Preface

The European Association for Consumer Research conference 2013 was hosted by Universitat Pompeu Fabra and IESE Business School, on July 4-7, in Barcelona, Spain. We welcomed participants from 34 different countries for 3 days of stimulating talks (reflected in this book) and equally inspiring socializing at some of Barcelona’s most iconic spots. We thank all those that joined us, and especially those who helped out with organizing a memorable conference.

We received 422 submissions, of which 213 were accepted. We could rely on a great team of reviewers, and on dedicated track chairs Frederic Brunel, Mary Caldwell, Maria Galli, Caroline Goukens, Paul Henry, Anne Klesse, John Pracejus, and Cristel Russell. Paul Henry and Mary Caldwell also set up a much appreciated workshop in filmmaking. A special thanks goes to our highly distinguished keynote speakers Robin Hogarth, Sheena Iyengar, and Benoît Monin. Much appreciation goes to those turning up early and helping to make our pre-conference on the moral dimensions of consumer behavior one of the many highlights.

We owe many thanks to IESE and Universitat Pompeu Fabra for providing us with spectacular venues, conference managers Estefania Sort Rebes and Esther Ribes Curto, and a great team of volunteers.

A big thank you goes to Rajiv Vaidyanathan, Executive Director of ACR. His input as an ever reliable and knowledgeable guide made this conference possible.

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**Special Session Summaries**

**Health Implications of The Marketing Mix: Environmental and Situational Moderators of Unhealthy Food Consumption**

Chairs: Sonya Grier and Cristel Antonia Russell
American University Washington, DC

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**Paper #1: The Influence of Place on Consumption: Exploring Adolescent Unhealthy Consumption in Low versus High-Income and Urban versus non-Urban Neighborhoods of the United States**

Brennan Davis, Baylor University, USA*
Michael Bader, American University, USA*
Sonya Grier, American University, USA*

**Paper #2: Media Influences on Adolescents’ Beliefs about the Health Risks of Fast Food Consumption: The Interplay of Television Viewing and Direct Experience**

Cristel Russell, American University, USA*
Denise Buhrau, Stony Brook University, USA*

**Paper #3: Time of Day Effects on the Regulation of Food Consumption After Exposure to Advertisements for Healthy and Unhealthy Foods**

Wendy Boland, American University, USA
Paul Connel, City University, London, UK*
Beth Vallen, Fordham University, USA

**Paper #4: Does Cash or Credit Increase Unhealthy Food Purchasing? A Reconciliation of Conflicting Evidence**

Lauren Bloch, Baruch College, USA*
Rajesh Bagchi, Virginia Tech, USA*

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**SESSION OVERVIEW**

Obesity is a worldwide epidemic and significant public health concern. In the U.S., analyses of nationally representative data demonstrate that 36% of adults and 16.9% of children and adolescents from 2 through 19 years of age were obese (Ogden et al. 2012; Ogden et al. 2002). Obesity and overweight result in a variety of health risks including increased risk for cancer, cardiovascular disease and hypertension, stigmatization and premature death (WHO Consultation 2000). In addition there are a breadth of psychological and social consequences including stigmatization, eating disorders and discrimination (Grier and Moore 2012; WHO Consultation 2000). Obesity also has significant economic implications, with estimates for the costs to U.S. companies alone estimated at $12.7 billion annually (Grossman 2004).

Prior research in marketing asserts that food marketing serves as an environmental influence on obesity (Seiders and Petty 2004). Now the goal is to understand the ways in which marketing may wield an influence on consumer behavior, a subject of increasing interest to the consumer research community (such as the food research curation at JCR; Block, forthcoming). As illustrated in the figure, the four papers in the session focus on various aspects of the marketing process, namely place, promotion, price, and product, to understand their relationship with consumers’ food beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

Together the papers demonstrate several environmental and situational factors that are directly shaped by marketing practices and that impact unhealthy food consumption. We focus on food consumption and measure multiple levels (e.g. cognitive, behavioral and health outcomes) of the impact of food marketing: beliefs about the health risks of fast food, actual consumption choices and obesity rates. The first paper investigates the relationship between where people live and unhealthy consumption, specifically teens in urban areas, to investigate how proximity to fast food is linked to unhealthy consumption in the context of obesity. The second and third papers in the session emphasize the interplay between the promotional and product elements, specifically looking at the influence of food advertising and direct product experience (paper 2) and whether the product advertised is healthy or not (paper 3), as well as moderators of these effects. Specifically, paper 2 shows that the more adolescents watch TV, the less they perceive the health risks of fast food but only when they have limited direct experience of fast food. And paper 3 demonstrates that the ways in which TV advertisements for healthy or unhealthy foods affect actual food intake vary as a function of the time of day. Finally, the fourth paper tackles issues of price with experiments that manipulate the method of payment to investigate whether and how the “pain” of payment influences food choices.

The session draws together a mix of methodological approaches: from macro level geospatial analysis (paper 1) to cross sectional data from a national panel (paper 2) and lab-based experiments (papers 3 and 4). Embracing the value of multiple levels of analysis, the session addresses both cumulative effects (papers 1 and 2) linked to actual and individual level effects (papers 3 and 4), with insights on the processes that drive observed effects. We also acknowledge the importance of addressing the obesity crisis by measuring both cumulative and individual impact of marketing mix variables. For instance, to offer a comprehensive picture of the promotional environment in which consumers live, the impact of food advertising exposure should be evaluated in terms of its cumulative effect (paper 2) as well as at the individual message level (paper 3).

Given the global concerns of the obesity epidemic, as well as with unhealthy consumption, the session should appeal to a diverse
The Influence of Place on Consumption: Exploring Adolescent Unhealthy Consumption in Low versus High-Income and Urban versus non-Urban Neighborhoods of the United States

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Obesity and overweight among youth is a major concern worldwide, and it is estimated that 110 million children are overweight worldwide (World Health Organization, 2009). Disparities in obesity rates exist among groups of youth identified by ethnicity, income and gender in the U.S. as well as worldwide (Grier and Moore 2012). In the United States alone, 16.9% of youth were obese while 31.7% were obese or overweight during 2007-2008 (Ogden et al. 2010). The consequential health risks, such as asthma, kidney disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and depression (Caprio 2006) affect not only the child, but also create social and economic costs for society. Estimates place the costs of childhood obesity amount to over $14 billion, and are expected to account for 1 in every 6 dollars spent on health care by 2030 (Cawley 2010; Wang et al. 2008).

Current arguments emphasize studying the specific environmental factors that support overeating for the population as a whole and by specific racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. Food marketing is an important part of the environment contributing to peoples' health behaviors, including food consumption and physical activity (McGinnis, Gootman & Kraak 2006; Moore and Rideout 2007). A current emphasis of research in the food domain is to understand specific population-level environmental factors that support overeating as well factors that might influence specific groups and create obesity disparities. This research emphasizes the significance of understanding the contexts in which youth live, learn and play. One stream of research has centered on the food environment, both inside and outside schools. Prior research demonstrates that the proximity of fast-food restaurants to schools is related to higher youth body weight and also suggests that this relationship may be stronger in urban areas (Davis and Carpenter 2009; Grier and Davis 2012; Currie et al. 2009). Research also suggests that some lower income, and ethnic minority (Grier and Kumanyika 2008) youth may be more vulnerable to this relationship than others (Grier and Davis 2012).

The findings demonstrating an association with environmental factors and obesity in urban areas highlight the importance of understanding location-based strategies as an important dimension of the food environment. Investigating locational differences is especially relevant since consumer research has demonstrated consumption differences across lower versus higher income areas (Talukdar 2008) and predominantly black versus non-black neighborhoods (Grier and Kumanyika 2008). However, the relationship between location-based marketing strategies and unhealthy consumption has received little attention from marketers despite a burst of attention from public health, urban studies and other disciplines.

In the present research, we explore how place affects unhealthy consumption among youth. We focus on urban areas given the stronger effects observed in prior research as well as the potential for variation. We integrate research on the relationship between place and unhealthy consumption among youth to develop a conceptual framework and hypotheses regarding how specific characteristics within urban areas will influence unhealthy consumption among youth. Specifically, we model how intra-urban differences by income are associated with unhealthy consumption by adolescents; and how access to unhealthy retail mediates some of this association. Results demonstrate that adolescents living in low-income urban neighborhoods consume significantly more alcohol, cigarettes, soda and fries and chips than their counterparts living in low-income non-urban neighborhoods, while adolescents in higher-income urban neighborhoods consume fewer of those items relative to adolescents in high-income non-urban neighborhoods. Focusing on the food outcomes, findings show that adolescents’ schools in lower-income urban areas are closer to fast food than non-urban areas while adolescents’ schools in higher-income areas are further from fast food than non-urban areas, explaining some of the intra-urban food consumption differences. Results contribute to an understanding of how place related issues influence unhealthy consumption.

Media Influences on Adolescents’ Beliefs about the Health Risks of Fast Food Consumption: The Interplay of Television Viewing and Direct Experience

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This paper continues with a focus on adolescents to explore the relationship between cumulative TV viewing and adolescents’ beliefs about the consequences of fast food consumption. Adolescence is a key period of psychological development when many lifelong behaviors and beliefs are formed, including health-related beliefs. One of the major socialization forces for youth is television. In fact, television is often regarded as the most influential media source through which youth acquire knowledge, whether based on accurate or inaccurate information, and learn about social behaviors, including nutrition (Collins, Elliott, Berry, Kanouse, and Hunter 2003; Gerbner 1995) and TV content is potentially an influential source of health knowledge for teenagers (Pechman and Wang 2010). The majority of American youth have access to video entertainment and TV remains the primary source of entertainment for today’s youth, who watch an average of 3 hours and 20 minutes daily (Rideout, Foehr, and Roberts 2010; Nielsen Media 2009). Television exposure is directly related to advertising exposure and thus to advertising messages about fast food: Advertising spending of fast food on television (network and cable) continues to reach new levels, having increased 12.18% in the last five years to reach $2,776,264,900 in 2011 (AdSpender 2012).

Research from the cultivation paradigm of communications studies has documented that cumulative TV exposure is linked to audiences’ generalized, and often skewed, views of reality. This body of research linking cumulative exposure to TV and audiences’ real-life beliefs and perceptions suggests that the amount of TV watched by youths may be related to biased views about the consequences of eating fast food (Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, and Morgan 1980; O’Guinn and Shrum 1997). The theoretical explanation for the cultivation effect is that TV viewing makes relevant information more accessible in memory for heavy viewers than for light viewers. This accessibility promotes a reliance on heuristic processing in how heavy viewers construct their judgments about the real world, hence explaining the positive relation between TV viewing and estimates of the frequency and probability of certain behaviors in society (Hawkins and Pingree 1982; Shrum, Wyer, and O’Guinn 1998).

We propose and test that teenagers’ perceptions of the health risks associated with fast food consumption vary as a function of their television exposure, per the cultivation paradigm. However, because direct experience shapes knowledge (Hoch 2002; John and...
Whitney 1986) the relationships between TV exposure and those risk perceptions reduces as their actual experience of fast food increases.

We report the findings of two cross-sectional surveys of American teenagers conducted in the cultivation research tradition (N = 445 and N = 1,000). Children of members of an online panel representative of the US population were asked a series of questions about their media habits, fast food habits and beliefs about the consequences of eating fast food, as well as a series of personality and psychographic variables.

The results indicate that the amount of TV watched by adolescents has a significant positive relationship with their positive perceptions about the consequences of eating fast food and an inverse relationship with their negative perceptions. This supports a cultivation effect of TV viewing: heavy TV exposure is related to adolescents’ beliefs about the consequences of eating fast food, they hold more positive perceptions and lesser negative perceptions about the consequences of eating fast food every day. However, this direct relationship only holds for positive fast food perceptions; for negative perceptions, it is qualified by youths’ direct experience with fast food. Adolescents’ level of prior direct experience with fast food moderates the relationship between TV viewing and negative perception of eating fast food. There are no differences in negative fast food perceptions amongst adolescents with prior direct fast food experience (i.e., no cultivation effect) as a function of the amount of TV they view. In contrast, adolescents’ negative perception of fast food consumption is a function of TV viewing if they do not have prior direct experience with fast food. In fact, heavy TV viewing decreases the perceptions of risks associated with fast food consumption for those adolescents with limited prior fast food experience. Therefore, while higher TV exposure is associated with lesser perceptions of the risks of fast food consumption (main effect), this effect is strongest amongst adolescents with limited prior fast food experience (interaction). Our findings are independent of the amount of physical activity adolescents engage in per week. This suggests that instead of TV viewing leading to reduced physical activity—in fact, there was a significant positive correlation between these two variables (r = .52, p < .01)—TV viewing rather exposes adolescents to programming content that influences their fast food perceptions.

The results contribute to an understanding of how TV viewing and direct experience influence health beliefs, and how these beliefs in turn impact health outcomes.

**Time of Day Effects on the Regulation of Food Consumption After Exposure to Advertisements for Healthy and Unhealthy Foods**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

As the previous paper shows, television watching is one of many practices that are associated with an unhealthy lifestyle (CDC 2012). Research demonstrates that exposure to food advertising increases food consumption, particularly for unhealthy foods. Individuals consume more of such foods when they watch a TV program that contains food advertisements compared to non-food ads (Falciglia and Gussow 1980; Harris, Bargh, and Brownell 2009). In effect, these ads act as automatic, real world primes for consumption (Harris et al. 2009).

Fortunately, individuals are able to automatically evoke self-regulatory strategies when facing primes that may prompt consumption. Such cues can lead consumers to activate measures to protect their own interests (e.g., planning to consume healthy fruits and vegetables as a means of avoiding less nutritious foods; Fishbach, Friedman, and Kruglanski 2003; Shah, Friedman, and Kruglanski 2002). Importantly, conceptualizations of self-regulation recognize that, with use, this resource becomes depleted (Baumeister 2002; Vohs et al. 2008). One implication of this is that self-regulatory failures may become increasingly more likely as the day wears on; while resources are likely to be quite strong in the morning, they are likely to decline as individuals engage in self-regulation throughout the day, rendering individuals more likely to succumb to temptations later versus earlier (Baumeister 2002). Thus, while individuals may be better equipped to guard against the consumption of food in response to ads early in the day, television watching later in the day—such as primetime viewing hours, when adult viewers are more likely to watch—may be more problematic from a dietary perspective.

This research explores the relationship between advertising content and food intake earlier versus later in the day. To date, no research has considered the differential manner in which consumers respond to food primes generated by advertising based on time of day. Across two studies, we show that while morning consumption does not vary with the type of food primed, individuals exposed to healthy food primes in the afternoon—both through ads (study 1) and via a word search task (study 2)—ate less than consumers who see ads for unhealthy foods or non-food control ads. This demonstrates that exposure to healthy advertisements may work to bolster depleted afternoon self-control, thus reducing food consumption. Interestingly, those exposed to unhealthy food primes did not consume less (or more) than those exposed to control ads in the afternoon, demonstrating that efforts to guard against indulgence are not bolstered (nor hindered) by priming temptations; the depletion of self-control in the afternoon may be sufficient to encourage increased consumption regardless of priming.

Our research carries important public policy implications given the proliferation of food advertisements targeted to adult consumers (Lee and Tseng 2005, Mink et al. 2010). Specifically, while the positive relationship between food advertisements and childhood eating (e.g., Halford et al. 2007; Halford et al. 2008, Halford et al. 2004) and obesity (Jackson et al. 2009) has been studied extensively and has resulted in policy implementations by governments to ban or limit food advertising to children (Hall 2007; Schultz 2011; Poggi and Schultz 2012), the impact of adult targeted food advertising has received far less attention. Thus, by demonstrating that the documented impact of food advertising on adult food consumption (see Falciglia and Gussow 1980; Harris, Bargh, and Brownell 2009) varies based on time of day, our research contributes to our understanding of the effect of time of day on consumer response to food-related environmental cues and, more generally, processes of self-regulation. Consequently, our findings carry implications for consumers and policy makers seeking to identify and mitigate the influence of environmental cues—particularly those outside of consumers’ conscious awareness—on overconsumption.

**Does Cash or Credit Increase Unhealthy Food Purchasing? A Reconciliation of Conflicting Evidence**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Are consumers more likely to buy more indulgent, high calorie foods when they pay by credit or when they pay by cash? Two recently published articles offer conflicting evidence: Thomas, Desai and Seenivasan (2011) present evidence that consumers are more likely to buy unhealthy food products when they pay by credit card, while Bagchi and Block’s (2011) findings support the opposite conclusion. In the current research, we reconcile these two contradictory sets of results by suggesting that the time between purchase and con-
We begin our theorizing with the emerging body of work on spending behavior that illustrates that the imputed cost of consumption (defined as the answer to a consumer’s question “How much is this pleasure costing me?” Prelec and Loewenstein 1998) is an important driver of spending and consumption decisions. Notably, imputed cost is greater for cash than for credit, and even specific cash bills themselves may differ in the pain of payment (Bagchi and Block 2011). Thomas et al. (2011) conducted studies that demonstrate that consumers are more likely to buy indulgent products when they pay with credit cards compared to cash. Results of their first field study support their theorizing that shoppers who paid with credit or debit cards had a larger proportion of vice products in their baskets. The result was replicated in lab experiments, in which participants were ostensibly helping a retail chain figure out what consumers would buy on a typical shopping trip. Importantly, in all these studies, purchase and consumption was temporally separated. Bagchi and Block (2011) find completely opposite results in a series of studies depicting scenarios when consumption occurs at the time of purchase. In their first field study, conducted at a frozen yogurt retailer, results confirm that consumers who paid with cash purchased and consumed significantly more calories than those who paid with a card. These results were replicated in three lab studies in which participants were instructed to select food items from a campus café for their afternoon snack. Results confirm not only that consumers made more indulgent choices when paying by cash compared to credit, but they made more indulgent choices when the cash itself was difficult (i.e., painful) to earn compared to easy to earn.

How can greater pain of payment explain the greater likelihood of indulgent food purchasing with credit as proposed by Thomas et al., and also explain the greater likelihood of indulgent food purchasing with cash as proposed by Bagchi and Block? Specifically, we suggest that when consumption immediately follows payment, a consumer is more likely to choose a higher calorie food option when paying in cash; however, when consumption is delayed, the consumer is more likely to choose a higher calorie food when paying by credit. We argue this occurs because in the immediate consumption scenario fulfillment from consumption alleviates the pain of payment. This does not occur when consumption is delayed.

We begin by testing this hypothesis in a study conducted as a 2 method of payment (cash vs. credit) x 2 temporal delay (immediate consumption vs. delayed consumption) between subjects design. In the first part of the study, the payment mechanism was made salient following the procedure used by Bagchi and Block (2011). Participants then read a description of either an immediate lunch consumption or a delayed consumption scenario (pick up food now for later consumption). All participants were then asked to select items from a menu (adapted from a large chain restaurant that includes a large variety of sandwiches, soups, salads, etc.) and to spend between $10 - $15 on their purchase. Results support our hypothesis that people choose more indulgent, higher calorie and generally unhealthy foods when paying in cash for immediate consumption and when paying by credit for delayed consumption (Total Calories: F(1,169) = 7.78, p < .010; Calories from Fat: F(1,169) = 9.45, p < .005; Fat(g): F(1,169) = 9.40, p < .005; Saturated fat (g): F(1,169) = 6.99, p < .01; Cholesterol (g): F(1,169) = 6.42, p < .02; Total carbs (g): F(1,169) = 4.06, p < .05; Total sugar (g): F(1,169) = 3.28, p < .08). We included perceptions of how healthy their product choice was and age as covariates in these analyses. Further analyses revealed that perceptions of how filling the product selection was mediated the effects of pain of payment on indulgence when consumption was in the immediate future but not when consumption was delayed. This is consistent with our argument that fulfillment derived from consuming more alleviates the pain for payment when consumption is in the near future. However, consistent with Thomas et al. (2011), fulfillment was not a mediator when consumption was delayed.

Taken together, these two studies reconcile previous findings on how pain of payment affects consumption. These findings are also suggestive of the possibility that other moderators may impact how pain of payment influences behaviors.
How to Ask: Making Prosocial Behavior Requests Most Effective
Emily Garbinsky, Stanford University, USA

Although this session is designed to be of substantial interest to those active in prosocial behavior research (as all three papers share a common focus on deepening our theoretical understanding of factors that influence consumers’ willingness to help), we also expect this session to have broader appeal. For instance, as helping results in increased happiness and life satisfaction, this session should also attract those who study consumer well-being more broadly. Additionally, this session will focus on ways to increase prosocial behaviors, making it relevant to persuasion researchers because it incorporates tactics to better solicit requests (Garbinsky & Aaker, Baca-Motes et al.). Lastly, this session should appeal to investigators interested in individual difference moderators as the effects of financial and cultural diversity are examined (Norton et al.). We hope that attracting a diverse audience will help facilitate a lively and fruitful discussion. In addition to creating connections between research areas, this session should also build connections between academia and industry because of its direct managerial implications; not only do the researchers focus on advancing our theoretical understanding of acting prosocially, but they also identify variables that could potentially be manipulated by marketers in order to increase charities’ actual donation rates (Garbinsky & Aaker) as well as hotel guests’ compliance rates (Baca-Motes et al.).

The Power of Giving: Why People Give Over Time

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Although motivations to give have enjoyed much resonance in the literature, the majority of research examines giving at a single point in time, leaving many foundational questions regarding the factors that motivate lasting giving unanswered. Attempting to address this gap, we examine the question: What motivates giving over the long run?

Longitudinal giving differs from one-time giving such that repeat donors have the opportunity to reflect upon their prior experience with the charity whereas one-time donors do not. Thus, memory for how you previously felt when being solicited has the potential to play a role in the decision to donate at a later point in time. We hypothesize that when the individual has a positive interaction with the charity, feelings of power may be cultivated and that individuals solicited at later points in time are likely to reflect upon their initial experience with the charity, with these recollections influencing choice. More specifically, we predict that positive recalled associations are likely to cultivate feelings of power which in turn drive giving.

Experiment 1. The objective was to examine whether the passage of time moderates the effectiveness of emotional appeals on giving and to provide initial evidence that the feeling of empowerment that is spurred by the happiness appeal drives giving at a later point in time. All participants were exposed to an advertisement for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital that depicted either a smiling child (happiness appeal) or a frowning child (sadness appeal). Then, half of the participants were asked how much money they would donate if they were to win a $50 lottery immediately after viewing the ad while the other half were asked whether they would donate money when they were contacted one week later. Thus, experiment 1 utilized a 2 (appeal: happy vs. sad) x 2 (donate: now vs. one week later) between-subjects design.

There was a significant interaction among those willing to give between emotional appeal and timing of solicitation on hypothetical donation amount, $F(1, 96) = 11.85, p < .01. In the donate now condition, emotional appeal significantly increased donation amount, $F(1, 48) = 16.53, p < .01$. However, when donation amount was measured at a later point in time, there were no differences in donation amount by emotional appeal, $F(1, 48) = 1.24, p > .05$. These results support the hypothesis that emotional appeal results in greater donations immediately following advertisement exposure, and that positive recalled associations are likely to cultivate feelings of power which in turn drive giving.

SESSION OVERVIEW

Prosocial behavior refers to “voluntary actions that are intended to help or benefit another individual or group of individuals” (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). Understanding what makes people likely to help is important for consumer welfare as acting prosocially has been tied to increases in happiness and life satisfaction (Meier & Stutzer, 2008) as well as decreases in anxiety and depression (Field, Hernandez-Reif, Quintino, Schanberg, & Kuhn, 1998). Despite extant literature documenting the effects of prosocial behavior on happiness, we have little insight into why helping makes people happy. Even more surprising, people behave prosocially relatively infrequently given the fact that we know the positive relationship that exists between helping and happiness. This raises the important question: Why do people help and under what conditions are they more likely to do so?

With three papers, this session addresses this question as it integrates various research perspectives to identify factors that lead to several kinds of prosocial behaviors. Garbinsky and Aaker examine monetary donations to charity over time. Specifically, they investigate how the passage of time moderates the effectiveness of emotional appeals. Although past research has shown that negative emotional appeals result in greater donations immediately following advertisement exposure, they show that positive emotional appeals result in greater donations if solicitation occurs at a later point in time. Further, they demonstrate that happiness appeals outperform in the long run because they are better able to make the giver feel empowered, which they show is a driver of lasting giving. Baca-Motes, Brown, Gneezy, Keenan, and Nelson focus on environmentally friendly behavior. Evidence from a large field experiment reveals that when hotel guests make a specific commitment at check-in and receive a pin to symbolize their commitment, the total number of towels that are hung for reuse in the hotel increased by over 40%, demonstrating how a small but carefully planned intervention can have a significant impact on prosocial behavior. Finally, Norton et al. focus on the positive consequences of prosocial spending by providing the first evidence for a psychological universal: people around the world experience emotional rewards from using their financial resources to benefit others. This emotional benefit was observed not only in countries with plentiful resources, but also in impoverished nations.

Paper #1: The Power of Giving: Why People Give Over Time
Emily Garbinsky, Stanford University, USA*
Jennifer Aaker, Stanford University, USA

Paper #2: Commitment and Behavior Change: Evidence from the Field
Katie Baca-Motes, Disney Research
Amber Brown, Disney Research
Ayelet Gneezy, University of California San Diego, USA*
Elizabeth Keenan, University of California San Diego, USA
Leif Nelson, University of California Berkeley, USA

Paper #3: Prosocial Spending and Well-Being: Cross-Cultural Evidence for a Psychological Universal
Michael Norton, Harvard Business School, USA*
Lara Aknin, University of British Columbia, Canada
Chris Barrington-Leigh, University of British Columbia, Canada
Elizabeth Dunn, University of British Columbia, Canada
John Helliwell, University of British Columbia, Canada
Robert Biswas-Deiner, Centre for Applied Positive Psychology
condition, participants that viewed the sad appeal indicated that they would be willing to donate more ($M = 27.50$) than participants that viewed the happy appeal ($M = 20.00$), $t(96) = 1.95, p = .05$. Conversely, in the donate one week later condition, participants that viewed the happy appeal indicated that they would be willing to donate more ($M = 24.65$) than participants that viewed the sad appeal ($M = 13.26$), $t(96) = 2.91, p < .01$. Furthermore, individuals’ reason to donate differed based on the timing of the solicitation such that the feeling of sadness spurred by the sad appeal mediates the relationship between appeal condition and amount willing to give for the donate now participants whereas the feeling of power spurred by the happy appeal mediates the relationship for the donate one week later participants.

**Experiment 2.** The objective was to verify that feeling empowered is driving the advantageous effect of happiness appeals over time by manipulating power in a more direct manner. Thus, experiment 2 utilized a single-factor between-subjects design where the degree to which individuals felt powerful was manipulated. There were significant differences in donation amount among those willing to give, with participants in the high power condition indicating that they would be willing to donate more ($M = 33.98$) than participants in the low power condition ($M = 18.24$), $t(72) = 5.18, p < .001$.

**Experiment 3.** The objective was to gain further insight into the mechanism underlying the effect by observing how emotional appeals and power interact. If feeling empowered mediates the relationship between appeal condition and donation amount at a later point in time, as we suggest, then making people feel powerful prior to giving should eliminate variation in donation amount. Thus, experiment 3 utilized a 2 (appeal: happy vs. sad) x 2 (power: high vs. control) between-subjects design.

There was a significant interaction among those willing to give between emotional appeal and power on hypothetical donation amount, $F(1, 136) = 4.77, p = .03$. In the control condition, participants that viewed the happy appeal indicated that they would be willing to donate more ($M = 20.36$) than participants that viewed the sad appeal ($M = 15.38$), $t(136) = 4.98, p = .04$. However, in the high power condition, there were no significant differences in amount willing to donate for participants that viewed the happy appeal ($M = 18.68$) or the sad appeal ($M = 21.50$), $t(136) = 1.07, p = .29$. Further, the extent of feeling powerful mediates the relationship between appeal condition and donation amount for those in the control condition, but not those in the high power condition.

**Experiment 4.** Past research has shown that whether thinking about the past elicits affect is determined by the extent to which individuals reflect upon their past experience. Whereas thinking about a past event in great detail elicits mood effects, thinking about a past event briefly does not produce changes in mood (Strack, Schwarz and Gschneidinger 1985). For this reason, we hypothesize that individuals who are instructed to recall in great detail how the charity appeal made them feel will re-experience the sadness that they previously felt, causing sadness appeals to outperform happiness appeals as they do initially after advertisement exposure. Thus, experiment 4 utilized a 2 (appeal: happy vs. sad) x 3 (recall: vivid vs. pallid vs. control) between-subjects design.

There was a significant interaction among those willing to give between emotional appeal and type of recall on hypothetical donation amount, $F(2, 105) = 14.63, p < .001$. In the control condition, participants that viewed the happy appeal indicated that they would be willing to donate more ($M = 28.22$) than participants that viewed the sad appeal ($M = 16.11$), $t(105) = 3.17, p < .01$. Similar to the control condition, in the pallid recall condition, participants that viewed the happy appeal indicated that they would be willing to donate more ($M = 25.80$) than participants that viewed the sad appeal ($M = 16.32$), $t(105) = 2.55, p = .01$. However, in the vivid recall condition, the relationship between appeal condition and donation amount reversed: participants that viewed the sad appeal indicated that they would be willing to donate more ($M = 31.67$) than participants that viewed the happy appeal ($M = 16.88$), $t(105) = 3.77, p < .001$.

Together, these results suggest that while sad appeals outperform happy appeals in the short run, happy appeals seem to outperform sad appeals in the longer run. Specifically, we show that feelings of power, spurred by pictures of smiling children (experiments 1, 2, and 4) or an imagination task (experiments 2 and 3), drive giving. Further, this effect emerges when emotional disparities triggered by the advertisement have dissipated, causing it to reverse the effectiveness of sadness appeals over time. By demonstrating the moderating role of time, this research further contributes to the understanding of valence framing and has important implications for research on lasting giving and feeling empowered.

**Commitment and Behavior Change: Evidence from the Field**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Influencing sustainable behavior is an ongoing challenge in psychology and consumer behavior research. One example is that of hotel towel reuse programs, which typically ask guests to “do their part” for the environment by reusing their towels. It is hoped this will trigger conservation minded behavior, but data shows participation rates are generally low (30-38%) (Goldstein et al. 2008). Normative appeals can increase participation (e.g., Goldstein et al. 2008), yet an estimated 50% of hotel patrons remain unresponsive. Furthermore, the “social norm” solution relies on communicating a typically false social “norm”—the majority of guests in most hotels do not reuse their towels.

In this paper we propose a novel approach for increasing guests’ participation in hotel towel reuse programs. Specifically, we suggest that allowing guests to actively express their interest in joining hotels’ environmental efforts by reusing their towels would consequently increase the likelihood they would do so. In order to test this proposition, we ran a large, intensive field experiment ($N = 4,345$) in a California hotel to examine how committing to practice sustainable behavior at check-in would influence guests’ subsequent compliance with eco-friendly behavior during their stay. Results show that specific commitments coupled with a publicly displayed symbol (environmental pin) increased towel reuse, arguably via signaling and dissonance avoidance.

We predict that guests’ participation in towel reuse programs would increase if they initially choose to commit to do so, presumably because choosing to commit sends a signal to the individual that she cares about the environment, which should promote consistent behavior (self signaling; see Ariely & Norton 2008; Bem 1972; Bènabou & Tirole 2011). Additionally, we argue that allowing guests to express their commitment to the environment publicly would reinforce their commitment and further increase sustainable behavior (e.g., Ariely et al. 2009). Finally, we expect that guests’ participation would be positively affected if their commitment specifies the steps required to achieve such behavior (e.g., Wright & Kacmar 1994).

Guests were randomly given the option at check-in to join the hotel’s environmental efforts through two types of commitments: General (commitment to be environmentally friendly during stay) or Specific (commitment to reuse towels during stay). To reinforce
signaling, some guests received a “Friend of the Earth” pin. This resulted in a two (Commitment Specificity: general, specific) by two (Symbol: pin, no pin), between-participants, design. We also included three external control conditions: “Message Only”—guests were only exposed to the hotel’s environmental message, “Pin Only”—guests only received a pin, and “No Manipulation”. Our main measure of compliance was the likelihood of towel reuse—hanging towels to be reused the next day.

A logistic regression analysis showed Specific Commitment guests were more likely to hang a towel relative to General Commitment guests ($M_{specific} \times .66.6\% \text{ vs. } M_{general} = 61.0\%; \text{Wald}(1) = 4.49, p = .034$). The regression further revealed a significant effect of Symbol: guests that received a pin were more likely to hang a towel ($M_{pin} = 68.0\%, M_{nopin} = 59.6\%); \text{Wald}(1) = 10.02, p = .002$). The interaction was not significant. A comparison to the three control conditions revealed that Specific Commitment plus Pin guests were more likely to hang a towel than guests in any of the control conditions ($p < .001$), while General Commitment plus Pin guests were only more likely to hang a towel than Pin Only guests ($p = .016$). When using a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons, the Specific Commitment plus Pin condition differed from all other conditions, and there were no other significant differences.

Overall, we found that a commitment alone is relatively ineffective in motivating behavior—the increase in desired behavior occurred only when the commitment was detailed and action-oriented. Based on past work, we propose that an abstract, diffuse, commitment requires very little effort to be fulfilled. In contrast, a more specified commitment promotes subsequent behavior consistent with the desired change. In addition, guests signing this specific contract further signal to themselves that they in fact care about the environment, which increases the likelihood that they will behave consistently with that identity. When coupled with a symbol to reinforce their commitment, guests were most likely to practice sustainable behavior, supporting our proposition that adding a social component would further promote behavior change. Notably, the commitment itself was entirely symbolic—once guests completed the check-in process they were able to exist in anonymity and behave as they wished, since they were unaware that their behavior would be monitored. From the perspective of hotels, and other entities attempting to motivate certain behaviors, our approach offers a simple alternative to more effective in motivating behavior—the increase in desired behavior occurring only when the commitment was detailed and action-oriented.

To examine the correlation between prosocial spending and subjective well-being within a large number of countries, we use data collected from 136 countries between 2006-2008 as part of the Gallup World Poll (GWP; total N = 234,917, Mage = 38, SD = 17; 49% male). The sample represents over 95% of the world’s adult population (aged 15 and older) and provides an exceptionally large and diverse snapshot. The data are collected using randomly selected, nationally representative samples with a mean size of 1321 individuals per country (SD = 730, range = 141-4437). The relationship between prosocial spending and SWB is positive in 120 out of 136 countries included in the Gallup World Poll, with this relationship reaching traditional levels of significance ($p < .05$) in some 59% of these 120 countries. In a pooled global estimate, the prosocial spending coefficient, $b = .27$, $p < .03$, exceeds half the coefficient of log income, $b = .41$, $p < .03$. Thus donating to charity has a similar relationship to SWB as a doubling of household income. Importantly, although rates of prosocial spending are higher in wealthier countries, $r(134) = .54$, $p < .001$, the size of the relationship between prosocial spending and SWB that emerges within countries is unrelated to rates of donation, $r(134) = -.10$, $p = .23$, or to the countries’ mean incomes, $r(134) = .09$, $p = .31$, suggesting that generous financial behavior is linked to well-being in poor and rich countries alike.

In Study 2a, we tested the causal impact of prosocial spending on happiness, randomly assigning participants in Canada (N = 140) and Uganda (N = 680) to write about a time they had spent money on themselves (personal spending) or others (prosocial spending). As predicted, there was a significant main effect of spending type, whereby participants randomly assigned to recall a purchase made for someone else ($M = .09, SD = 1.00$) reported significantly higher happiness than participants assigned to recall a purchase made for themselves ($M = -.09, SD = 0.99$), $F(1, 784) = 8.21, p = .004$. The interaction of spending type and country was not significant, $F(1, 784) = 1.88, p = .17$. Thus, participants in Canada and Uganda reported higher levels of happiness when they thought about spending money on others rather than themselves. In Study 2b, participants in India (N = 101) were assigned to recall a recent purchase in which they spent money on themselves (personal spending condition) or someone else (prosocial spending condition); those in the control condition proceeded directly to our happiness measures without recalling a past spending experience. A one-way ANOVA revealed significant between-group differences in positive affect, $F(2, 96) = 3.44, p < .04$. Using LSD contrasts, we found that positive affect levels reported by participants in the control condition ($M = 3.72, SD = 72$) and personal spending condition ($M = 3.64, SD = .49$) were not significantly different from each other, $p > .65$; most importantly, participants in the prosocial spending condition reported higher levels of PA ($M = 4.11, SD = .54$) than participants in either of the other conditions, $p < .04$.

In Study 3, participants in both Canada (N = 60) and Uganda (N = 95) engaged in a version of the “dictator game,” a widely-used economic paradigm in which generous financial behavior can be observed in a controlled setting. We entered trait happiness, donation amount, country, and a donation amount X country interaction term into a linear regression equation predicting post-task positive affect. Supporting our hypothesis, donation size was the only significant predictor of post-task PA, such that larger donations were associated with higher levels of positive affect ($b = .27, p < .001$). The interaction of donation amount and country ($b = -.06, p > .45$) did not approach significance, such that donation amount predicted dictators’ post-task positive affect in both the Ugandan ($b = .19, p < .04$) and Canadian ($b = .35, p < .005$) samples.

**Prosocial Spending and Well-Being: Cross-Cultural Evidence for a Psychological Universal**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Warren Buffett, one of the richest people in the world, recently pledged to give away 99% of his wealth, saying that he “couldn’t be happier with that decision” (Buffett, 2010). Consistent with Buffett’s claim, recent research suggests that financial generosity may indeed promote happiness (e.g., Dunn, Aknin, & Norton, 2008). For Buffett, this striking act of generosity necessitated little self-sacrifice; he noted that “my family and I will give up nothing we need or want by fulfilling this 99% pledge,” whereas for other people, “the dollars [they] drop into a collection plate or give to United Way-mean forgone movies, dinners out, or other personal pleasures” (Buffett, 2010). Of course, in many parts of the world, spending one’s limited financial resources on others may mean sacrificing more than just movies and dinners out. Does spending money on others promote happiness even in relatively impoverished areas of the world?
Taken together, the present studies provide the first evidence for a possible psychological universal: human beings around the world experience emotional rewards from using their financial resources to benefit others. From an evolutionary perspective, the emotional rewards that people experience when they help others may serve as a proximate mechanism that evolved to facilitate prosocial behavior, which may have carried short-term costs but long-term benefits for survival over human evolutionary history. The robustness of this mechanism is supported by our finding that people experience emotional benefits from sharing their financial resources with others not only in countries where such resources are plentiful, but also in impoverished countries where scarcity might seem to limit the possibilities to reap the gains from giving to others. In highlighting the potential universality of emotional benefits stemming from prosocial spending, the present work adds to the chorus of recent interdisciplinary research on the importance of generosity for human well-being.
Exploring Consumers’ and Marketers’ Navigation of Fashion Systems
Daiane Scaraboto, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile
Eileen Fischer, York University, Canada

Paper #1: Fashion Market Encounters: Towards a Theory of Institutionalized Seduction
Soren Askegaard, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark*
Deniz Atik, Izmir University of Economics, Turkey
Stefania Borghini, Università Commerciale “Luigi Bocconi”, Italy

Pierre-Yann Dolbec, York University, Canada*
Eileen Fischer, York University, Canada

Diego Rinallo, Euromed Management, France*
Valeria Pinchera, Università di Pisa, Italy

Paper #4: Fashion Consumption by Plus-Sized Consumers: A Socio-Material Perspective
Daiane Scaraboto, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile*

SESSION OVERVIEW
Baudrillard (1979) has argued that institutionalized fashion systems constitute one of the most central aspects of contemporary consumer culture. To date, consumer researchers have tended to study fashion as a means to understanding conceptual phenomena such as groups seeking cultural and/or institutional transformation (McCracken 2008; Sandicki and Ger 2009; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013), or the pursuit of individual identity projects (e.g. Gilles and Nairn 2011; Parmentier and Fischer 2011; Thompson and Haytko 1997). Given the importance of fashion systems to consumer culture, a deeper understanding of how marketers and consumer navigate and shape fashions systems per se is warranted.

The goal of this session is therefore to advance our understanding of diverse aspects of fashion systems as they have emerged over time and in distinctive contexts. Toward this goal, we bring together a group of presentations that illuminates various institutional actors, practices, and processes of fashion systems. Askegaard, Atik, and Borghini examine interactions between producers and consumers to explain seduction in fashion from an institutional perspective. Dolbec and Fischer focus on the practices of consumers who interact in the online fashion world and identify unintended market level consequences of these practices. Rinallo and Pinchera investigate processes that led to the emergence of rival fashion systems in Italy through processes of commercial mythmaking. Finally, Scaraboto draws on a socio-material perspective to investigate the embodied consumption practices of a specific segment – plus sized consumers – as these practices have been shaped by the assemblage comprised of narrative and material elements of fashion systems. Individually, each paper extends a theoretical conversation of interest to consumer researchers: Askegaard, Atik, and Borghini elevate our understanding of the connections between seduction and consumption; Dolbec and Fischer advance discussions of marketplace dynamics; Rinallo and Pinchera shed new light on the role of commercial mythmaking in market systems; and Scaraboto contributes to the small but growing literature on materiality and consumption. Collectively, these papers offer fresh insights on how fashion systems evolve and the roles that consumers and marketers play in the shaping and reshaping of institutional norms and structures.

In all cases, the authors have collected data, developed analyses of their datasets, and crafted preliminary manuscripts to report their findings. This session is aimed at provoking lively discussion among participants and the audience that will contribute to the refinement and further development of the papers included here, and of other scholarly research on the topic. With that in mind, presentations will be kept at 15 minutes each, leaving enough time for discussion and questions from the audience. The papers draw on a variety of disciplinary and methodological approaches that should appeal to a broad audience interested both in fashion consumption and, more generally, in how consumption is shaped by and shapes the institutional contexts in which it is situated.

Fashion Market Encounters: Towards a Theory of Institutionalized Seduction

EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Fashion as an institutional system and a market process is a (if not the) central part of contemporary consumer culture (Baudrillard 1970). Fashion translates symbolic meanings into consumable signs that consumers can adopt through a variety of rituals (McCracken 1986), however, in doing so they are necessarily altering and to a certain degree personalizing the meanings of the fashion item (Thompson and Haytko 1997; Murray 2002). Clothing in particular represents the most relevant accessory of the personalized body as it most manifestly materializes the consumer’s identity for both oneself and for others – or, indeed, one of the individual’s multiple identities or “multiple self-identifications” (Goffman 1961). Although there are limits to the linguistic metaphor (Campbell 1996), clothes are visual texts that, like other images such as advertising and photographs, can build bridges and create a powerful and effective non-verbal language, able to communicate to the self and to others (Barnard 2002; McCracken 1986). Consumer research has contributed significantly to understanding the fashion consumer as an active and individuated agent, exploring and exploiting marketplace resources for personalized life projects. If the agentic consumer has been in the forefront of the consumer research on fashion, so far less attention has been paid to the dynamic interplay between the different agents in the fashion market.

Peñaloza (2001) was among the first to describe marketer and consumer interaction in a cultural process of consumption and production. Her context of the Western rodeo show, perhaps surprisingly, bears a lot of similarities to the world of fashion in the ways in which this cultural production unfolds. First of all, consumers experience this market offering as a mixture of entertainment, education, and business. Secondly, she observes, consumers’ prior familiarity with the context is decisive for the experience. Furthermore, in the cultural production process, consumers interact with other agents representing both marketer and consumer groupings. The resulting process is one of consumption as cultural production through a variety of marketer-consumer interactions; parallel to what is the case within the fashion industry. Kozinets, et al. (2004) add a significant dimension to our understanding of producer-consumer relationships through their discussion of ludic agency. Their observation that consumer-marketer relations are complex and dialectical, and consist of
moves and countermoves between market agents is insightful also for the functioning of the fashion system. Rather than “diabolical”, they qualify the marketer-consumer relationship in the ludic context of the ESPN zone as dialectical. More important, they draw on inspiration from Deighton and Grayson’s (1995) analysis of the constellation of playful consumption and marketer seduction to suggest an even more complex relationship between these concepts and their role in marketer-consumer power structures, concluding that in order to understand the scope and character of consumer agency, we must assert that play and playful consumption is “simultaneously seductive and subversive” (Kozinets et al. 2004, 660). This observation, we would argue, is equally valid for fashion consumption.

Seduction has been very rarely used in a consumer research context. Whereas the concept is more applied in the context of psycho-analysis, the seductive elements of marketing and consumption tend to be downplayed if referred to at all. Seduction is absent from major works in the social sciences, except Baudrillard’s (1979) rereading of Kierkegaard’s philosophical and aesthetic discussion of seduction and Lipovetsky’s (1987) treatise of fashion and modernity. None of these can be said to represent any firm theorization of seduction and none of them include any empirical validation. Beyond the work of Deighton and Grayson (1995), no single work has made any attempt to theorize or empirically demonstrate seduction in marketing and consumer research literature. Deighton and Grayson underline the social construction of seduction and set out to explore the paradox of seduction, that “it induces consumers to enjoy things they did not intend to enjoy” (1995, 660). Their otherwise meticulous analysis of the relations between seduction and marketing suffers from a few weaknesses when seduction is considered at an institutional level. First and foremost, their model asserts that social systems emerge from individual transactions, whereas the opposite from a sociological perspective is equally true. Secondly, their restriction of seduction to processes where the new social consensus is narrow-based prevents the model from saying much about seduction in connection with broad social institutions. In other words, while a fashion may prevent the model from saying much about seduction in connection with broad social institutions.

Our analysis tries to remedy this weakness by introducing an institutionalized concept of seduction. The fashion world, while not having exclusivity to institutionalized processes of fashion within marketing, is an obvious context for an attempt to develop a more institutionalized theory of fashion. As far as data gathering is concerned, the research underpinning this article consists of 36 semi-structured, in-depth interviews conducted by two of the three authors with middle class professionals both on the producer and the consumer side. Sixteen employed women represent fashion consumers, and six fashion designers, and fourteen other fashion professionals representing the industry were interviewed in total. The data were collected in a major European city, by most considered one of the absolute capitals of the global fashion industry.

We analyze the data with focus on various dimensions of the seduction process in an institutional perspective, drawing mainly on the conceptual apparatuses of Baudrillard (1979) and Lipovetsky (1987). We discuss our findings first and foremost in relation to the work of Deighton and Grayson (1995) in order to expand their analysis and provide building blocks for an institutional theory of seduction in marketing and consumer research. We conclude by drawing attention to the broader consequences of theorizing seduction in a marketing context.

### Same Same, But Different: How the Imperfect Reproduction of Institutional Practices by Inter-Connected Consumers Changes the Online Fashion Market.

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

This presentation contributes to a growing body of knowledge on the creation, maintenance and disruption of markets by explaining how the imperfect reproduction of existing institutional practices by consumers leads to the emergence and reinforcement of new institutional practices and boundaries, and parallel taste regimes. Previous research has broadly looked at (1) how markets are being transformed under the actions of marketers (e.g., Giesler 2012; Humphreys 2010) and (2) how dissatisfied consumers actively work to influence market dynamics (e.g., Giesler 2008; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013, Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007). In our context, consumers are not actively seeking to change the market. Rather, unintentional changes are brought about by their everyday actions when pursuing and sharing their passion with other consumers. Although consumers’ value-creating practices have been the object of previous inquiries (e.g., Ansari and Philips 2010; Schau et al. 2009), little is known on the effects of those practices on markets.

The context of this study is the online fashion world. We used a multi-method qualitative approach. Our data set is composed of field notes and observations following a 22-month long ethnography of an outfit sharing website, lookbook.nu; interviews with 17 fashion bloggers, designers, buyers, and participants in lookbook.nu; journal articles from major fashion magazines and websites, leading world journals; interviews with industry actors; and data gathered from leading online fashion forums and fashion bloggers.

Institutions are continuously reproduced by institutional actors who, following established but tacit rules and norms, and sharing common cognitive and cultural beliefs, carry out taken-for-granted institutionalized practices. Our use of institutional theory is consistent with structuration theory, where “structures shape people’s practices, but […] people’s practices […] constitute and reproduce structures” (Sewell 1992: 4). We view fields as “co-evolutionary systems,” where the practices of actors influence the dynamics of the field (Zietsma and Lawrence 2010). A change in the institutional practices can, then, disrupt an institution and instigate a reworking of existing relations between actors, meanings and practices (Zilber 2002), and institutional practices and boundaries (Zietsma and Lawrence 2010).

This research uses as a starting point recent socio-technological changes, such as the wider availability of high speed Internet and high end photo cameras, the rise of blogs and forums as spaces of discussion, and the diffusion of the major features associated with social news websites, which provide a context facilitating institutional changes. These socio-technological advances create a schism between older and newer options available to consumers who want to talk about and get informed on the latest fashion trends, which opens up a space for “imaginative and/or deliberative response” (Emirbayer and Mische 1998) and the emergence of new institutional actors (Ansari and Phillips 2010). We argue that these new social sites allow consumers to gather together and exchange on their fashion practices; to adopt, interpret, and imperfectly mimic existing institutional practices; and to gain influence by doing so. These new entrants have the potential to instigate institutional changes (Zilber 2002).

Online, consumers consciously or unconsciously mimic existing institutional practices previously exhibited by other actors in the field. Participating on websites such as lookbook.nu and polyvore.com, they do photo shoots and exchange pictures of their outfits, and...
curate looks by selecting certain brands and products. On their blogs, they advertise their favorite brands and designers by writing about them, and critique fashion shows and collections. In street photography blogs, they select upcoming trends and document them. In other words, they emulate the work of, respectively, fashion stylists and fashion photographers; marketers, designers and retailers; and fashion editors. Consumers, though, do not possess the full array of human and nonhuman resources necessary for the perfect interpretation and reproduction of existing institutional practices. Most of these participants have little to no experience in the field of fashion. Their lack of experience and knowledge in fashion contribute to new interpretations, and hence modification, of existing practices (Zibber 2002). Moreover, consumers also lack the appropriate material resources, such as the financial resources to procure the brands advertised by fashion magazines, or the tools, such as high end cameras and lighting equipment, required to carry out certain practices; this further initiates changes in the way practices are carried out (e.g., Shove and Pantzar 2005).

These modified practices are enacted en masse on a multitude of Internet websites, by tens of thousands of interconnected consumers. The human and nonhuman resources that consumers share and their interactions online allow for the diffusion of the modified practices and associated objects and meanings. Through this, new institutional boundaries, which delimit new roles for this category of actors, such as fashion bloggers, street photographers, and fashion forum participants, emerge. The socially constructed values, beliefs, and material practices of this new class of actors, that is, the institutional logics structuring this subfield (Thornton and Ocasio 2008), are different than the ones that exist within the broader field of fashion. Rather than being dominated by the logics of art and commerce (Scaraboto and Fischer 2013), this subfield also operates under the logic of accessibility, favoring a fashion genre that is wearable and affordable. Ultimately, this leads to the development of new ways to orchestrate objects, doings and meanings, i.e. practices, that ultimately converge in a new, parallel taste regime, or a way to orchestrate “the aesthetics of practice” (Arsel and Bean 2012). As taste is itself a boundary mechanism, this new regime further solidifies the new institutional boundaries.

Our research offers new insights in how market changes by identifying interconnected and passionate consumers as unintentional agents of change who, by wanting to carry out existing institutional practices, end up affecting the institutional dynamics of the market of fashion. We also highlight the role of material changes and materiality in reproducing or disrupting institutions. Finally, we show how new taste regimes emerge.

**National Mythmaking, Foreign and Domestic: A Historical Analysis of the Birth of Italian Fashion**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

This presentation contributes to the session’s goal of contextualizing fashion by looking at the historical development of Italian fashion in the 1950s-1970s period. Specifically, we examine commercial mythmaking activities centered upon the first Italian fashion shows, which were instrumental to the development of distinctly Italian fashion collections which would not take inspiration from French style. Our theoretical point of departure consists in work that has examined how marketers shape the past for competitive purposes inside a nation. Peñaloza’s (2000; 2001) twin analyses of a Western stock show and rodeo conclude that collective events (such as the fashion shows we examine) might serve as collective platforms for an ongoing collective renegotiation of the past in ways that favor the national industry. Thompson and Tian’s (2008) analysis of two US Southern magazines propose that marketers can be conceived as commercial mythmakers that compete for identity value through the ideological shaping of popular memories and counter-memories about the nation’s past. Our goal is to extend such stream of research by investigating the cultural and political processes inherent in commercial mythmaking at the international level, when local historical resources are employed to legitimize the national industry vis-à-vis foreign competition.

Employing theories on nations as imagined communities (Anderson 1992) and nation building as assimilation projects (Gellner 1983), and drawing on recent directions in the sociology of collective memory and commemoration (Conway 2010), in this presentation we employ historical research methods to reconstruct the origin and initial development of Italian fashion. Italy, now a world leader in fashion, emerged in the international scene only after WWII, thanks to the activities of Giovan Battista Giorgini, who organized the first Italian fashion weeks in Florence. Before, Paris was the only center from which all fashions were emanated and the occasional attempts to create alternative epicenters (notably, in the US, during WWII and the German occupation of France) had been short-lived. Notably, Italian fashion was symbolically and materially built on local historical resources and in direct opposition to French fashion. The emergence of Italian fashion is therefore an appropriate empirical context to shed light on the processes involved in commercial mythmaking aiming at building nation brands.

Our research team consists of a consumer culture theorist and a business historian. Building on previous accounts of Italian fashion history, we examined data from the Giorgini Archive of Italian fashion, which contains press clippings (mostly from US and Italian newspapers and magazines), promotional material, letters and pictures about fashion collections, which enabled us to follow the emergence of Italy as a fashion country. Before the 1950s, Italian fashion did not exist. Since the XVIII century, tailors and dressmakers in Turin, Rome, Milan, Naples and elsewhere had been completely dependent on Paris as Italian consumers (aristocracy and the bourgeoisie) demanded to be dressed à la mode de Paris; despite such dependence, French collection would be adapted to local taste since, as sharply noted by a journalist (Bernasconi 1950), some of its extremely decorated details would be considered superfluous in Rome and slightly ridicule in Milan.

Giorgini, a resident buyer of handcrafter leather goods for US department stores, after repeated attempts, convinced 13 Italian dressmakers to present in Florence, in front of a selection of North American buyers and journalists, fashion collections different from those showcased in Paris. The first Italian fashion shows took place in 1951 and only attracted eight buyers and a few journalists, but enjoyed enormous media visibility, paving the way for increased success and attendance from the years that followed. The rules of the game set by Giorgini for participating fashion producers were strict. Firstly, Italian collections could not be inspired by French fashion; additionally, Giorgini suggested presenting “boutique” clothes designed for leisure, sport, and informal occasions, targeting American women. Secondly, promotional activities would leverage on local heritage and appealed to one of the institutional logics of fashion, that of art (Scaraboto and Fischer forthcoming), to create a sense of continuity with the past: “Italian collections translate in lines, cuts, and portability the Renaissance artistic tradition”, 1951’s press notes reported. Taking place in historical palaces, fashion shows and special events would convey the (historically inaccurate) idea of a direct continuity with one era, the Renaissance, which provided a powerful and resonant selling proposition for Italian fashion.
Despite its immediate success, the history of Florentine fashion shows was plagued by strife among fashion houses, which were mostly located in Rome and Milan. Already in 1953, eight Roman “secessionists” provocatively presented their collections in Rome before the Florence shows. Over the years, uncoordinated calendars and domestic rivalry between Roman and Florentine fashion shows resulted in reduced international attendance, until the moment when political interventions forced the two fashion events to merge and coordinate their schedules. Eventually, with the advent of prêt-à-porter, history repeated itself when in 1974 some leading fashion houses left Florence and created a separated event in Milan, which quickly became the new Italian fashion city.

By documenting the emergence of Italy as a fashion country and rivalry among Italian cities to become the country’s fashion capital, our study shows that before national mythmaking can occur, local marketers must be mobilized towards common marketing goals such as projecting internationally a coherent image and supporting national-level marketing events that can act as platforms for export promotion. Local place branding efforts and the sovereignty of market leaders has therefore to be opposed at the level of ideology, public discourse and marketplace practices. Italy, with its many secessions and “civil wars”, show that such processes are often unstable: marketers can and do resist attempts to “unify the country”.

Fashion Consumption by Plus-Sized Consumers: A Socio-Material Perspective

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research on fashion consumption has most often considered how consumers attempt to express themselves through their fashion choices (Murray 2002; Thompson and Haytko 1997). With few exceptions (e.g. Fornäs, Fredriksson, and Johannisson 2011), little attention has been paid by consumer researchers to the materiality of clothes and of the bodies that wear them. Yet, the consumption of fashion cannot be decoupled from its material aspect: the buttons, the belts, the zippers, the seams and the fabric that may come together with a given body to bind at the waist, hang bagnally over the buttocks, or drape elegantly from the shoulders. While the consumption of fashion is a socio-material experience for all consumers, it may be more acutely so for those whose bodies are regarded as deviant from the norms that inform the offerings of mainstream marketers. So-called plus-sized consumers are indisputably within this category (Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). In contrast to the skinny body of fashion models and ideal fashion consumers, the fat body has been consistently considered abject, and inappropriate for fashion (LeBesco 2005). Indeed, most evidence points toward a persistent and pervasive prejudice against fat, in the fashion field and beyond (Gesser-Edelsberg and Endevelt 2011).

Joining the recent material turn in social sciences (e.g. Canniford and Shankar forthcoming; Orlikowski 2009; Schatzki 2010), this study adopts DeLanda’s (2006) assemblage theory to investigate how both the expressive and the material aspects of fashion matter to the consumption practices of consumers who do not fit the ideals of fashion marketers. DeLanda’s perspective puts into focus the following research questions: How do the fashion assemblages plus-sized consumers are enrolled in become destabilized? How do plus-sized consumers attempt to stabilize these fashion assemblages? Since DeLanda’s perspective highlights that assemblages intersect with one another and can be nested within one another, particular attention is paid to how dynamics within other assemblages may serve either to stabilize or destabilize a given plus-size fashion assemblage. These research questions are addressed through a netnography (Kozinets 2010) of Fatshionistas, plus-sized consumers who blog about their fashion consumption experiences. Data on the online interactions of bloggers and their audiences was collected through observing, reading, and archiving selected posts and comments over the course of three years of fieldwork. Selected blogs were thoroughly read and all relevant content posted on these blogs was collected, coded, and interpreted.

Findings suggest that a plus-size fashion assemblage is continually threatened by a range of capacities exerted by the consumer and by other components of the assemblage. One, for example, is material “wear-out.” Since it is difficult to find clothes that fit, the consumer tends to wear and wash them often, leading to break down of fabrics and stitching. Moreover, when seams or stitches are stretched tightly over the body, they are more strained and apt to pop, rip, or tear; such outcomes are doubly destabilizing, in that they render the garment useless and expressively humiliating. The plus-sized consumers own bodily changes too can destabilize fashion assemblages: either weight loss or weight gain can mean that garments no longer fit. Destabilization is further caused by expressive “wear-off.” Clothes that once were expressive of the consumer’s desired look can become outdated as colors or styles evolve. Even without styles changing, an outfit or garment can be expressively downgraded in the consumer’s own eyes through repeated wearing (outfit repetition is usually shunned at in fashion contexts) and also when the reactions of others lead plus-sized consumers to regard their own clothes as less stylish or attractive than they initially thought them to be. At the intersection with other assemblages, a plus-size fashion assemblage is further destabilized by material “lock-out,” i.e. limited or erratic offerings from marketers, which means that garments that are worn out materially or expressively cannot be readily replaced.

To stabilize fashion assemblages, plus-sized consumers can engage in practices that rely on new material and/or expressive elements. One option is to deliberately engage with alternative assemblages, for example sewing clothes that fit the plus-sized body, or foregoing the search for appropriate options from established mainstream fashion marketers. This option, however, means engaging in an alternative fashion system, not necessarily one with which the consumer most desires to be integrated. Another option is for consumers to attempt to lose weight so as to fit into a greater range of available clothing options. This is eschewed by the Fatshionistas studied, but advocated by other expressive elements within the mainstream market assemblage. A third practice is to introduce new expressive elements (e.g. posting photos of carefully produced plus-size fashion outfits) into intersecting assemblages so as to encourage mainstream marketers to create a wider range of offerings that would make the plus-size fashion assemblage stable (see Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). Plus-sized consumers may also work to destabilize intersecting assemblages. By trying on and wearing clothes that were not “meant for them,” for example, they force mainstream fashion assemblages to change. These insights have implications for understanding fashion consumption and other consumption contexts where the materiality of bodies and of products is of paramount importance.
Cristel Antonia Russell, American University Washington, DC

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**Paper #2: Do You Know What I Know? : Negotiating The “Secret” Brand Backstory**
Vanisha Narsey, University of Auckland, New Zealand*
Cristel Russell, American University, USA

Ashlee Humphreys, Northwestern University, USA*
Ashley Heyer, Northwestern University, USA

**SESSION OVERVIEW**
This session focuses on how consumers assess the credibility, authenticity, and truth of information. We take a broad approach to the notion of information, including information received through electronic word of mouth from other consumers and experts in the field (paper 1), information revealed about the making of a brand, its “backstory” (paper 2), and information communicated by companies, via their corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts (paper 3). Collectively, the papers show that, regardless of the source of information, consumers must assess the credibility of the sender (the Who), and the information presented (the What) and negotiate the meaning of the message and its implications for their relationships with the brand, company, or consumption practice (the How and Why?). Although they focus on different contexts of consumption (food, television, and green CSR claims), the papers reveal strikingly similar distinctions about the processes that affect who, what and how consumers individually and collectively believe and about the reasons they chose to believe or not. In particular, all three papers reveal a distinction between insiders and outsiders, between those in the front stage and those in the back stage: who reveals? who learns? who conceals?

Because these negotiations of meaning often involve a communal process, all three papers take into account the community of other consumers. We recognize that the reception of information about a brand or practice is often received in a public setting, whether it be an online platform (paper 1), an exhibit (paper 2), or a community of peers (paper 3). As such, consumers’ understanding of the information is also shaped by others’ responses to and understanding of the information. For this reason, sociocultural factors emerge as important moderators of the responses, as documented and with social class in paper 3.

The papers in the sessions all follow the Consumer Culture Theory tradition. To tackle the complexity of this meaning-making process, the researchers employ depth interviews and netnography to gather rich consumer narratives and enable a thorough understanding of the “how” consumer choose to believe (or not) the information they receive.

We would love to have Sidney Levy discuss the intersections between these three papers. Drawing from his own research on consumers’ gullibility, he will offer his own insights regarding what and why consumers choose to believe.

**“Tell Me Again How I Need ‘Healthy’ Whole Grains?!”: Collective Assessment of Online Credibility and Negotiation of Truth in Difficult Decision-Making Processes**

The constantly growing amount of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has been significantly impacting the way consumers make purchase decisions. We define eWOM as online consumer-generated content related to consumption experiences presented in various formats, including text, image, video, audio, and scale rating, on multiple platforms, including forums, review sites, social networks, blogs, microblogs, bookmarking sites, and media sharing sites. Word of mouth is the primary source for purchase referral for food and beverage brands with as many as 46% of consumers collecting information via online recommendations about food and beverages in order to make purchase decisions (Affinitive, 2012).

In this paper, we are interested in examining how consumers use online textual recommendations to inform their choice of a dietary plan or lifestyle. Often, such a choice represents a difficult decision because it involves choosing between several similarly attractive options, i.e., compromise alternatives (Simonson, 1989).

The consumers then tend to seek support online and bond with like-minded individuals, as was already demonstrated in the work about online communities (Chalmers Thomas, Price, and Schau, forthcoming; Kozinets, 1999; Leimeister, Ebner, and KrcaMar, 2005).

It is plausible that consumers rely on different cues to assess the credibility of information they are presented with. A long history of research finds that credibility is a multifaceted concept with two primary dimensions, expertise and trustworthiness, and secondary factors such as source attractiveness, professionalism, homophily, prior knowledge, and fairness (Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz, 1969; Moore and Rodgers, 2005). While some research has shown that eWOM may have higher credibility and relevance to customers than marketer-created online sources of information, other researchers warn that Internet users are increasingly indulging in content verification behaviors and are thus becoming more vigilant (Flanagin and Metzger, 2000). Various models have been used in the past decade to describe online credibility assessment (see Metzger, 2007 for a review). For instance, Cheung, Luo, Sia, and Cheng (2009) found that confirmation with eWOM receiver’s prior beliefs can be a strong informative cue to credibility. Similarly, Metzger, Flanagin, and Medders (2010) demonstrated various collective techniques for credibility assessment, including social information pooling and social confirmation of personal opinion. Finally, Mackiewicz (2010) showed how credibility can be constructed through interaction with readers.

We aim to investigate a crucial assumption in the word of mouth theory—that consumers’ messages carry far higher credibility and trust than traditional media—and answer the following research questions: 1) How does a community of consumers assess other consumers’ online credibility? 2) Which cues to online credibility (e.g., source attractiveness, expertise, homophily, etc.) does a community rely on when presented with difficult decisions? 3) How does a community of consumers approach contradicting information (before and after making a difficult decision)? 4) How do consumers deal with the perception of being different and/or deviant from the norm?
We use a longitudinal approach to investigate horizontal credibility assessment practices (on a community vs. personal level) in several online communities centered around difficult decision-making processes with salient long-term consequences: the choice of a gluten-free lifestyle. While more and more consumers are being diagnosed with various food insensitivities and illnesses such as Celiac, the choice to avoid eating grains is still considered to be quite radical. Interestingly, it is also against the common “food guide pyramids”, i.e. guides showing the recommended intake for each food group, which are published and distributed by government institutions and health officials. We conceptualize these official discourses of governments and other administrative bodies about optimal food choices and intake as the front stage (Goffman, 1959), with consumers’ lived experiences and perceptions of health make up the back stage. These experiences consequently become the focal topic of discussion and negotiation in various online platforms, such as blogs, online forums, and social networks.

Through a netnographic investigation (Kozinets, 2010), we demonstrate that the credibility assessment process is specific to the online context and can include a negotiation of truth among community members. We also observe that some cues to online credibility investigated in extant literature do not seem to carry as much weight as homophily and prior knowledge in such an assessment process. Consider Susan’s comment on one registered dietitian’s blog post that “many healthy foods are eliminated or significantly decreased including whole grains and fruits. Many nutrients and variety is also limited [from this kind of lifestyle]”: “I haven’t eaten wheat for almost 17 years. I’m at a normal weight for my height, rarely get sick, look 10 years younger than I really am, and have plenty of energy. Tell me again why eating wheat is necessary and how “unrealistic and unhealthy” this diet is?” Kate responded to the same claim with the following statement: “124 pounds down after eliminating grains, high sugar fruits and starchy (high carb) veggies. Tell me again how I need ‘healthy whole grains’?” Similar reactions were observed across other online platforms, such as social networks, where consumers tried to defend their lifestyle against mainstream recommendations. For instance, consider Andrew’s reaction to one consumer’s negative Facebook comment: “Why comment here if you don’t buy into the plan. So negative and annoying.” We observe how through their collective assessments and negotiations, the consumers reveal new information and bring forward their “truth” to front stage, and in some cases, they even drive the change of official discourse.

Our findings expand the prior work on eWOM which mostly revolved around single-purchase contexts for medium-involvement goods and services, such as books, digital cameras, and theatres. By demonstrating that a lifestyle community selectively adopts eWOM and collectively assesses credibility to negotiate the truth about the optimal eating habits with other consumers, as well as authoritative sources of information, such as fitness experts, medical doctors and dietitians, we also contribute to prior work on online communities, credibility, and difficult decision-making.

Do You Know What I Know? : Negotiating The “Secret” Brand Backstory

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Whilst many brands choose to remain tight-lipped on the magic behind their product, consumers sometimes have the opportunity to go “behind-the-scenes” or into the “backstage” where they can access the backstory or “making of” a brand. Bonus feature DVDs in the case of media brands, experiential activities such as special tours or museum exhibits (Daily Mail 2011) in the case of traditional brands offer information about the brand biography (Avery, Paharia, Keinan, and Schor 2010), the history of the brand, hence revealing many of the brand’s secrets. Although understood as “essential to understanding aspects of its consumption” (Diamond et al. 2009, 123) the brand backstory experience itself and its contribution to consumers’ experience of the brand has not yet been deeply investigated. Of particular interest within this research is how consumers individually and communally negotiate and maintain the secretive nature of the brand backstory.

Goffman’s (1959) distinctions between the front and back regions and their functions in supporting the social performance provide a useful base to explore this phenomenon. Whereas the “front” is a social place in which “hosting” occurs, the “back” is a space where preparation for the construction of the performance occurs (e.g. kitchens, boiler rooms) (Goffman, 1959). The performance gains credence by limiting access to the backstage because revealing too much information may “discredit the performance out front” (MacCannell, 1973, 591). The backstage of a brand thus reveals its “inner workings” (MacCannell, 1973, 595), promises to be authentic (Gammon and Fear, 2006), and allows consumers access to esoteric information to which they would not otherwise be privy. Yet, we still know little about how consumers negotiate the meaning of the brand backstory and, in turn, how the revelation of brand secrets, through the backstage, affects their relationships with the brand. The wealth of literature on secrets agrees that the boundaries created by secrets regulate and manage social relationships by creating dichotomies (insiders vs. outsiders, revealers vs. concealers, revealers vs. learners etc.) (Bok, 1982; Derlega and Chaiken, 1977; Vermeir and Margócsy, 2010, Vrij et al., 2002). How, then, might consumers respond to the brand backstory, where they can access staged “secrets” about the brand?

To answer this question, this research relies on the discourses surrounding Outrageous Fortune: The Exhibition. This 2010 museum exhibition in Auckland, New Zealand, delved into the “behind-the-scenes” of the television series by featuring the inspirations that sparked the writers and brainstorming notes for each episode, a display of costumes and props, displays that psychiatrically dissected the personalities of the main characters, and most notably an erected stage set from the show that visitors were able to walk through and interact with. To obtain deep insights about consumers’ experiences of the brand backstory and their negotiation of the “secret”, we conducted 24 phenomenological in-depth interviews with visitors of the six-month long exhibition. Participants shared their motivations and expectations for visiting the exhibit, their general experiences of it, and their reactions to each element as well as their thoughts, feelings and actions concerning the brand after visiting the exhibit.

Initial findings reveal the process of negotiating the “secret” backstage. Some visitors of the exhibition actively “worked” to gather additional information (active agents) whereas others perused the exhibition casually gaining insights about the backstory (voyeurs). In negotiating the “secretness” of the backstage, voyeurs do not acknowledge the constructed nature of the backstory, accepting what is presented as encompassing the entire backstory of the brand. On the other hand, active agents recognize that the exhibition backstory does not reveal all, that there are other secrets beyond what is presented; they acknowledge the commercial implications, for the producers of the exhibition, of revealing “secrets”. And, whereas all visitors understand that the creators of the backstory hold control of the “secrets,” they differ in their willingness to accept the backstage as legitimate. This is reflected in how much they, themselves, maintain the aura of secrecy, by relinquishing and revealing information provided in the backstory to others. Voyeurs maintain the confidentiality and respect for the disclosure provided to them in the secret by
either letting the information ruminate within them or disclosing to certain individuals close to them such as family members as a way to process the revelations. Active agents on the other hand are more likely to broadly disclose pieces of information to others (such as online forum members) as a way in which to demonstrate their access as an “insider” and to associate themselves with a degree of status in granting others access to the “secret”. Secrecy was maintained by concealing parts of the information gained or by emphasizing the extraordinary value of the “secret”. Common to both active agents and voyeurs however, was a desire to maintain the social boundary distinctions created by the secret, thus preserving the aura of secrecy and enhancing their personal relationship with the brand.

This research contributes to the body of research on the characteristics and nature of revealing personal secrets to others (Caughlin et al. 2012; Vrij et al., 2002), by identifying the further complexities of sharing revealed secrets, not owned by the discloser.

**What Does Green Mean?: Managing Divergent Meanings of Corporate Social Responsibility for Different Market Segments**

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Promoting products and companies as both socially and environmentally sustainable is a core component of many contemporary marketing strategies and increasingly the concern of many consumers. A recent McKinsey study shows that although 87 percent of consumers worry about the environmental consequences of their purchases, only 33 percent intend to buy green products (Bonini and Oppenheim 2008). Marketers, it seems, are not creating CSR messages that drive most consumers to change patterns of behavior. As companies move from being evaluated not only on functional and emotional levels, but on social values as well, the question of consumer assessment of these values arises. How do consumers make meaning of CSR and what, if any, differences exist between consumers with different economic and cultural resources? How should managers reframe CSR to be more resonant with many consumer values and meanings?

In this paper, we aim to study how CSR claims exist and are interpreted within a socio-cultural system. Although previous studies have been valuable in revealing the psychological process of product and company evaluation and have begun to elucidate some of the social dynamics surrounding CSR, we still know little about the broader social and cultural context within which consumers make these value-laden evaluations. For this reason, we adopt an approach that assesses consumer judgments within a cultural framework. As many scholars have argued, brand meaning arises from the complex interplay of cultural myths and discourses with individual goals, values, and practices (Diamond et al. 2009; Giesler 2012; Holt 2004; Schau et al. 2009; Thompson, Rindflieisch, and Arsel 2006). Adopting this socio-cultural branding approach yields several benefits. First, we do not yet know how CSR brand meanings arise nor how they can be differentially interpreted by consumer segments that have different allocations of economic and cultural resources. Second, it is important to note that consumers often form judgments without deliberate reasoning (Fitzsimons et al. 2002). When it comes to issues of corporate social responsibility, knowledge is complex and ambiguous. For this reason, “gut feelings”, cultural myths of contamination, and halo effects from other companies in the industry easily take hold and can affect consumer judgments. It is therefore critical to examine the cultural and social context surrounding these judgments because they are the resources from which consumers draw when deciding issues of corporate social responsibility.

Through in-depth interviews with 34 informants and a critical discourse analysis, we find that consumers draw from cultural discourses of authenticity, bureaucracy, and efficiency, and filter them through their own cultural lens, as it is shaped by personal and class-based experience. When assessing the environmental and social responsibility of companies, consumers drew from three cultural discourses—authenticity, big business, and efficiency. Each discourse, we observe, is an attempt to reconcile a particular anxiety related to modernity, an attempt to overcome the commercial and functional aspects of marketplace relationships. The authentic imperative draws from modern anxieties about distance of industrial processes from nature. The liability of bureaucracy draws from fears of depersonalization and instrumental behavior of large organizations articulated by Weber (1922/1978), Whythe (1956), Foucault (1977) and others. The discourse of efficiency draws from cultural concerns of pollution, contamination, and disorder (Douglas 1966). These discourses form the network of signifiers within which CSR is debated and discussed. As our informants illustrate, these three issues are inextricably intertwined within a particular logic.

Yet we also show that bureaucracy, authenticity, and efficiency are not interpreted as one-dimensional concepts. Each threat to corporate social responsibility—authenticity, bureaucracy, and efficiency—is seen through the lens of these two class-based perspectives. We find that consumers differ markedly in their interpretation and application of these discourses according to social class. Working class consumers tend to focus on the “front stage”, scrutinizing contexts of consumption. Further, they tend draw from the domestic order of worth that values family and local community. Professional class consumers, on the other hand, focus on the “backstage”, scrutinizing production and using the civic and marketplace orders of worth. From these findings, we provide recommendations for public policy makers and CSR-inclined companies for managing a consumer-centric CSR portfolio that is resonant with consumer meanings and values.
The evolution of consumer competence from consumerism to sustainability

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Does a shift in consumer culture from consumerism to sustainability entail a change in consumers’ ‘toolbox of competence’? This is the question we hope to answer.

The study of consumerism has given rise to the identification of various types of challenges: environmental, social and cultural (Gabriel and Lang 2008). A positive connection between an accumulation of possessions and an increase in personal happiness has been questioned (Shankar, Whittaker and Fitchett 2006). An increase in purchasing and discarding of short-lived or disposable items has caused environmental problems such as depletion of resources and the establishment of a throwaway society (McCollough 2009). Homo consumericus is a fragmented turboconsumer who experiences a paradoxical happiness; on the one hand he is informed and free to choose, on the other hand his lifestyle and pleasures are dependent on the commercial system (Lipovetsky 2006).

There is a lively debate about the resolution of these environmental and social problems, which focuses on the need for a cultural evolution from the paradigm of consumerism to the one of sustainability (Assadourian 2010; Kilbourne, McDonagh and Prothero 1997). This systemic change requires the effort and participation of all the stakeholders of society. Institutions play a central role in redirecting cultural norms towards sustainability (Vare and Scott 2007), companies spread sustainability values through the development of environmentally friendly offers (Hartmann and Apaolaza Ibáñez 2007) and what about consumers? To conduct a more sustainable lifestyle, is a consumer competence required that is different from the one supporting consumerist consumption practices?

Consumer competence has been mainly defined in terms of the consumer capacity to acquire and comprehend marketplace information. A competent consumer is assumed “to be informed about products and to be familiar with how markets function” (Berg 2007, 418). The constructs of consumer sophistication (Titus and Bradford 1996), consumer expertise (Alba and Hutchinson 1987) and consumer savvy (Nancarrow, Tinson and Brace 2011) define consumer competence in terms of the skills deployed to best satisfy consumers’ needs in a specific shopping situation. A savvy consumer is an informed and active agent who possesses technological sophistication, interpersonal network competency, online network competency and marketing/advertising literacy to consume (Macdonald and Uncles 2007). This consumer competence represents an ability to acquire, thus, a capacity to have. The expertise to judge and obtain what it is the best to have is the main cause of consumer empowerment.

Sustainability implies a restraint in the use of resources, consequently a change and a reduction in the way of consuming. The findings of the analysis of in-depth interviews conducted with British consumers, who actively engage in a more sustainable lifestyle in their everyday lives and in being members of a local environmental organization, show a more complex consumer competence. To contain the amount of waste and to limit the environmental impact, consumers re-appropriate prosumeristic skills of the past. They engage in practices such as cooking from scratch, mending, knitting, gardening, repairing furniture and insulating their houses. This results in a competence of doing more than a competence of having. The competence of creating acquires more value than the ownership.
of goods, specifically if they are not unique and are purchasable in the marketplace. The recognition deriving from the possession of competence and the ability to utilize it in practice become more important than the status obtained from the display of branded possessions. In the paradigm of consumerism, products and services have a ‘linking value’ (Cova 1997), in the sustainability paradigm it is the competence that is endowed with linking value more than the products and services.

**Competent Cooking? Applying practice theory in the kitchen**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Theories of practice have recently become popular in consumer research (Boulaire and Cova forthcoming, Echeverri and Skålén 2011, Halkier and al. 2011, Warde 2005, Watson and Shove 2008). They have been used as a way to shift emphasis away from the consuming subject to embrace more fully the ways in which collective/shared understandings of consumption, as well as the material stuff of consumption, shape the way in which that consumption proceeds (Shove and Pantzar 2005; Southerton 2006). They have also been used as a way to explore the more macro shaping of consumption through the operation of marketplace discourses (Halkier and al. 2011, Warde 2005). We follow a similar approach in this paper, but focus on the concept of ‘competency’ to orchestrate our contribution. Consumer research literature sees competences mainly as series of skills and knowledges surrounding the practice of shopping (Berg 2007) and dealing with the heterogeneous sets of information available in the marketplace (Gronhøj 2007). To our knowledge the concept of competency has been mainly analysed in relation to the shopping decision making process, and hence little has been said about consumer’s competences in relation to other practices of consumption.

Our context is the ‘world of cooking’ to include analysis of cooking practices, cooking objects and cooking discourses. Data includes a mealtime ethnography of 20 British households involving written and photographic observations of meal preparation and consumption, and interviews with householders. This data is supplemented by an examination of cooking discourses in contemporary British cookbooks. This multi data approach was designed in response to the complex interweaving of culturally significant behaviours” (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). During fieldwork, consumer competence was reconstructed through the different data sets. In analysing this data we have three key contributions to the theorising of competency as it relates to consumption. First we find that levels of engagement and ends/projects are central in shaping our view of what counts as competency. Here we note for example the very large disjuncture between projects of holding a dinner party and the more mundane everyday project of feeding the family. In each of these examples what it means to be a competent cook draws on a series of very different knowledges and skills sets about properties of foodstuffs, about where to access foodstuffs, about how to prepare food and how to correctly present it (see also Halkier and Jensen 2011, Truninger, 2011). Second, we observe the distributed nature of competence between user and objects i.e. kitchen equipment, cookbooks and ingredients (see Watson and Shove 2008, in the case of DIY). We find that there has been a distinctive shift here from competencies associated with food preparation and cooking towards those associated with shopping for, and selection of, ingredients (see also Arsel and Bean, forthcoming). We also argue that the recent emphasis on ingredients and kitchen gadgets is an example of shifting competencies from the practitioner to the objects of the project themselves and as such has involved a de-skilling of cooking (see also Cappellini and Parsons forthcoming). Finally we observe the thoroughly performative nature of competence and the centrality of ‘learning through doing’ in both the supermarket and the kitchen (see also Beckett 2012).

**Leaning to be competent in « liquid modernity »: the case of working poor**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Bauman (2006) characterizes “liquid modernity” by precariousness and insecurity, due to the decrease of traditional social protections and the rise of consumption. This uncertain living environment has created a need for constant apprenticeship, as competences lose value before being fully integrated by people. Therefore, competences are not only a way to survive in the society, but also a tool for the competent ones to impose domination. But then, what does happen for the most disadvantaged consumers, such as poor people? The absence of economic resources generally keeps them away from the “normal society” (Bauman 2003). Unable of showing they belong to consumer society, they are defined as “defective” consumers. But can apparently deprived people engage specific resources and develop competences? And if they do, what are these competences created for?

To explore these issues, we focus on consumption practices and discourses of « working poor » in France. A “working poor” is defined as a person working but living in a poor home” (INSEE 2009). Experiencing social downgrading and/or impoverishment, there are at the heart of this “liquid” modernity. As for the methodology, we have undertaken 12 long interviews (McCracken 1988) analyzed under hermeneutic approach (Thompson and al. 1994), and completed by participative observation (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). Our analysis highlights two levels of competences developed by these consumers: a “consumptive” level and a “productive” level.

First, working poor engage in competences as a way to control their consumption. Defined as a familiarity with the way the market works (Berg 2007), competences permit them to navigate in the consumption world. It implies managing strictly their budget by several ways, avoiding temptation or dangerous tools of consumption such as credit, or getting knowledge on the cheapest products. Second, they engage in competences as a way to access to more consumption. In recycling iron scrap, restoring armchairs or offering massage, they develop competences they can transfer into money. Interestingly, this money is converted only in pleasurable consumption (clothes, leisure), they don’t allow themselves otherwise.

Results address several theoretical discussions. First, it deals with the competences literature by showing that beyond the « consumer » (Cova and Cova 2012) collaborating to the production system, these consumers create their own production system. Second, it establishes a new social stratification, much more based on competences than consumer goods. The “competent” group is associated to the former “working class” who is selling its work (Blasius and Friedrichs 2003). Third, it brings new prospects on the disadvantaged consumer, who beyond the culture of poverty (Hill 2002) is able to engage resources. He does it by compensating a lack of economic resources with competences associated in the bourdieusian
literature (1979) to cultural capital. By these competences, they go beyond survival by recovering self-realization.

Bauman (2006) describes liquid modernity as a constant tension between a desire for security and a desire for freedom. In our results, the “consumptive” level of competences is a way to get security by controlling consumption, while the “productive” level of competences is developed to get more freedom in consumption. This reverses the traditional situation described about consumption, in which consumers use in general production (such as work) to get security and then feel free on the market thanks to consumption.
Variety: A Solution to All Problems?
Anne Klesse, Tilburg University, The Netherlands*
Aparna Labroo, University of Toronto, Canada

Paper #1: Dubious Means: Why Fast Thinking Increases Variety-Seeking During Goal Pursuit
Aparna Labroo, University of Toronto, Canada*
Yifan Dai, University of Toronto, Canada

Paper #2: Do Weight Watchers Want More Options? How Activating Self-Regulatory Concerns Triggers the Need for Variety
Anne Klesse, Tilburg University, The Netherlands*
Caroline Goukens, Maastricht University, The Netherlands
Kelly Geyskens, Maastricht University, The Netherlands
Ko de Ruyter, Maastricht University, The Netherlands

Paper #3: The Impact of Usage Frequency of Lifestyle Branding
Jingjing Ma, Kellogg School of Management, United States*
Alexander Chernev, Kellogg School of Management, United States

Paper #4: Is Variety the Spice of Love?
Jordan Etkin, Duke University, United States*

SESSION OVERVIEW
During the last decade the Western world witnessed an explosion of choice in nearly every product category enabling us to choose between various different products. On top of that, products frequently come with a variety of different functions encouraging us to use them across different usage situations. In addition, an abundance of leisure activities, travel destinations and dining options stimulate us to engage in different activities rather than sticking to our preferred options. Although, this polarization of variety aligns with individuals’ tendency to switch away from products previously consumed or activities performed for the sake of variety (Ratner, Kahn & Kahne- man, 1999), it also poses the challenge to balance diversification and routine.

This session intends to present four papers that provide novel insights on factors (i.e., fast-thinking and dieting) that foster diversification as well as intriguing consequences (i.e., willingness to pay and pro-relationship commitment) of variety seeking. In the first paper, Labroo and Dai show that fast thinking increases uncertainty regarding which means is most appropriate to accomplish a certain goal (e.g., becoming healthier) and, hence, stimulates individuals to diversify the means they choose to fulfill their goal. In the second paper, Klesse, Goukens, Geyskens and de Ruyter demonstrate that activating self-regulatory concerns triggers variety seeking. Specifically, the findings highlight that dieters seek more variety than non-dieters and, more importantly, that also non-dieters diversify their choices when self-regulatory concerns are activated.

The third paper by Ma and Chernev explains that companies encourage consumers to use products across a variety of usage situations to increase willingness to pay. However, the findings demonstrate that this strategy is only effective for functional brands but detrimental for lifestyle brands: for such brands decreasing usage frequency increases willingness to pay. Finally, Etkin explores how the variety of activities couples perform together influences their pro-relationship motivation depending on the stage that the relationship is in: in the early stage couples are motivated by varied activities but in later stages they are motivated by similar activities.

Since the papers focus on diverse contexts (i.e., goal pursuit, dieting, product usage and romantic relationships), this session is likely to draw attention from a diverse audience. We believe it fits well to the conference’s topic: The polarization of variety is a prominent development in the last decade and forces consumers to balance routine versus diversification. Concentrating on relevant issues such as fast-thinking, losing weight or maintaining a good relationship, this session reveals novel factors which induce variety seeking and highlights situations in which diversification is beneficial. In doing so, this session generates knowledge that helps optimize the balancing act individuals encounter frequently.

Dubious Means: Why Fast Thinking Increases Variety-Seeking During Goal Pursuit

EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Fast thinking (speed at which thoughts come to mind) is known to impact several behavioral outcomes. For example, fast thinking increases elation, evokes positive feelings (Pronin, Jacobs & Wegner, 2008), and increases positivity of responses and confidence (Pronin & Wegner, 2006). These effects of fast thinking are similar to highs induced by drugs (Carey & Mandel, 1968), near death experiences (Noyes & Kletti, 1976), exercise (Hansen, Stevens, & Coast, 2001), fast-tempo music (Thompson, Schellenberg, & Husain, 2001), or brainstorming (Nijstad & Stroebe, 2006). However, during goal pursuit, people have to choose among several means with which to pursue the goal (Gable & Harmon-Jones, 2008) and focus on the most effective means available (Labroo & Kim, 2009). Although fast thinking is known to increase positive affect and confidence in a single outcome, when a person has to choose one means from many possible choices, fast thinking might make all the outcomes look very positive. A result is that while on its own, each means is great and a person will have high confidence in its efficacy, when narrowing choice the person will find it difficult to trade-off options which will increase uncertainty regarding which means is best and increase variety seeking among means that could fulfill the person’s goals.

Two experiments tested this proposition. In study 1 (N = 92), we measured chronic differences among people in tendency to engage in health versus indulgence goals, we manipulated thinking speed using a manipulation by Pronin et al. 2008 in which participants are exposed to several slides either at a fast or slow pace, and then we measured the range of indulgent options participants then chose. Participants allocated 100 points between 5 chocolate options as indicating strength of preference for each option. A variety-in-choice index was created by subtracting 20 from the score each participant assigned to each chocolate and squaring the difference and summing up the score. Thus, a lower score indicated more variety-in-choice, while a higher score indicated more focused preference toward fewer chocolates. A regression run with thinking speed, mean centered goal tendency and their interaction on this index revealed a main effect of thinking speed, b = -258.08, SE = 151.92, t = -1.70, p = .09, showing faster thinking led to more variety in choice. This main effect was qualified by a significant interaction, b = -188.03, SE = 92.13, t = -2.04, p = .04. Spotlight analysis revealed that among indulgent participants were significantly more likely to show variety-in-choice of chocolates (M = 790.04) when they were in the fast rather than slow thinking condition (M = 2755.51), t(89) = 2.09, p < .05. Among health oriented people, the reverse was true and fast thinkers showed less variety-in-choice of chocolates (M = 2006.81) compared to slow
thinkers (M = 534.89), t(89) = 2.00, p < .05. Mediation showed that our thinking-speed manipulation impacted the extent to which participants reported their mind as racing, and the effect of thinking-speed and goal type on choice variety was mediated by extent of mind racing.

In study 2 (N = 78), we primed health versus indulgence goals (Fishbach & Labroo, 2007), manipulated thinking speed (Pronin et al., 2008), and then measured choice of healthy options, to ensure our effects are not limited only to indulgences. Participants choose five snacks to consume at that moment. The options included red pepper slices, broccoli florets, cherry tomato, baby carrot, and celery cuts and they could pick five pieces of one type of vegetable or one of each vegetable, or any other combination. They also indicated how certain they were that their choice was among the best means to become healthy. We created a variety-in-choice index. A 2 (thinking-speed) x 2 (goal-type) ANOVA revealed only a predicted two-way interaction between thinking-speed and goal-type, F(1, 72) = 4.49, p < .04. Health-primed participants showed more variety-in-choice of healthy foods when their thinking was fast (M = 4.80) rather than slow (M = 6.26), t(72) = 1.70, p < .05. Indulgent participants showed variety-in-choice when their thinking was fast (M = 6.72) than slow (M = 3.76), t(72) = 2.18, p < .05. While fast thinking boosted positive mood, it also increased uncertainty about which means might best serve the accessible goal, and this uncertainty regarding which means might be most effective increased variety in the kinds of goal-relevant means participants chose.

In sum, across two experiments we showed that fast thinking can increase uncertainty about efficacy of means used for goal pursuit, which increases the variety in the kinds of means people choose to fulfill chronic or situation-cued goals. Variety in choices was observed only for means that could serve an accessible goal. When the choice conflicted with or did not serve the accessible goal, people narrowed choice, suggesting they may instead have chosen their favorite. This latter finding, that fast-thinking increased choice of favorites when choices did not serve an accessible goal is compatible with recent findings showing that fast thinking increases choice of affective options (Chandler & Pronin, 2012). It is notable, however, that uncertainty and not positive mood increased choice variety. In a follow-up study, time pressure did not show similar effects – time pressure only reduced time people took to make a choice, it did not impact variety seeking among means to fulfill a goal. These findings are important for several reasons. They are among the first to show that sometimes fast thinking can increase choice uncertainty rather than certainty. An additional contribution of this paper is that we show for a first time how fast thinking can impact goal pursuit and choice of means by increasing choice uncertainty. (Words 936)

Do Weight Watchers Want More Options?
How Activating Self-Regulatory Concerns Triggers the Need for Variety

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In daily life food variety has become omnipresent. When dining out or grocery shopping consumers can select between a variety of different dishes and products. On the upside, these strategies correspond with individuals’ preference for variety in food consumption (Kahn & Ratner, 2005) and provide them with higher consumption utility (Kahn & Wansink, 2004). On the downside, food variety fosters increased consumption (Rolls et al., 1981). Parallel to this trend, weight watching has become a recurring theme in present-day life. When reading magazines or watching TV, one is bombarded with information on dieting programs, creating the impression that watching one’s weight is the status quo. Considering these recent developments in combination, the question that presents itself is whether weight concerns, in general, and restricting one’s food intake, in particular, could influence individuals’ need for variety: Would individuals who restrict their food intake seek more or less variety than individuals free from self-regulatory concerns?

When individuals are concerned about their weight, they restrict their food intake and adhere to self-imposed demands instead of listening to physiologically determined satiety boundaries (Herman & Polivy, 1984). This brings about stronger hedonic responses to highly tempting food (Hofmann et. al, van Koningsbruggen, Stroebe, Ramanathan, & Aarts, 2010). In fact, when individuals restrict their food intake, they constantly ruminate about food and evaluate food stimuli in terms of pleasure that can be derived from eating. Accordingly, restricting one’s food intake provokes a struggle between adhering to self-imposed demands and the desire to maximize pleasure from eating. Consuming the same kind of food easily results in habituation and decreases enjoyment of that particular food (Epstein et al., 2009) while eating a variety of different food is expected to bring about higher anticipated levels of consumption utility (Kahn & Wansink, 2004).

Taking these findings together, we predict that restricting one’s food intake potentially increases variety seeking since it provides a means to compensate for the decreased pleasure that comes with adhering to these self-imposed demands. Specifically, we argue, first, that dieters seek more variety than non-dieters and, second, that also non-dieters engage in higher variety seeking if self-regulatory concerns are activated. In study 1 we utilized a 2 (self-regulatory concerns vs. no self-regulatory concerns) x 2 (dieter vs. non-dieter) between-subject design. Participants took part in two seemingly unrelated studies. The first part served to activate self-regulatory concerns by means of mental budgeting. In line with Krishnamurthy and Prokopiec (2009) participants in the treatment condition read that people try to limit their snack consumption to 2.13 snacks a day and were asked to type in the number of snacks they would allow themselves. Subsequently, all participants took part in a taste test and were randomly assigned to either taste a piece of chocolate cake or waffle. At the end participants could choose another piece of waffle or cake as a reward. We measured variety seeking as switching away from the food item just eaten. A direct logistic regression with self-regulatory concern and dieting status as well as the interaction effect on the likelihood to seek variety (no vs. yes) revealed dieting status (p < .05, beta = 1.30) and mental budget as significant positive predictor (p < .05, beta = .79). Dieters as well as non-dieters with a mental budget were more likely to choose a different snack than non-dieters or participants without a mental budget. The interaction effect is insignificant (beta = -.71). This study provides initial evidence that self-regulatory concerns increase variety seeking.

In study 2 we exclusively focused on non-dieters. Again, we activated self-regulatory concerns by means of asking half of the participants to generate a mental budget of how many snacks they want to allow themselves. Afterward, all participants were allowed to customize their own chocolate bar choosing any six toppings out of a six-item choice set (e.g., cappuccino chocolate chips, or nougat piece). The results show that participants who imposed a mental budget chose significantly more different toppings (Msub = 3.52, SD
they could wear only twice a month as opposed to every day). In contrast, limiting the usage frequency of the lifestyle brand increases consumers' valuation (e.g., consumers were willing to pay more for Victoria’s Secret sleepwear that they could wear only twice a month as opposed to every day).

To support our proposition that the impact of varying product usage on product valuation is a function of the self-expressive nature of the underlying brands rather than other differences associated with different brands, **study 2** shows that positioning the same brand as functional vs. lifestyle can also switch the impact of usage on product value. Specifically, we show that when the positioning of a T-shirt brand centers on its comfortableness, limiting the usage of this brand to only once a week as opposed to every day significantly decreases consumers’ willingness to pay for this brand. In contrast, when the positioning of this T-shirt brand centers on its self-designed features, limiting the usage of this brand to only once a week as opposed to every day significantly increases consumers’ willingness to pay for this brand. This supports the proposition that the impact of usage on product depends on self-expressiveness of the brand.

**Study 3 and 4** further examine the role of self-expression when usage is limited by comparing its effect on product valuation across consumers with high and low self-expressive needs. These experiments build on the notion that if the impact of usage on product value depends on the self-expressiveness of the brand, this effect should be stronger for individuals with a high need to self-express rather than a low need to self-express. In this context, **study 3** shows that consumers with a chronically high self-expressive need, rather than a low self-expressive need, exhibit increased valuation of their favorite items from their most self-relevant brands when usage is limited as opposed to unlimited. Following this line of reasoning, **study 4** shows that increasing consumers’ need for self-expression increases their willingness to pay for lifestyle brands and that this effect is more pronounced when usage frequency is limited. The findings from these four experiments provide convergent evidence that limiting usage frequency can have a differential impact on lifestyle versus functional brands, decreasing valuation of functional brands while increasing valuation of lifestyle brands. (Words 757)

**Is Variety the Spice of Love?**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Maintaining good romantic relationships is an integral part of life. Indeed, prior work finds satisfying marital relationships are crucial for physical and psychological health (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). What, then, makes a romantic relationship work? In this research we consider how the similarity, or variety, of joint-activities that couples perform together might impact relationship success. Relationship partners typically engage in numerous joint-activities, and those activities differ in the amount of variety they involve. Over the course of a week, for example, some couples may do relatively similar activities together (e.g., watching different TV shows different nights), while others may do relatively dissimilar activities (e.g., watching a TV show one night, going out to dinner one night, and play tennis one night). Might engaging in more (vs. less) varied joint-activities impact relationship wellbeing, and if so, how?

Building on past work on temporal shifts in social preferences, we suggest that whether variety enhances pro-relationship motivation depends on people’s perceptions of where they are in the course of their relationship. Prior work on socioemotional selectivity theory finds that subjective perceptions of time influence social interaction preferences (Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999). When people perceive that there is much time ahead of them (e.g., when they are...
young), they tend to prefer novel social interactions that provide new information. When people perceive less time ahead of them (e.g., when they are older), they tend to prefer more familiar social interactions that provide emotional stability (Carstensen et al., 1999).

We reason that time perceptions will also change over the course of a relationship. Compared to the later stages, people early in a relationship should perceive that there is more time ahead of them. As a result, we suggest that people will place more value on feeling excitement early in their relationship, but more value on feeling calm or stable later in their relationship. This difference in relative value of excitement versus stability should, in turn, affect whether more varied or similar joint activities generate more pro-relationship motivation. Variety is usually associated with novelty and change, and engaging in variety-seeking behavior often results in stimulating experiences (Khan, 1995; Kahn & Ratner, 2005). Consequently, we argue that engaging in more varied joint-activities should lead partners to perceive more excitement in the relationship. Engaging in more similar joint-activities, in contrast, should lead partners to perceive more stability in their relationship. Thus, we predict that engaging in more varied activities will enhance pro-relationship motivation when people perceive that they are at early stages of a relationship, whereas engaging in more similar activities will enhance pro-relationship motivation when people perceive that they are at later stages of a relationship.

We find support for our propositions across four studies, measuring pro-relationship motivation in multiple ways. Study 1 provides an initial test of our theory, showing that when participants perceived their relationship as relatively short in duration, varied (vs. similar) activities increased the amount of effort (i.e., time) exerted in describing the relationship ($M_{\text{var}} = 139.7, M_{\text{sim}} = 100.2; \beta = 39.54, t(132) = 2.36, p < .05$). In contrast, when participants perceived their relationship as relatively long in duration, similar (vs. varied) activities increased the amount of time spent describing the relationship ($M_{\text{sim}} = 119.9; M_{\text{var}} = 80.4; \beta = -39.57, t(132) = -2.35, p < .05$). The results of study 2 follow this same pattern, but instead measure participants’ willingness to spend money on a special occasion dinner (for short duration: $M_{\text{var}} = $180.00, $M_{\text{sim}} = $111.25; $F(1, 69) = 6.57, p < .05$; for long duration: $M_{\text{sim}} = $161.00, $M_{\text{var}} = $111.18; $F(1, 69) = 3.57, p = .06$). Study 3 provides support for the roles of excitement and stability in driving the effects of activity variety on pro-relationship motivation and short and long levels of perceived relationship duration. Consistent with our theory, results show that excitement mediated the effect of variety on pro-relationship motivation in the short duration condition (95% CI: .08 to .98), but not in the long duration condition (95% CI: -.92 to .14). Further, stability mediated the effect of variety in the long duration condition (95% CI: -.50 to -.04), but not in the short duration condition (95% CI: -.05 to .35). Finally, study 4 provides additional support for the predicted interaction between activity variety and perceived relationship duration, showing effects on an avoidance measure of pro-relationship motivation. We find that when perceived relationship duration is short, varied (vs. similar) activities decreases the likelihood of choosing to interact with an attractive member of the opposite sex ($M_{\text{var}} = 54.8%, M_{\text{sim}} = 80.5%; \chi^2 = 5.47, p < .05$), whereas the opposite pattern obtains when perceived relationship duration is long ($M_{\text{sim}} = 53.8%, M_{\text{var}} = 77.8%; \chi^2 = 3.96, p < .05$).

In sum, this research demonstrates that the variety of activities couples perform together has an impact on pro-relationship motivation, and consequently, relationship well-being. We find that variety may both enhance and detract from pro-relationship motivation, depending on relative relationship duration. Our findings bring together a number of bodies of literature, including variety, romantic relationships, motivation, and time, to offer new insight for individuals interested in maintaining their own romantic relationship, as well as those in a more advisory role (marriage counselors, therapists, etc.). Our work also suggests that marketers may enhance consumer valuation for products and services gifted and used by relationship partners by encouraging consumers to focus on relationship activity variety (vs. similarity).
SESSION OVERVIEW

Heritage is a complex and often elusive construct, but its six meanings in the World English Dictionary all allude that it relates to people’s tangible and intangible connections to the past. But what is the status of heritage scholarship within our discipline? A review of JCR for the past 25 years reveals the construct has received at best superficial treatment. Only four articles (O’Guinn and Belk 1989; Dong and Tian 2009, Thompson and Tian 2008 and Bradford 2010) focus on heritage as an integral construct. Further scrutiny reveals the word “heritage” appears in other articles only occasionally as a modified noun (e.g., with “brand,” “cultural,” “ethnic,” “family” or “municipal” preceding it). Yet consumers often engage with many industries and companies solely or primarily to experience heritage.

Unfortunately, consumer behaviour seems to have yielded this area of study to their counterparts in tourism studies, history, anthropology and other disciplines. This session reasserts the importance of heritage studies to consumer behaviour. It offers four papers that explore how consumers seek experiences related specifically to their cultural heritage, or the heritage variant that captures the consumption of experiences emanating from beyond people’s social groups. The papers discuss how different factors such as discourses, design, and directives by stakeholders shape consumers’ experiences of cultural heritage. Together, the papers offer an admixture of ethno-graphic, historical and case-study approaches. Data collection for each study is complete, and many papers include deep immersions into the phenomena and sites of interest.

“The Politics of Invisibility: Constructing Authenticity in the Industrial Museum”

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In 1987, Robert Hewison published his polemic The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline, in which he charted the rise of museums and heritage sites, particularly those dedicated to the industrial past. His central argument was that heavy industry in the UK was disappearing at a rapid rate, and the only place to gain a sense of working conditions was to experience them in the museums that offered a trip back in time to the industrial towns of the late 19th century. Museums such as Beamish in the North East and the Black Country Museum in the Midlands opened their doors to visitors looking for the real-life experiences of the miners, candle makers, iron smelters, nail makers, retailers and housewives. Towns were reconstructed in meticulous detail, using original materials. Where possible, original dwellings and shops were transported to the sites, rebuilt and furnished with great attention to detail. Hewison’s argument was that although these museums looked authentic, visitors actually consumed ersatz, sanitised accounts of these sites. Further, they were passively engaged and gained little understanding of the wider historical environment.

Our paper takes as its case Blist Hill Industrial Museum in Ironbridge, Shropshire, UK. Today, Ironbridge is a beautiful town situated in a gorge, split by the River Severn. With its historic buildings, restaurants, quaint shops and winding ancient jitties, it is a tourist attraction in its own right. The iron bridge spanning the river—the first to be built in the world—is a testimony to the area’s industrial history. It is hard to imagine this picturesque gorge is largely attributed as being the birthplace of modern industry—yet it was once a hive of iron smelting, trade and transportation. The tree-populated gorge was barren and mud soaked, and every second house was said to be an inn or a brothel. The very name Bedlam Furnaces offers a hint that the modern-day town is a far cry from the reality of life at the time. Of the six museums in Ironbridge, the most popular is Blist Hill, a living museum featuring a reconstructed industrial town where visitors can experience 19th-century life.

We question the notion of museums as memory containers (Crane 2000) and suggest that they can also be sites of social amnesia depending on what is ignored, hidden or forgotten. We contend that this practice constitutes a politics of invisibility. We locate our argument in the context of historical interpretation and in particular, in the role of dominant sociocultural discourses in shaping our perceptions of social class and gender. All too often, displays claiming to represent the subordinate classes are little more than shallow, picturesque, sentimentalised versions of a bygone period (Bennett 1988). They are imagined communities of the mind in which the working and middle classes seem to live harmoniously side by side, each accepting their allotted place in life (West 1988). Furthermore, Chabot (1990) suggests any discussion of gender in the museum is almost accidental where women are either portrayed as “ladies” engaged in genteel tasks set against the backdrop of the Victorian parlour, or as servants or shop girls (Porter 1988). In most cases, equally absent are memorabilia relating to the women’s involvement in the Suffragette struggles. Overall the general atmosphere reflects an apolitical population.

In giving substance to our proposition we further discuss the contentious notion of authenticity (Kolar and Zabkar 2010) and how it is produced and consumed. We examine two forms of authenticity: 1) Staged authenticity. MacCannell (1973) places the visitor in a quest for authenticity, and introduces this notion in touristic settings. Influenced by Goffman’s “front back dichotomy,” (1959) the visitor is said to try and penetrate the false fronts of stage settings, in order to reach the back region of authenticity. Failure to do so is more a consequence of the manipulated structural features of created space, which may often be mistaken for the genuine article and leads to touristic false consciousness. In effect, what consumers experience is a kind of performance that lies somewhere between the constructed reality of existential feeling and the authenticity of the object/display (Zhu 2012); 2) Material authenticity. Proesler (1990) maintains
museums have three effects; they transform culture, they generate new forms of culture and they destroy other cultural forms. This process is achieved through the selection, value given and meanings attached to the objects of display. During this process, authenticity becomes ascribed to material objects (Jones 2010). In the process, the social and working relationships are forgotten in a fog of ‘nostophobia’ (Chhabra 2008, 2012; Goulding 2001). In many living industrial museums, the story told is one of retailing and materiality, rather than the history of worker relations and economic conditions. Blist Hill is no exception (Goulding 2000; 2001).

“Heritage Lost or Found? Sociality and Fullness in the Irish Theme Pub”

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The “dream Irish pub of the popular romantic imagination” (McCarthy 2001) is idealized as a place where strangers and locals come together to experience community or sociality (Fennell and Bunbury 2009). Romanticized, mythologized, and latterly commoditized, the idea of the Irish pub — and the idealized notion of the sociality experienced therein — has become one of Ireland’s most significant cultural icons in the eyes of consumers in many nations (e.g., Brown and Patterson 2000; Molloy 2003). The Irish pub is also a significant export, with numerous Irish companies offering “kits” that enable enterprising owners in far-flung regions of the earth to assemble and furnish an Irish-themed pub that is a reasonable facsimile of those existing or once existing in Ireland, and that will, it is hoped, facilitate sociality — and profits.

Given the geographical diffusion and (some would argue) degeneration of the Irish pub, researchers have to date debated the authenticity or lack thereof of contemporary Irish pubs outside, and even inside, Ireland (e.g., Muñoz, Wood and Solomon 2006). But debates regarding the (in)authenticity of pubs in this genre, however, have paid little attention to how Irish-themed pubs can be constituted so consumers within those spaces can actually experience something of the sociality iconically associated with them.

We conceptualize sociality as analogous to the notion of fullness, a term Miller (2008) introduces (2008) to characterize domestic spaces that are more (vs. less) replete with interpersonal social relationships. Miller emphasizes that people’s objects and the built spaces they inhabit both reflect and help to constitute fullness in home settings. We adapt his notion for consideration in the Irish pub setting. We also draw on DeLanda’s (2006) notions of assemblages to consider pubs as networks of material and narrative elements that can variably cohere to produce greater vs. lesser fullness. Our research question is the following: “What elements of assemblages comprising Irish pubs make some more full than others?”

We address this question drawing on ethnographic data collected from five field settings, each an Irish pub located in Toronto, Ontario. The data were collected over a period of three years, and involved participant observation and field interviews all conducted by the lead author. Data analysis yields three types of elements that are particularly potent in constituting fullness. The first includes material elements of the space that channel and shape interactions to provide elements of a mise-en-scène that facilitate sociality. The second includes a core group of consumers in a retail space who themselves construct a narrative that holds that their ties to each other are forged and re-affirmed by the pub space in which they interact. The third includes lead marketers who draw on personal resources and invoke marketplace myths in ways that enhance the perceived fullness of the space in which they enact their role. None of these elements is either necessary or sufficient to constitute a full space; rather, fullness can be enhanced by any one or more than one, of these elements. Moreover, we find fullness can be destabilized when a single element is lost or changed, even when others remain the same.

This work sheds new light on the link between cultural discourses and heritage consumption by balancing an emphasis on materiality with an emphasis on narrative or discursive elements that contribute to such types of consumption. We further contribute to this conversation by framing “heritage” consumption as some iconic essence (in the case of Irish pubs, that essence is sociality or fullness) that may be constituted in consumption venues lacking what many would regard as authentic heritage-related attributes.

The study also complements existing literature on retail servicescapes, which tends to focus on the processes and factors that produce place attachment (e.g., Borghini, Sherry and Joy 2010) or immersion in themed retail settings (e.g., Kozinets, et. al, 2004). By focusing on fullness as something consumers can experience in retail settings, we broaden the range of outcomes under consideration. By using assemblage theory as a lens through which to examine fullness, we expand the repertoire of perspectives that can be deployed to understand commercially and culturally significant servicescapes, such as Irish pubs.

“The ‘Ministry of Food’ Then and Now: Changing Discourses of Thrift in Britain (1939 – 2012)”

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In this paper we explore the idea of thrift as a specific consumption disposition and examine the ways this disposition might be seen as part of a specifically British heritage. We do so by examining the changing discourses (and their associated calls to consume in specific ways) across a 70-year period. Our interest in this project was sparked when thinking about Jamie Oliver’s ‘Ministry of Food,’ which is concerned with a mass reskilling of the British population in thrifty and healthy cooking practices in the current context of poor health and rising childhood obesity. The original 'Ministry of Food' was set up in Britain just before the WWII in 1938. While the context and motivations were different, it also concerned with teaching the British population thrifty and healthy shopping and cooking skills in the face of wartime rationing. We observe that while some elements in these government and non-profit social marketing efforts have changed, some remain the same.

Thrift as a consumption disposition has received some attention from consumer researchers. Studies explore thrifty food shopping (Miller 1998, Bardhi and Arnould 2005), cooking (Cappellini and Parsons 2012) and food disposal (Cappellini 2009; Evans 2011). In these studies thrift involves saving scarce resources (mainly financial, but also time, effort and labour) in everyday consumption practices in order to spend these resources at a later date. Researchers also find that these thrift practices are not only about individual saving and frugality, but can also constitute a collective enterprise with people coming together to save for the greater good of group members, such as the family (Cappellini and Parsons, 2012). But to our knowledge, as yet there are no historical studies of thrift discourses and practices in consumer research. Historians have looked at how government social marketing campaigns during WWII attempted to influence behaviours associated with feeding the family, such as growing food, shopping, cooking and disposal (Mennell1985, Oddy 2003, Witkowski 2003; Choen 2011; Farmer 2011). Historical work also shows how such representations echo discourses of the time about gender and the division of labour inside and outside the household (Yang 2005; Yesil 2004; Farmer 2011). Apart from a few excep-
ions (c.f., Farmer 2011) the majority of these studies have focussed on the American context.

Given these theoretical and empirical gaps, we examine a series of British social marketing texts identifying both continuities and discontinuities of thrift discourses over time. We take an interpretive approach to these texts, exploring their contexts, intended audiences, and their key underlying messages. Our sample includes 1939-45 Ministry of Food wartime campaigns (‘Dig for Victory’, ‘The Kitchen Front’ and ‘Food Facts’) and recent government initiatives to include WRAP’s ‘Love Food Hate Waste’ campaign, the Food Growing in Schools Taskforce and Jamie Oliver’s ‘Ministry of Food’ social enterprise initiative.

Our preliminary findings show that the two periods are different in terms of the intended audience and the final thrift goal. During WWII women, (namely, mothers and wives), were the intended audience of these campaigns. Left alone in their households to look after the children and elderly relatives, they were entreated to contribute to the war effort by being thrifty in the kitchen. Today the intended audience is more fragmented, as these campaigns do not simply target nuclear families but different types of households. Despite these differences, there are many similarities in the campaigns. In both periods, thrift is connected to economic hardship and austerity and is presented as a way of achieving a more frugal lifestyle through modifying everyday consumption habits. Consumers are offered detailed pedagogical recommendations on how best to feed their families. Meal preparation is broken down into a series of interconnected practices, each of which is analysed in detail with the aim of saving resources at each stage. These include growing food (mostly on allotments), shopping, cooking and dealing with leftovers. The texts suggest savings can be achieved through the development of specific skills and their associated knowledges in each practice. In both periods a particular emphasis is placed on the consumption of specific products (perceived as quintessentially British) as a central feature of thrifty consumption.

We find similarities in thrift discourses operating at both the level of the individual household and collectively within wider society. At the household level, consumers are entreated to learn new consumption skills and knowledges in order to sustain healthy families. Here, discourses focus on family and good parenting. On a collective level, wartime thrifty consumption was about pulling together for the war effort. More recently, consumers are asked to work together to protect the environment and help create happy healthy communities. Here wider discourses about responsible citizenship, and more recently environmental stewardship, dominate. In both periods we also see a strongly moral orientation towards waste and its prevention at all costs.

In closing, we highlight the benefits of historical studies of consumption discourses, in particular in recognising the roots of some consumption dispositions (and their associated skills and knowledges) that we take for granted today. We also highlight how government and other public-sector bodies act to ideologically shape consumption patterns and practices.

**“Consuming the Crown: Key Facets of the British Royal Family Experience”**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Throughout the history of the British Royal Family, people have sought ways to experience its pomp, pageantry and peccadilloes. Access to the Royals is available at all price points: e.g., a £15,000 bottle of QE II Diamond Jubilee brandy, a 2012 Booker-Prize winning novel, a Royal-focused movie, or a cheap souvenir coffee mug. Our work explores not just what consumers of royalty buy, but why they do so. Our seven-year (2005-2012) ethnography, featuring dozens of Royal sites, immersions and depth interviews made us increasingly aware of the myriad ways the Royals and the marketplace intersect. Our book Royal Fever (forthcoming, 2013) unpacks many aspects of royal consumption, including the fascination with Diana, consuming the Royals through the media, how marketers co-opt Royal images, and the rhythm of Royal tourist towns. This presentation offers our unifying theoretical template that forms the scaffold for our book. We offer a framework of “six F’s,” gleaned from interacting with consumers and providers who orchestrate Royal consumption. Not only do these facets comprehensively capture the appeal of the Royals, but they represent key value pillars valorized by contemporary, global-savvy consumers.

Our first facet is **fairy tales**. One would be hard-pressed to account for the appeal of the Royals without drawing parallels to this genre, which obviously valorizes royalty and its trappings. Underdog princesses, hard-working commoners who “earn” royal status, handsome princes, weddings and glittering castles are staples of fairy tales, and of that great purveyor of childhood narratives, Walt Disney. Now, of course, consumers can re-engage with the same cultural narratives over and over. Furthermore, “transmedia consumption” (Ilhan 2011) means children dress up in Disney costumes while watching Disney films, perusing Disney storybooks and fantasizing about visiting Disney parks chock-a-block with “live” Princesses.

The second facet of Royal consumption is **family**—one resonant with most consumers. Even “Royal Family” emphasizes how integral this aspect is to the monarchy. That the Royals claim a 1000+-year genetic lineage legitimizes the family as biologically remarkable as well. Since the Queen’s childhood through her metamorphosis into Britain’s favorite grandson, family has been particularly salient to the Royal experience. She even allowed unprecedented glimpses into the Royal household; the most dramatic example was the sanctioned documentary, Royal Family, in 1968. (Smith, 2012) For young families immersed in the postwar-UK Baby Boom, images of the monarchs-as-parents resonated—especially among women who identified with the Queen as she juggled work and familial duties. (Smith 2012) This family dimension suffered during the 1990s-early 2000s, when three of the Queen’s children divorced, and the Queen’s sister and mother died. Yet these setbacks reinforce the notion that imperfect interludes can increase the appeal of “human brands” (Thomson 2006). Since that time, a slew of happier occasions among the “Young Royals” has reinvigorated the family facet.

Our third facet is **fanfare**; no activities evoke the emotionality of the monarchy than its public rituals. These include Jubilee celebrations, State Visits, investitures, and of course, weddings and funerals. Even relatively low-key rituals (e.g., the Changing of the Guard) are laden with ritual artifacts, scripts, performance roles and audiences (Rook 1985). The most lavish (and increasingly rare) of all is the coronation of a new monarch. Yet Royal fanfare now includes events related not to the monarchy, but to British (and global) culture. In 2012, Hampton Court Palace hosted both Olympic cycling events and also a pop concert series. Obviously, consuming fanfare is a key draw for many Royal seekers.

**Fashion** is the fourth facet. In the 1980s and 1990s, fashion was equated with the iconic figure of Princess Diana; yet fashion was a fixture in the Royal milieu long before her ascendancy. George IV (r. 1820-1830), for example, “did not follow fashions, he set them… [abandoning] multi-colored ‘peacock’ fashions in favor of…smart, black, sombre dress pioneered by George and Brummell in the 1790s.” (Clark, 2001) Even the Queen, associated more with colts and corgis than couture, wears gowns by leading designers to affairs...
of state. Nowadays, the media report sartorial choices of the major and minor Royals *ad nauseum*—including fashion disasters. Yet even Princess Beatrice’s “toilet-seat hat” was auctioned for charity for over $130,000. Furthermore, Royal fashion choices (e.g., Catherine’s nude hose) often trigger copycat buying. Consumers obviously are not just interested in Royal apparel; they troop through lushly-decorated palaces to enjoy displays of armor, china, furniture, and priceless artworks.

Our fifth facet is *fiascos*, or complete, ignominious failures that can humiliate. Throughout history, the Royals have been embroiled in fiascos that have threatened their existence and relevance. Two well-known examples are Edward VIII’s abdication and the Queen’s decision to not honor Diana as a Royal after her death. Fiascos (as well as tragedies and blunders) are essential parts of the Royal narrative, because they 1) allow consumers to claim they engage with the Royals for historical reasons and they 2) best expose the risks of managing heritage-based “human” brands—even though those who orchestrate Royal consumption claim the family to be “above celebrity” (Otnes, Maclaran and Crosby, 2010).

Our sixth and final facet is fortune. The Royals’ net worth is approximately half a billion dollars—stemming from a huge art collection, millions of acres of land, the Crown Jewels, and even rare swans. Fortune impacts consumers in two key ways: 1) the Royals often display these assets so the public can enjoy them and 2) the Royals can enjoy unfettered consumption if they so choose. Thus, vicarious consumption accounts for much of the Royals’ appeal.
Turning up the Heat on Haptics: Temperature and Consumer Decision Making
Courtney Szocs, University of South Florida, USA
Dipayan Biswas, University of South Florida, USA*

Paper #1: Mental Thermoregulation: Affective and Cognitive Pathways for Non-Physical Temperature Regulation
Rhonda Hadi, Baruch College, USA
Dan King, NUS Business School, Singapore*
Lauren Block, Baruch College, USA

Paper #2: Warmer or Cooler: Exploring the Influence of Ambient Temperature on Cognitive Task Performance
Luqiong Tong, Tsinghua University, China
Rui (Juliet) Zhu, University of British Columbia, Canada*
Yuhuang Zheng, Tsinghua University, China
Ping Zhao, Tsinghua University, China

Paper #3: Red in the Eye, Blue in the Mouth: The Influence of Visual cues on Temperature Perceptions
Courtney Szocs, University of South Florida, USA
Dipayan Biswas, University of South Florida, USA*

SESSION OVERVIEW
Whether choosing what clothing items to wear, while heating or chilling a food item, or when adjusting the thermostat at home, the office or in the car, consumers are extremely conscious of temperature (Cheema and Patrick 2012). Temperature is one aspect of haptics, along with texture, weight and hardness, all of which are primarily perceived via the sense of touch (Klatzky and Lederman 2002). Despite the imminent influence of ambient, body and product temperature in consumers’ daily lives, relatively little attention has been devoted to temperature and its implications for behavioral research. While sensory marketing has emerged as an important area in recent years, most studies have focused on visual and auditory aspects with relatively less attention devoted to olfactory, gustatory and haptic aspects (Krishna 2012). In fact, of the five senses, the sense of touch has possibly received the least amount of attention from marketing researchers (Peck and Childers 2008). In this regard, this special session focuses on temperature and our main objective is to present a set of studies touching upon not only how temperature influences consumer decision-making, but also on factors that influence temperature perception.

This session will encourage discussion on temperature as well as the broader theme of the influence of haptics on consumer decision making, and aims to attract researchers with an interest in different aspects of sensory marketing. With three papers, we hope to encourage interactive discussions between the presenters, the discussion leaders and the attendees.

The limited studies in the consumer literature which examine temperature show that incidental exposure to specific ambient and product temperatures influences product preferences (Hong and Sun 2012), that semantic congruence between product temperature and scent influences product evaluations (Krishna, Elder and Caldera 2010), and that interacting with objects that have different temperatures influences interpersonal warmth (Williams and Bargh 2008). However, little is known about how temperature influences consumer decision-making processes and the factors that influence temperature perception. To that end, the first paper in this special session (by Hadi, King, and Block) focuses on the influence of perceived body temperature on the decision-making process. This paper examines how consumers mentally thermoregulate their decision-making process based on the current (vs. desired) body temperature. The second paper (by Tong, Zhu, Zheng, and Zhao) also investigates the influence of temperature on the decision-making process. This research specifically examines how ambient temperature influences heuristic decision making, and ultimately performance on simple (vs. complex) cognitive tasks. Finally, the third paper (by Szocs and Biswas) investigates the influence of visual cues on product temperature perceptions. This paper focuses on how incidental exposure to red versus blue visual cues might influence perceptions about the temperature of the focal product.

Collectively, the three papers in this special session all focus on temperature in the context of consumer decision making. However, each paper takes a different perspective with Tong, Zhu, Zheng, and Zhao focusing on ambient temperature, Hadi, King, and Block focusing on body temperature, and Szocs and Biswas focusing on product temperature. In addition to the variety of perspectives, the papers by Tong, Zhu, Zheng, and Zhao, and Hadi, King, and Block examine temperature as an independent variable while Szocs and Biswas examine temperature as a dependent variable. Given these varied perspectives and the nascent state of this topic domain, this special session is likely to lead to discussions for future research ideas.

Mental Thermoregulation: Affective and Cognitive Pathways for Non-Physical Temperature Regulation

EXTENDED ABSTRACT
In the behavioral sciences, the term “cool” processing typically refers to processes which involve cognitions and critical analysis, while “warm” processing alludes to systems involving feelings, desires, and emotions (Metcalfe and Mischel 1999). This terminology suggests that at least semantically, each process encompasses a distinct thermoregulatory tone. However, if reliance on emotions can indeed function as a warming process and reliance on cognitions functions as a cooling process, individuals may alter their decision-making style according to their thermoregulatory objectives, without conscious awareness. It is precisely this notion that we address in the current research.

The mammalian tendency to physically thermoregulate is well documented in the biological sciences (Kirkes 1899; Alberts and Brunjes 1978). Mammals seek warm stimuli when their body temperature drops below normal, and seek cooling stimuli when their body temperature rises above normal. For humans, however, physical thermoregulation may not be the only way regulation can occur. Thermoregulation might be possible via non-physical mechanisms. For example, some research suggests individuals may consume stimulating products and partake in interpersonal activities in response to physical cold (Parker and Tavassoli 2000, Tavassoli 2000, Zhang and Risen 2010). Collectively, such research seems to imply that humans can engage in thermoregulation through non-physical and largely mental means, a process we term “mental thermoregulation.” We assume this is indeed the case, and further propose that the use of a particular decision-making style (using either an affective or cognitive pathway) can also serve as a thermoregulatory mechanism. Thus, we propose that an individual may embody a particular decision-making process that is metaphorically consistent with his or her thermoregulatory objective (and thus inconsistent with his or her thermoregulatory state), whenever the current state is non-optimal.
Study 1 was a 2 (temperature: cold vs. warm) x 2 (object description: low sentiment vs. high sentiment) between-subjects design, and examined the degree to which individuals were relying on affect to measure their WTP for insurance for an object (an antique clock). Presumably, if one is not relying on emotions, there should be no difference between WTP under the two object descriptions. However, if one is relying on emotions, we expect WTP to be higher for the object with a high sentiment description. Results revealed a significant temperature by object description interaction. In the cold temperature condition, the difference between the low sentiment and high sentiment conditions was indeed significant, with individuals’ WTP higher in the high sentiment condition than in the low sentiment condition. In the warm temperature condition however, the difference between the two object description conditions was not significant. A 4-item Decision Basis scale measured whether decisions across different conditions were based on respondents’ affective reactions or cognitions. A bootstrap procedure (Hayes, 2012) confirmed the conditional indirect effect of temperature on WTP through Decision Basis was significant, suggesting that reliance on emotions mediated the relationship of temperature x object description on WTP.

The second study was a 2 (temperature simulation: cold vs. warm) x 2 (number of pandas: one vs. four) between subjects design. We adapted our procedure from Hsee and Rottenstreich (2004), who argue that when individuals rely on affect in making decisions, they become insensitive to scale. Thus, individuals relying on their emotions are willing to donate as much money to save one panda as to save four pandas, but those using cognitive processing are willing to donate more to save more pandas. Results revealed a significant temperature x number of pandas interaction. In the warm condition, the difference between the one-panda and four-pandas conditions was indeed significant—participants were more likely to donate when there were four pandas in the scenario than when there was only one panda in the scenario). In the cold temperature condition however, subjects appeared to indeed be insensitive to scale—the difference between the one-panda and four-pandas conditions was not significant.

The purpose of our third study was to support the thermoregulation explanation by suggesting that the mere use of cognitive versus affective pathways can indeed alter an individual’s perception of physical temperature. After the temperature manipulation, participants were given explicit instructions to use either their feelings or evaluative thoughts in assessing a series of scenarios (adapted from Pham 2001), and then asked to indicate how cold/warm they felt, as well as how comfortable they felt temperature-wise. Results indicated that participants in the affective pathway condition felt warmer than those individuals in the cognitive pathway condition, regardless of their initial temperature condition. Further, results produced a significant temperature x processing interaction on comfort: in the cold condition, affective respondents were more comfortable than cognitive respondents, but the reverse was true in the warm condition, supporting our mental thermoregulation account.

Our fourth study was a 2 level (instructions: affective vs. cognitive) between subjects design to demonstrate physical temperature fluctuations as a result of affective vs. cognitive pathways. Subjects were equipped with wireless thermometers to measure their temperature while they used either their feelings or evaluative thoughts in assessing a series of scenarios (same manipulation as in study 3). Before starting the task, there was no significant difference between physical temperatures of participants in the two conditions. After completing the task, however, participants in the affective condition produced a significantly higher temperature than individuals in the cognitive condition. In the cognitive condition, individuals’ temperatures were significantly lower after the task, as compared to before the task, and in the affective condition, participants’ temperatures were significantly higher after the task, as compared to before the task. Hence, this suggests the mere use of cognitive versus affective pathways can alter an individual’s physical temperature via a physiological warming (vs. cooling) process.

Thus, we contribute to literature on thermoregulation, embodiment, and the role of affect in decision-making by suggesting that reliance on emotions (cognitions) can function as a warming (cooling) process, and individuals may accordingly alter their decision-making style to fulfill thermoregulatory objectives in response to experienced physical temperatures that are cooler or warmer than homeostatic levels in their internal milieu.

**Warmer or Cooler: Exploring the Influence of Ambient Temperature on Cognitive Task Performance**

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Although both practitioners and academics agree that temperature affects human cognition in important ways (Hancock, Ross, and Szalma 2007; Williams and Bargh 2008), there is no consensus in terms of how temperature exerts its effect. In fact, mixed results have been observed in the literature (Hancock and Vasmatzidis 1998).

First, prior research on temperature suggests that heat, which can induce thermal stress, competes for cognitive resource and consequently hurts task performance (Hancock and Warm 1989). Thus, compared to individuals in a cool temperature condition, those in a warm temperature condition should have limited cognitive resource towards the focal task (Ramsey et al. 1983).

Second, a separate line of research suggests that different levels of cognitive resources can prompt alternative information processing modes. When individuals have limited cognitive resource for the focal task, they are likely to engage in less systematic and more heuristic processing (Todorov et al. 2002). Thus, we expect that those in the warm (cool) temperature condition, due to their limited (abundant) cognitive resources, are likely to engage in primarily heuristic (systematic) processing (Cheema and Patrick 2011).

Finally, past research has shown that while systematic processing benefits simple tasks (Frisch and Clemen 1994), heuristic processing is more beneficial for complex tasks (Rieskamp and Hofrage 1999). Systematic processing is extensive and compensatory, whereas heuristic processing involves limited and selective information processing. The comprehensive nature of systematic processing makes it particularly suited to simple tasks (i.e., tasks that require individuals to process a small amount of information). However, a different pattern of results is expected for complex tasks. Decision makers have limited information-processing capacity. Thus, as task complexity increases (i.e., as the task requires individuals to process a larger amount of information), systematic processing suffers from computational errors and limited memory capacity (Bettman, Luce, and Payne 1998), leading to worse decisions. Heuristic processing, because it relies on less information and is less subject to computational errors, does not lead to worse decisions as task complexity increases. Relatively speaking, then, heuristic (vs. systematic) pro-
pcessing should lead to better performance on complex tasks. Sum-
mulating our theorizing so far, we hypothesize that cool (vs. warm)
temperature should prompt greater systematic processing, and con-
sequently lead to better performance on simple tasks; and that, in
contrast, warm (vs. cool) temperature activates primarily heuristic
processing, and thus leads to better performance on complex tasks.

Our first two studies (1A & 1B) test the above hypothesis. Study
1A used 3 (temperature: warm vs. moderate vs. cool) X 2 (task com-
plexity: simple vs. complex) between-subject design. The focal task
was a classic choice task, which requires participants to select their
preferred lottery from four different options (Payne et al., 2008). Op-
tions were defined by payoffs for 12 equiprobable events defined by
drawing 1 of 4 numbered balls (simple condition) or 1 of 12 num-
bered balls (complex condition) from a bingo cage. Among the four
options, one option had the highest expected value, which represents
the correct answer. The study was run with no more than four people
per session. The same lab was used, but the temperature was set to
be warm (25-26 Celsius), moderate (21-22 Celsius), or cool (16-17
Celsius). Results confirmed our hypothesis, such that when the task
was complex, a significantly higher percentage of individuals in
the warm temperature condition chose the correct option than that
in the cool or moderate temperature condition. However, when the
task was simple, participants in the cool (vs. warm) temperature per-
formed better. Study 1B was a theoretical replication of study1A by
using a different task.

Study 2 aims to shed light on the underlying mechanism. If,
as we argue, heuristic processing underlies the beneficial effects of
warm temperature on complex task performance, then we should ob-
serve equally good performance from those in the cool temperature
condition if we prompt them to engage in heuristic processing. To
induce heuristic processing, we manipulated participants’ available
cognitive resource by having them remember either a 2-digit or an
8-digit number (Gilbert and Hixon 1991). In line with prior research,
we expect that those being asked to remember the short (long) num-
der would have ample (limited) cognitive resources for the focal
task, and thus engage in primarily systematic (heuristic) processing.
We build effects of color cues on temperature perceptions
(Chen and Chaiken 1999). The study employed a 2 (temperature:
warm vs. cool) * 2 (available resources: high vs. low) between sub-
ject design. The focal task was always the complex lottery task as
used in study 1A. As anticipated, when participants had ample re-
sources for the focal task, we replicated prior result such that those
in the warm (vs. cool) temperature performed better on the complex
lottery task. However, for those with low available resources, they
performed equally well regardless of whether they were in the warm
or cool temperature condition, presumably.

Study 3 extends our theorizing to the domain of creative cogni-
tion. We theorize that warm temperatures, due to its activation of
heuristic processing, can enhance creativity. Prior research suggests
that the carefree nature of heuristic processing prompts individuals
to think freely and thus facilitate creative cognition (Friedman and
Fürster 2000). In three separate tasks (studies 3A, 3B, and 3C), we
found support to this hypothesis.

Red in the Eye, Blue in the Mouth: The Influence of
Visual cues on Temperature Perceptions

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Temperature is one of four haptic properties that individuals rely on when evaluating objects (Klatzky and Lederman 2002), and is an especially important factor for food and beverage evaluations. In fact, research shows that temperature plays an influential role in food product acceptability (Rozin and Tourila 1993) and even taste evaluations (Zellner, Stewart, Rozin and Brown 1988). However, despite the importance of temperature perception in food/beverage evaluations, there has been very limited research examining factors that might influence consumer perceptions of product temperature. The limited number of studies which examine factors influencing temperature perceptions focus on such issues as how feelings of social exclusion influence ambient temperature perception (Zhang and Leonardi 2008), how interacting with warm or cold objects influences interpersonal warmth (Williams and Bargh 2008), and how semantic congruence between product temperature and olfactory cues influences haptic perceptions and product evaluations (Krishna, Elder, and Caldara 2010). Along these lines, hardly any research has examined cross-modal sensory effects on temperature perceptions; that is, the role of other sensory inputs on product temperature perceptions. In that context, in this research, we examine the effects of visual cues on haptic temperature perceptions. More specifically, we examine how incidental exposure to red or blue peripheral color cues might influence a consumer’s perceptions of the temperature of a focal product. That is, would a consumer rate a focal product as having a higher (lower) temperature after seeing a red (blue) peripheral color cue? Equally importantly, would there be conditions which can lead to an opposite pattern of results? For example, can under certain conditions, exposure to red (blue) peripheral cues lead to lower (higher) temperature perceptions? We address these questions and more broadly examine the influence of visual (i.e., color) cues on haptic (i.e., temperature) perceptions. The focus on red and blue colors is driven by ecological factors. Specifically, red and blue are often used to denote hot and cold temperatures on items such as faucets, air-conditioning systems, weather maps, and thermometers. In addition, the focus on the effects of visual cues on temperature perceptions makes practical sense since it is very unlikely, and often impossible, to obtain temperature perceptions through any of the other sensory inputs/cues (e.g., from taste, olfactory, or auditory).

We build on theories of visual dominance and intersensory inte-
gration and propose that visual cues can play a more influential role in determining temperature perceptions because visual inputs are available prior to haptic inputs, since visual cues can be obtained with a greater degree of non-proximity than haptic cues. Along the same lines, in most real-world scenarios, visual cues would be obtained sequentially earlier than haptic cues. The relative ease and earlier availability of visual cues relative to haptic cues leads to visual cues receiving more weight in temperature evaluations relative to haptic cues.

In study 1 we demonstrate the basic effect of color cues on temper-
ature perceptions (i.e., the color-temperature effect) using a one factor experiment with two conditions (visual cue: red vs. blue). We find that when asked to sample a clear, room-temperature beverage from a red or blue cup consumers who sample from a red (blue) cup perceive the beverage as having a higher (lower) temperature.

In studies 2 and 3 we provide evidence that the color-temperature effect is a function of the ease of obtaining visual (vs. haptic) cues to temperature which leads to visual cues receiving more weight in temperature evaluations. Specifically, in study 2 we manipulate the ease of obtaining visual cues to temperature by manipulating the salience of the color cue using a 2 (visual cue: red vs. blue) x 2 (cue salience: high vs. low) between subjects design. In this study, the color cue is a beverage napkin and visual salience is manipulated by placing a white cup in such a way that it occludes (i.e., low cue salience) or does not occlude the napkin (i.e., high cue salience). We find that when visual inputs are easy to encode relative to haptic inputs (i.e., high cue salience) the color-temperature effect persists,
however when ease of encoding is reduced by minimizing visual cue salience the color-temperature effect is diminished.

In study 3 we manipulate the order sequence in which visual (vs. haptic) information is available using a 2(visual cue: red vs. blue) x 2(sensory cue sequence: visual-haptic vs. haptic-visual) between subjects experiment. In this study we manipulate the color of the beverage and have participants view the color of the beverage before sampling the beverage (i.e., visual-haptics) or after sampling the beverage (i.e., haptics-visual). In support of our theorization we find that when visual information is available before haptic information (i.e., visual-haptics), and hence is easier to obtain, the color-temperature effect persists. However, when haptic information is available before visual information (i.e., haptics-visual) the effect is diminished.

Finally, in study 4 we examine the robustness of the color-temperature effect to unambiguous product temperatures. Employing a 2(visual cue: red vs. blue) x 3(beverage temperature: room vs. cold vs. warm) between subjects design we have participants sample a cold, room or warm temperature beverage from a red or blue cup and evaluate the temperature. We find that the color-temperature effect persists for room temperature beverages, gets diminished for warm beverages and gets reversed for cold beverages.

In conclusion, across four studies we show that visual color cues influence haptic temperature perceptions. The influence of incidental visual cues on focal product temperature perceptions remains largely unexplored in the consumer behavior literature. As a result, the findings of our research can potentially shed insights into cross-modal sensory effects on temperature perceptions. In addition to these conceptual implications, understanding the role of visual cues in temperature evaluations also has managerial implications, especially since the temperature of a food/beverage influences the items' overall product evaluation.
Expectations and Epiphedonics – Novel Factors That Change Perspective and Enjoyment
Aaron Snyder, Stanford University, USA

Paper #1: The Dismal Side of Power: How Power Thwarts Enjoyment in Familiar Domains
Aaron Snyder, Stanford University, USA*
Baba Shiv, Stanford University, USA

Paper #2: Mix it Baby: The Effect of Customization on Perceived Healthiness
Nina Gros, Maastricht University, The Netherlands
Anne Kløse, Tilburg University, The Netherlands*
Valerie Meise, Maastricht University, The Netherlands
Darren Dahl, University of British Columbia, Canada

Paper #3: Pleasure Favors the Unprepared
Jayson S. Jia, University of Hong Kong*
Baba Shiv, Stanford University, USA

Kristina Kampfer, University Erlangen-Nuremberg
Monika Imschloß, University Mannheim
Andrea Weihrauch, University Erlangen-Nuremberg*

SESSION OVERVIEW
Consumers habitually form expectations about experiences (Lee, Frederick, & Ariely, 2006) and products (Kahn, Luce, & Nowlis, 2006), which affect both their decisions and the subsequent experience of the chosen option. These biased perceptions can lead to suboptimal decisions (Hoegg & Alba, 2007) or to reduced enjoyment (Shiv, Carmon, & Ariely 2005), a process we will refer to as epi- hedonics (that is, how enjoyment and experience is affected by incidental factors). In terms of experiences, expectations in the form of knowledge about the ingredients in a beverage can impede enjoyment (Lee et al., 2006). Similarly, extrinsic factors such as price and irrelevant product attributes have been identified to bias consumers in this manner. For example, it has been shown that visual cues can be more instrumental in driving taste perceptions than actual taste (Hoegg & Alba 2007) and that consumers incorrectly rely on assortment aspects rather than inherent hunger or diet restrictions to derive the appropriate consumption amount (Kahn & Wansink, 2004). These findings demonstrate that consumers’ consumption decisions are often influenced by factors that bias their expectations and in turn might influence their behavior or perceptual experience.

Especially when people are trying to reduce their overall amount of consumption (because of turbulent economic times, when economic growth should be slowed) while still maximizing enjoyment, investigating how expectations are both formed, and impact the experience, itself is extremely relevant for modern consumers. Furthermore, in the context of food consumption, investigating how and why consumption biases influence expectations and consumed amount is timely, since obesity rates are rising.

Therefore, it is important to understand the factors that lead to expectation formation—including quality or health perceptions—so that better decision and planning strategies can be enacted to maximize enjoyment potential, reduce over-consumption, and avoid biased perceptions. The papers in this session fit this need by providing insight into the factors that cause the formation of harmful expectations. Indeed, these papers provide novel, counterintuitive findings with respect to the nature of consumer biases, and simultaneously offer consumers techniques to avoid suboptimal decisions or experience preparation strategies. In doing so, this session adds to existing research (e.g., Chandon & Wansink 2007; Shiv and Nowlis, 2004) and offers recommendations to consumers about how to maximize enjoyment when consumption must be curbed.

In the first paper, The Dismal Side of Power, the authors show that how powerful one feels can impact experiential enjoyment (i.e., how much utility is extracted from a consumption experience) by changing the use of expectations about experience quality. Specifically, they find that, paradoxically, high levels of power can actually reduce enjoyment by employing unnecessarily high expectations when evaluating an experience. In the second paper, Mix it Baby, the authors focus on how producing expectations through customization can be a source of bias in consumers’ product perceptions (i.e. healthiness perception). They establish the counterintuitive finding that selecting your own ingredients as compared to receiving a prepared product decreases its perceived healthiness. In the third paper, Pleasure Favors the Unprepared, the authors find that forming expectations by preparing for an experience (versus not preparing) reduces objective enjoyment of that experience. More precisely, preparation increases desire for some parts of an experience over others, generally resulting in an overall reduction in experience enjoyment. In the fourth paper, Can You Feel What You Expect?, the authors demonstrate the ability of social information to affect expectations and haptic sensory experience.

Taken together, these papers (all in advanced stages) describe factors that affect the formation of expectations, and the subsequent impact of those expectations on enjoyment in the consumption context. This session not only demonstrates that expectations are easily affected by a variety of novel factors, but that these shifts in expectation can have dramatic consequences for the objective enjoyment of the experiences they describe. In today’s turbulent economic climate, consumption must be reined in to avoid producing excessive levels of personal or public debt. It is then of great importance to understand how to maximize the enjoyment or utility for the remaining consumption experience. These findings help consumers toward this goal by recommending how to make better choices and experience preparations that maximize potential enjoyment, thereby better balancing consumption quantity and consumption quality. Therefore, we believe that the papers in this session help promote more effective consumption in turbulent times. These papers will further appeal to people interested in consumer biases, food consumption, expectations, and the burgeoning study of epi-hedonics.

The Dismal Side of Power: How Power Thwarts Enjoyment in Familiar Domains
EXTENDED ABSTRACT
We know that we feel better about the decision that we make when we are more powerful, but after making the decision, how does the feeling of power impact our enjoyment of the experience that we select? Consumers naturally gravitate toward states of high power and actively pursue power (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2006). The pursuit of power is motivated by knowledge that, as an affective state, it confers psychological benefits and social status (Alicke, 1985; Anderson, Brion, Moore, & Kennedy, 2012; George- son and Harris, 1998; Hall, Coats, & Smith Le Beau, 2005; Taylor...
and Brown). Despite these many investigations of antecedents and consequences of power, no work has yet addressed how varying the affective state of confidence may impact consumer enjoyment of a concurrent experience.

Therefore, because power is actively pursued in many consumption domains, it is important to better understand how this affective state impacts experiential enjoyment. In the current research, we present several experiments to explore our predictions that power impacts experiential enjoyment, and that although consumers anticipate this to be the case, they do so in the wrong direction. Specifically, we propose that increasing power increases the expectation threshold people set for interpreting an experience as enjoyable. However, because power increases reliance on one’s natural disposition (including expectations), this effect should be moderated by the extent to which people have any baseline familiarity with the item in question. That is, in unfamiliar domains people are unlikely to display differences in experiential enjoyment based on their power level. Therefore, we specifically hypothesize that consumers’ intuition may not accurately describe the relationship between power and experiential enjoyment because it relies on assessment of the positive valence associated with feeling powerful to predict enjoyment (H1, Study 1). By drawing on the power literature, we make the more nuanced assertion that, instead of positive affect assimilation, power will have its dominant effect on enjoyment by changing the use of expectations to judge the quality of an experience. Therefore, higher levels of power should be associated with lower levels of experiential enjoyment (H2A, Study 2), and this relationship should be independent of the effect of affect on enjoyment (H2B, Study 2).

However, because power only increases reliance on existing expectations (and does not directly change expectations) it should only affect enjoyment in familiar domains (i.e., domains with which one has experience; H3 Study 3).

Together, the findings from the above studies provide support for the model that the positive affective state of power decreases experiential enjoyment (Experiment 2) because higher power increases the threshold consumers use to evaluate familiar experiences (Experiment 3) and that this effect defies consumers’ lay intuition (Experiment 1). Consumers should be careful not to pursue states of high power while experiencing something that they would like to enjoy because high power levels increase the use of high expectations, and therefore the threshold for which an experience is evaluated as positive. These findings lead to recommendations for consumers wishing to maximize experiential enjoyment. Consumers attempting to maximize their enjoyment of a familiar experience (i.e., an experience for which they have expectations, either from previous experience or from third-party information), may wish to reduce how powerful they feel during consumption, especially if the quality of the goods they are consuming is not extremely high. If one has high expectations for a consumption experience, there is greater likelihood that the actual experience will fall short of these expectations, and if it does, this will negatively impact experiential enjoyment.

Mix it Baby: The Effect of Customization on Perceived Healthiness

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Companies in the food industry (e.g., M&Ms) engage customers in the production process by allowing them to select between different ingredients to create their individual product. The purpose of this research is to explore whether the mere act of selecting one’s own ingredients for a given food/drink influences its perceived healthiness. Considering the increasing trend for customization (Lyon 2011) and the rising rates of obesity (Flegal et al. 2010), it is relevant to investigate whether customizing food products could bias consumers’ healthiness perceptions. This research adds to existing research that identifies factors, such as price (Shiv, Carmon, and Ariely 2005), health positioning (Chandon and Wansink 2007a), and healthiness (Raghunathan et al. 2006) which bias consumers’ product perceptions. We present three studies to demonstrate that selecting one’s own ingredients as compared to buying the complete product decreases its perceived healthiness. Further, we provide first evidence for the underlying mechanism.

In study 1 we investigate whether students that mix their own juice and those that obtain a ready-made juice differ in their healthiness perceptions of the drink. We offered students (N=85) a glass of juice. Depending on the condition the student either saw one ca-rafe containing a mixture of juices (non-creators) or three different carafes (self-creators), each containing a different juice. Since we want to test whether the mere act of selecting ingredients influences individuals’ healthiness perceptions, we need three juices (i.e., cranberry, lemon, and orange juice) that were pre-tested to be equally healthy and tasty. After participants mixed their juice we measured the perceived healthiness of the juice (7-points semantic differential scale, 1=healthy and 7=unhealthy). An ANOVA with the healthiness ratings of the juice as dependent variable revealed that self-creators (M_self-creators =2.88, SD=1.64) rated the juice as significantly less healthy than non-creators (M_non-creators =2.12, SD=1.04; F(1,83)=6.58, p<0.05).

In study 2 we make use of food (i.e., cereal) to test generalizability of our finding. We explore whether selecting your own cereal ingredients as compared to obtaining a prepared mix decreases the perceived healthiness of the cereal. In addition, we investigate whether this effect is dependent on the physical act of mixing the ingredients together oneself. To test this we manipulate whether participants (N=114) create their own cereal (self-creators vs. non-creators) and whether they perform the action of mixing themselves (yes vs. no). While the self-creators selected the cereal ingredients of their choice (i.e., walnuts, pumpkin seeds and dried strawberries; pre-tested to be equally healthy and tasty), the non-creators obtained a prepared mix of ingredients. Participants either performed the act of mixing their ingredients themselves or a researcher assistant took care of this: both self-creators and non-creators either filled the ingredients together themselves or a researcher assistant took care of this: both self-creators and non-creators either filled the ingredients together themselves or a researcher assistant took care of this. Before participants were allowed to eat the cereal, they indicated its perceived healthiness. A two-way ANOVA with healthiness ratings of the cereal as the dependent variable revealed a statistically significant main effect for creating your own cereal with self-creators rating the cereal as less healthy (M_self-creators =7.29, SD=1.52) than non-creators (M_non-creators =7.92, SD=1.84; F(1,110)=4.02; p<0.05) irrespective of who performs the action of mixing the ingredients.

Study 3 fulfills two purposes. First, it tests the robustness of our effect by using another product of interest (i.e. yoghurt). Second, and most importantly, study 3 sheds light on the underlying mechanism for our effect. We argue that individuals in the mixing condition are faced with the decision of what kind of product to make. They have to think about which goal, tastiness or healthiness, they prioritize when creating their own mix. Generally, there are individual differences in concern with the emphasis individuals put on healthy eating. We expect that individuals who are concerned with healthy eating rely on healthiness as a criterion when selecting the ingredients while individuals that do not care about healthy eating would not take healthiness into account when choosing the ingredients. Further, in line with research on goals we predict that individuals base their judgment of the end product on the goal they had when creating it.
As a consequence, we expect an interaction effect between our manipulation (i.e. self-creation) and the importance attached to healthy eating. We predict that the effect is pronounced for participants that do not attach importance to healthy eating but attenuated for participants to whom healthy nutrition is important.

Seventy-three participants took part in this study (distributed via Amazon Turk) and were randomly assigned to a self-creator condition or non-creator condition. All participants were shown a picture of plain white yoghurt. Afterward, depending on the condition participants either selected their own toppings choosing out of mango, cranberries and walnuts (pre-tested to be equally healthy) or received the prepared mix. Afterward participants indicated the perceived healthiness of their yoghurt on a 10-point Likert scale (10 = being very healthy). In addition, participants expressed their (dis)agreement with the statement “I consider eating healthy to be important” using a 7-point Likert scale (7 = strongly agree).

We find a significant difference between self-creators (M= 7.51, SD = 1.82) and non-creators (M = 8.37, SD = 1.15) in perceived healthiness of the yoghurt (p < .05). More importantly, we also find the predicted interaction effect between our manipulation and the importance attached to healthy eating (F (1, 72) = 3.81; p < 0.06). For participants that attach importance to healthy eating there is no significant difference between self-creators (Mself-creators = 7.89, SD = 1.59) and non-creators (Mnon-creators = 7.98 SD= 1.73; F < 1, p =0.87). However, individuals that do not attach importance to healthy eating judge their yoghurt to be significantly less healthy when they created it themselves (Mself-creators =6.72, SD = 2.02) as compared to when they obtained a prepared mix (Mnon-creators = 8.44, SD= 1.38; F(1,72)=6.43; p<0.05).

Our studies reveal customization as a factor that biases consumers’ healthiness perception: The mere act of selecting ingredients oneself decreases consumers’ healthiness perception. In a follow-up experiment, we intend to prime individuals with a health goal or an indulgence goal to provide further evidence that differences in goals are driving our effect.

**Pleasure Favors the Unprepared**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

How do we derive the most pleasure during a hedonic experience? One school of thought recommends that we prepare for experiences in order to maximize pleasure. Indeed, we plan itineraries for perfect vacations; we make music playlists to enjoy our favorite songs; we have lengthy debates before choosing a DVD to watch with friends. However a contrasting philosophy suggests that ‘less preparation’ for experiences yields more pleasure. People often claim to have more fun when they travel on a whim, enjoy old songs more when they come up on the radio, or like watching a movie that comes up on TV even when they own the DVD.

Extant literature examining hedonic experiences, like lay wisdom, is also equivocal in predicting how preparing for an experience can affect its hedonic value. One stream of research suggests that pre-experience savoring and preparation can motivate enhanced appetitive states and greater engagement (e.g. Berridge & Robinson 1998, Higgins 2006, Wadhwa, Shiv, & Nowlis 2008). Another stream of research suggests that pre-experience anticipation or mental preparation can induce satiation or reduce reward-value (e.g. Morewedge, Huh, & Vosgerau 2010; Schultz 2002). At the core, these two different hedonic strategies actually reflect contrasting motivations. Consuming experiences that one has prepared for (active sampling) revolves around enjoying what one has deemed to be the best possible options, while consuming experiences that we little prepared for (passive sampling) revolves around enjoying experiences as they come.

Across experiments ranging from creating music playlists to watching YouTube videos to taking virtual art gallery tours, we find that this effect is driven by a novel mechanism in which informational and motivational factors interact during the pre-experiential stage to change how much enjoyment one derives from different individual components of a hedonic experience. In particular, active sampling depending either on memory or extrinsic information induces focalism on focal packets, which can end up reducing the overall pleasure of an experience via the relative derogation of non-focal packets (Experiments 1, 3, 4). This effect holds for negative experiences (Experiment 2), but can be attenuated in several circumstances, including when packet-focalism is dispelled by induced focus on a broad range of packets (Experiments 5, 7), or when there is no information on the ordering of packets (Experiment 6).

We find that an active pre-experience generally results in a greater desire for focal packets and reduced weighting and enjoyment of non-focal packets of an experience, which can result in less pleasure being derived from the overall experience. During passive sampling however, attention is captive to the immediate packets that are presented (even if those packets are non-focal ones), so derogation of peripheral packets does not occur. In other words, our findings intuit that a movie preview can make a movie worse not because it ‘spoils’ the focal scenes, but because it decreases how much one enjoys the non-focal scenes and structure of the movie. For repeated experiences, the bias in active sampling is akin to a listener interrupting the storyteller and telling them to “get to the good bit already,” while passive sampling is akin to a captive listener sitting back and enjoying the story as it comes, even when the story is familiar.

Despite its novel predictions showing both the pros and cons of preparing for experiences, our research also integrates cohesively with previous literatures: one on the structure of experiential utility, and another on the valuation of hedonic experiences. Firstly, prior research on the structure of hedonic experiences has partitioned experiential utility into three distinct stages – anticipation, online experience, and memory (Elster & Loewenstein 1992; Kahneman, Wakker, & Sarin 1997). Extant work on the valuation of hedonic experiences has primarily examined how factors in the anticipatory phase affect experience reward value (e.g. Nowlis, Mandel, & McCabe 2004; Nowlis and Shiv 2004; Plassman et al 2007). Our interests however, are in how information from memory can interact with desires in anticipation to change how online utility is derived from experiences. This framework also predicts an iterative process whereby active sampling’s effect on experienced utility will change memory, which will then change anticipation, experience, and then memory again, etc. Critically, we also study each macro aspect of experience with a micro lens by exploring packet-level differences.

This line of investigation has numerous managerial implications for optimizing repeat consumption (for products ranging from media to cereal), service design, brand evolution, and promotional strategies (e.g. blanket promotion prior to a movie release can make the actual movie experience worse). In such areas, our findings make counter-intuitive predictions, for example, that promoting the non-peak packets along with the peak packets can actually enhance an overall experience, while promoting the best aspects of an experience can end up yielding the worst overall experience.
Can You Feel What You Expect? How A-Modal Information Affects Haptic Perception

EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

Traditional retailers have begun to take advantage of the holistic sensory experience. Not only in practice, but also scientifically, sensory marketing has gained relevance (Krishna 2011). However, there is only little research within the field of sensory marketing that explores the influence of a-modal information (Krishna 2011). Moreover, with sensory information being ambiguous in nature (Troye and Supphellen 2012), we assume the suggestibility of sensory perception by a-modal information.

We employ online peer reviews as one type of a-modal information (e.g. Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006). In an experiment, we demonstrate that despite the physical presence of a product in an evaluation task and the possibility to directly touch it, positive social information impacts perceived softness positively compared to negative social information.

We draw on the two-stage model of cognition (Peracchio and Luna 2006) to explain the effects of social information on haptic perception. It suggests that consumer judgments are formed in a preliminary stage of automatic processing and then followed by a more conscious stage with deliberate processing.

Moreover, we expect that evaluative criteria (as peer reviews) facilitate the encoding of the sensory experience. As sensory attributes are often ambiguous because it is unclear what factors contribute to the attribute, Hoch and Ha (1986) found that the quality of polo shirts can be influenced by positive information regarding the quality.

By the rise of the web 2.0 and the tremendous amount of information online, social information and word of mouth (WOM) have become of utmost importance in influencing consumer behavior (for a recent review see Zhu and Zhang 2010). Accordingly, many companies take advantage of online consumer reviews as a new unconventional marketing tool. Prior studies demonstrate that firms not only regularly post-product information about their offerings and sponsor promotional chats on online forums, but also proactively encourage their consumers to spread the word about their products online (Godes and Mayzlin 2004).

Effects of online consumer reviews can be both positive and negative. By acting as informant and recommender, online consumer reviews have the capability of influencing decision making processes and consumer behavior (Park and Lee 2008).

Touch research both within psychology and consumer behavior literature is still in its infancy, although attention is increasing (e.g. Peck and Childers 2008). In accordance to Krishna and Morrin (2008), haptic perception implies the “perceptual processing of inputs from multiple subsystems including those in skin, muscles, tendons and joints” (p. 808). Haptic exploration is a major component in determining overall product quality. Therefore, touch plays an instrumental role and is predictive of properties relevant to the product performance.

Contrary to online studies, our judgment task provides the opportunity to directly touch the product and thus makes the social information a stimulus of minor instrumental relevance. Thus, it would be plausible, that consumers rely on their individual haptic input for the evaluation of softness perception. But as established by Burtnkrant and Cousineau (1975) in an offline setting, people use other individuals’ product evaluations as a source of information about the product. According to this theorizing, we propose the following:

H1: “Positive compared to negative social information affects the perceived softness of a fabric positively.”

Recent research on touch further has revealed that consumers differ in terms of their haptic orientation, called need for touch (NFT). Peck and Childers (2003a) define need for touch as “a reference for the extraction and utilization of information obtained through the haptic system” (Peck and Childers 2003a, p. 431). NFT is a multi-dimensional construct with two underlying factors, namely instrumental and autotelic touch. The strength of both dimensions of NFT differs between individuals and can be measured by the “Need for Touch Scale” developed by Peck and Childers (2003a). As our experiment is an evaluation task that asks participants to touch the product in order to gain information, we focus on the instrumental dimension in the scope of this study.

Research in this emerging area has primarily concentrated on touch versus no touch conditions and elaborated that tactile input increases product evaluations for high quality products among people high in NFT (Grohmann et al., 2007). As for general differences between haptic orientation, consumer behavior literature shows that people high in NFT utilize haptic information earlier in their product evaluations than their low NFT counterparts (e.g. Peck and Childers 2003). To them, the haptic experience is a convincing element in product judgment (e.g. Peck and Wiggins 2006).

H2: “Individuals high in instrumental NFT will be less influenced by social information in their softness ratings than those low in instrumental NFT.”

We created the social information stimulus according to prior research (e.g. Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006; Park, Lee, and Han 2007). We created five reviews set at three lines (positive 5 stars, negative 1 star). The review’s content aimed at performing a recommendation role and focused on the haptic perception of the towel. In line with Park et al. (2007), brand effects were controlled by not displaying brand name. The haptic stimulus was a white towel as it possesses salient haptic attributes and thus serves as an example of products where touch is diagnostic and important in assessing quality. The tag was removed, the brand name undisclosed (Peck and Childers, 2003). The towel was of medium quality and softness.

A total of 81 undergraduate students (M_age = 23.02) participated in the experiment in exchange for chocolate bars. They were randomly assigned to one of the experimental conditions (positive / negative social information). We asked participants to read the peer evaluations and handed them the towel (time of haptic exploration constant at 20 seconds). The questionnaire assessed the towel’s perceived softness with five items (e.g. “the towel feels soft”, “the towel feels plush”; Cronbach’s alpha = .90). Individuals’ instrumental need for touch was measured by six items from the need for touch scale (Peck and Childers 2003; Cronbach’s alpha = .89).

We employed a 2 (valence of social information: positive vs. negative) x 2 (instrumental need for touch: high vs. low) between-subjects design. A median split for instrumental need for touch was performed. An ANOVA revealed the predicted main effect of social information valence (p< .05) and a marginally significant main effect of individual’s instrumental need for touch (p< .10) on perceived softness. No significant interaction effect of social information valence x instrumental need for touch was found (p>.10). Results show that individuals who read the positive social information compared to negative social information before touching the towel rated the same towel as significantly softer (M_{positive} = 4.90 vs. M_{negative} = 3.62). Further, individuals high compared to low in instrumental need for touch are less influenced by social information in general in their softness perception (M_{high_NFT} = 4.40 vs. M_{low_NFT} = 4.06).

Our study shows that social information affects haptic softness perception of a towel. This is true despite the salient diagnostic attribute of the towel (softness) which could be directly experienced in our study. Moreover, individuals high in instrumental need for touch are less influenced by a-modal information and individuals low in instrumental need for touch.
Paper #1: Using the Shopping with Consumers Technique
Tina Lowrey, HEC Paris*
Stacy Neier, Loyola University Chicago,
Cele Otnes, Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Carolyn Rivers, Loyola University Chicago, USA
Srinivas Venugopal, Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Madhubalan Viswanathan, Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Linda Tuncay Zayer, Loyola University Chicago, USA

Paper #2: Goal Setting, Goal Pursuit, and the Dynamics of Grocery Shopping
Ana I. A. Costa, Católica-Lisbon, School of Business & Economics*
Rita Coelho do Vale, Católica-Lisbon, School of Business & Economics*

Paper #3: Processing Fluency and Pleasure in Retail Environments: Are Visually Complex Interiors Less Likely to Attract Customers?
Ulrich R. Orth, Christian-Albrechts-Universität Kiel*
Christiane Solf, Christian-Albrechts-Universität Kiel
Jochen Wirtz, National University of Singapore

Paper #4: The battle of extrinsic cues: Just what does it take to convey quality? A cross-country ‘wine store’ experiment
Roberta Veale, Adelaide University*
Pascale Quester, Adelaide University
Michael Proksch, Christian-Albrechts-Universität Kiel
Ana Valenzuela, Universitat Pompeu Fabra

SESSION OVERVIEW
Battles for in-store presence between manufacturers and retailers are intense and costly due to the proliferation of brands, new product introductions, and the scarcity of what is considered prime shelf space (Forster 2002). Such aggressive negotiation for prime in-store treatment suggests that many consumers’ choice decisions are made at the point of sale (Rettie and Brewer 2000). In fact, P&G calls the three to seven seconds when someone notices an item on a store shelf the “first moment of truth” and believes they are a crucial determinant of product choice (Nelson and Ellison 2005).

However, despite the importance of shelf placement in retailers’ and consumers’ decisions, the topic of in-store buying behavior has received surprisingly little attention from consumer psychologists (but see Drèze et al. 1994; Valenzuela and Raghubir 2009; Chandon, Hutchinson, Bradlow and Young 2009).

The proposed session brings together four papers that provide new insights into in-store buying behavior by reinterpreting already established field methodologies. The session begins with the work by Lowrey, Neier, Otnes, Rivers, Venugopal, Viswanathan and Tuncay Zayer, which analyzes how the in-store methodology of “shopping with consumers” has been used since it was first articulated. The presentation includes work made in subsistence marketplaces, with male consumers, in Internet contexts, and in longitudinal studies of gift-giving and spectacular retail settings. Then Costa and Coelho do Vale present findings from a field study employing the SWC technique that uncover how grocery shoppers’ goals and plans affect buying behavior and customer satisfaction. This is followed by two papers, which identify two novel factors influencing in-store behavior and test them using field experiments. Specifically, Orth, Solf and Wirtz propose that the visual complexity of retail environments influences consumer evaluations and consequently their behavioral intentions through affect generated during the processing experience. Finally, Veale, Quester, Orth and Valenzuela identify the intrinsic and extrinsic product attributes, which impact quality and price expectations most consistently when consumers are considering a variety of alternative options from the “shelf”. A cross-country in-store field study analyzes the influence of a combination of five influential extrinsic and one intrinsic product cue on consumer quality expectations of both price and quality in the wine category via a conjoint analysis experimental design. Overall, these papers highlight how a set of well-established field methodologies can be reinvented to answer important novel questions about in-store consumer behavior.

Using the Shopping with Consumers Technique
EXTENDED ABSTRACT
The shopping with consumers (SWC) technique (Otnes, McGrath, and Lowrey 1995; Lowrey, Otnes and McGrath 2005) is ideal for direct observation of various consumer behaviors in field studies. SWC basically consists of combining observation with interviewing. In its original conceptualization (Otnes et al. 1995), researchers accompanied informants on their shopping trips, informally interviewing them during the process without audio- or video-taping the interactions (instead, making detailed field notes immediately after completion of the interaction to reduce the intrusive nature of the technique). The technique has been used to explore a variety of phenomena. For example, McGrath and Otnes (1995) investigated how strangers interact in the marketplace, Lowrey et al. (1998) studied consumer ambivalence caused by marketplace factors, Sherry (1998) used the method (in conjunction with other methods) in his four-year ethnography of Nike Town Chicago, Xia (2003) used SWC to study internet browsing, and Lowrey et al. (2004) used the method in their 12-year longitudinal study of Christmas shopping. More recently, both Zayer and her colleagues, and Viswanathan and his colleagues used SWC in their research, as follows.

Gaining an Expanded Understanding of Male Consumers. Specifically, in research published in the Journal of Retailing, we explored persuasion management strategies of male consumers of fashion and grooming products (Otnes and Tuncay 2008). In further research on male consumers published in Qualitative Market Research, we examined how men formed brand relationships (Zayer and Neier 2011). In both cases, we accompanied informants on shopping trips to drugstores or salons, and to a clothing retailer. Informants were provided $40 to purchase fashion or grooming products and/or services. Informants chose retailers such as boutiques and street vendors to more mainstream retailers in shopping malls and selected a variety of goods and services in the fashion and grooming category. The time spent with informants varied in length from 30 minutes to several hours. During these trips, we took note of key behaviors and immediately following, we typed up detailed notes of the shopping trips. Moreover, in addition to this data, we also conducted in-depth interviews and a collage technique with informants to gain a richer understanding of the phenomenon we were studying.

This technique was invaluable in gaining a nuanced understanding of consumers’ behaviors and perceptions in situ. Informants were able to articulate exactly what was on their minds as they were shopping. Moreover, the technique allowed researchers to pick up on interesting marketplace behaviors that would not have been revealed,
Goal Setting, Goal Pursuit, and the Dynamics of Grocery Shopping

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Grocery store managers want customers to have pleasant and satisfying shopping experiences, as this will ultimately drive sales, loyalty, and brand equity. How store visits unfold, however, depends largely on their original intent, i.e., on whether customers are shopping to stock up for the month, top up weekly purchases, buy food for dinner, take advantage of promotions, or simply for leisure (Walters and Jamil 2003). While in some instances, shoppers take time to scroll down aisles and consider several purchases, in others they focus on quickly finding and buying a few intended items (Hui, Fader, and Bradlow 2009). Creating store environments that successfully accommodate customers with different shopping goals and decisional mindsets poses a considerable challenge for retailers (Gollwitzer and Bayer 1999).

Point-of-purchase promotions encouraging shoppers to switch their initial buying intentions, or acquire more items than initially planned, are a ubiquitous feature of retail landscapes (Bell, Corsten and, Knox 2011). Consumers respond positively to in-store marketing when it activates forgotten needs (Inman, Winner, and Ferraro 2009), materializes broadly sketched purchase intentions (Lee and Ariely 2006), or suggests better ways to attain shopping goals (Walters and Jamil 2003). In such instances, unplanned buying may become a valued part of the shopping experience, even though purchases are, deliberately or otherwise (Dijksterhuis et al. 2005), largely driven by external cues. But grocery shopping is a frequent, routine and largely utilitarian activity for most. Over time, consumers may thus become aware of tendencies to engage in unplanned buying with detrimental outcomes – like overspend time and money, struggle to make basic purchase decisions, or experience buyers’ regret –, and develop behavioral strategies to curb exposure or decrease susceptibility to in-store stimuli (Inman et al. 2009). They may even come to avoid shopping in environments where they feel unplanned buying is harder to control. Self-regulation of responses to point-of-purchase marketing has thus the potential to affect purchase behavior as well as satisfaction with the shopping experience, and ultimately store loyalty.

Grocery shopping began to attract academics with the work of Kollat and Willett (1967) on impulse buying. Some have since analyzed the influence of consumer characteristics (Beatty and Ferrell 1998), product category (Wertenbroch 1998), in-store promotions (Heilman, Nakamoto and Rao 2002; Stilley, Inman and, Wakefield 2010a), and out-of-store marketing (Bell et al. 2011) on unplanned purchases. Others have studied how situational aspects like store familiarity (Inman et al. 2009), shopping party size/composition (POPAI 2011), time pressure (Park, Iyer, and Smith 1989), and shopping budget (Stilley et al. 2010b), may lead to unplanned buying. But few have yet investigated how process variables such as shopping goals (Bell et al. 2011), plans (Stilley et al. 2010b), and self-regulating strategies (Block and Morwitz 1999) influence this behavior. Importantly, a clear picture of how these interact with in-store stimuli to shape grocery shopping behavior is still lacking.

This paper presents findings from a field study aimed at uncovering how consumers’ goal setting and striving activities influence their grocery shopping behavior and satisfaction with shopping experiences. The study undertook an action phases approach (Heckhausen e Gollwitzer 1987) to investigate the dynamics of grocery shopping trips in detail. Action phase models hold that goal-directed consumption entails several stages (Bagozzi and Dholakia 1999):

- Goal setting, when superordinate, focal and subordinate consumption needs are ascertained and the broad motives and context for engaging in purchases emerge;
- Goal striving, when specific purchase intentions are defined and a shopping plan envisaged;
- Action initiation and control, when shopping take place under self-regulation, to ensure plan enactment upon exposure to in-store stimuli;
- Evaluation, when consumers assess how well they have enacted plans, fulfilled intentions and achieved goals;
- Feedback, when the cognitive and affective outcomes from stage 4 are integrated in new goal-directed actions.

The field study employed the SWC technique (Ottes, McGrath and, Lowrey 1995) to observe in-store behavior and inquiry consumers about shopping drivers and outcomes. It involved the completion of structured interviews with 156 grocery shoppers, the collection of shopping lists and bills, and the administration of a written questionnaire. Qualitative data underwent content analysis for interpretation and synthesis, and was then compiled with quantitative data for further analysis.

Goal-directed consumption implies that attaining desired shopping outcomes depends as much on their nature as on what is done to achieve them. Consumers’ scripts, detailing the consumption goals to be achieved, as well as when, where and how to act to achieve them (i.e., the consumption plans), have been shown to shape the provisioning, preparation and consumption of meals to a great extent (Costa et al. 2007). Accordingly, field study results show that
unplanned buying occurs mostly when shopping goals are construed at an abstract level (e.g., carry out the monthly shopping trip), and customers shopped in deliberative mindset (i.e., with ill-defined purchase intentions and shopping plans). In this case, self-regulatory activities are scarce and shoppers are only moderately satisfied with retail experiences. Conversely, when concrete shopping goals (e.g., to take advantage of particular product discounts) are tied to implemental mindsets (e.g., written shopping list use), unplanned purchases become marginal, and both self-regulation and customer satisfaction increase. Satisfaction however drops when customers have more concrete shopping goals (e.g., buy food for dinner), but carry out shopping trips with mainly deliberative mindsets.

As manufacturers and retailers stretch ever-decreasing budgets to deploy promotions across traditional and online stores, knowledge on where, when and why consumers purchase what they do becomes increasingly valuable. Meanwhile, shoppers try more than ever to curb the temptation of buying what they did not plan, do not really need or simply cannot afford, in light of the current economic crisis. Tighter self-regulation of reactions to in-store stimuli, however, implies they might miss unexpected bargains, fail to recall what they intended to buy, or purchase items that do not best meet their needs. Further insights into consumers’ shopping goals and plans will lead to a more complete and coherent picture of in-store decision-making, and more enlightened advice on how to promote or inhibit it.

**Processing Fluency and Pleasure in Retail Environments: Are Visually Complex Interiors Less Likely to Attract Customers?**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

We propose that the visual complexity of retail environments influences consumer evaluations and consequently their behavioral intentions through affect generated during the processing experience. Drawing from research on processing fluency, we suggest that interior designs lower (vs. higher) in visual complexity are more likely to relate to greater pleasure and consequently to generate more favorable store evaluations and approach behavior. Results from one experiment and one field study provide support to the basic hypothesis.

Long Abstract: The influence of interior design in general and specific design characteristics (i.e., complexity) in particular on visitor experiences and behaviors has received attention in diverse contexts such as automobiles, architecture, retail stores, hospitality facilities, and brands. Despite these studies, our theoretical understanding of how visual complexity can influence visitor affect and behavior in retail environments remains limited. The major goal of this paper is to explore how a retail environment’s visual complexity impacts prospective customers along with the extent to which individual differences play a role. In particular, we propose that the ease of a consumer processing a visual environment (i.e., their processing fluency) will affect how visual complexity influences store evaluations and behavioral intention.

Based on the concept of processing fluency (the ease of stimulus processing), researchers developed an understanding of how visual cues impact consumer evaluations and intentions. Processing fluency is generally thought to be affectively positive with more fluent stimuli associated with more positive response. Research on salient stimulus characteristics established that visual complexity is an established driver of fluency. In general, designs are more complex when they include larger numbers of objects; when objects are more irregular, dissimilar in shape, color, texture, orientation; when objects have more visual detail, and when spatial arrangement of objects is asymmetric or irregular. Different than previous studies on the design of products, packages, or abstract stimuli, we focus on the interior design of retail environments. Specifically, we examine the perceived ease of processing a simple versus a complex visual environment, such that ease of processing effects are significantly more positive for simple rather than complex interiors (complexity is a traditional manipulation of processing fluency). To provide insights into the underlying process we explore the mediating role of affective response (pleasure), and the moderating roles of two individual difference variables, processing mode and shopping motivation.

Visual perception and processing models emphasize the role of an individual’s processing mode in determining whether a person processes and perceives an environment holistically or analytically. Consumers with a holistic processing style will base their responses on cues that are different from consumers with an analytical style, namely the configuration of elements working together rather than single elements. Therefore individual processing mode should moderate the effect of complexity on pleasure such that holistic processing facilitates processing of complex stimuli and thus increases fluency and positive affect, whereas analytic processing hinders processing and relates to less positive affect.

A parallel stream of research suggests that differences in consumer motivation may impact their response to the visual design of retail environments. Specifically, a utilitarian shopping orientation coinciding with low complexity should enhance processing ease and should support fluency and positive affect, whereas a hedonic shopping should elicit more positive affect in more complex environments. Two empirical studies, one experiment and the other a field study aimed at providing evidence for the hypothesized effects.

Study 1 (N=196), a 2 (retail interior complexity: high vs. low) x 2 (shopping motivation: hedonic vs. utilitarian) experiment, exposed students to digital images of simple and complex interiors of deli stores selected after a pretest. Shopping motivation was manipulated by asking participants to imagine they were shopping for deli using either hedonic or utilitarian descriptors. Stimuli were displayed on a notebook with respondent ratings captured electronically. After viewing the stimulus, participants submitted their ratings of visual complexity, pleasure, store evaluation, approach-avoidance, and shopping motivation. To assess individual processing mode we employed a series of standard embedded figures tests (EFT) for completion within five minutes of time. For each EFT respondents had to identify a small abstract figure hidden within a larger more complex pattern.

As expected, results of tests for mediation and moderated mediation indicate a significant effect of complexity (through pleasure) on store evaluation (product quality, store attractiveness, price value) and subsequently on behavioral intention (approach-avoidance). In particular, lower complexity was associated with greater pleasure but only for utilitarian shopping motivation. In addition, a holistic processing mode enhanced the effect of complexity on pleasure. To better understand the postulated underlying process of fluency and to test the robustness of these findings in a field setting, we conducted study 2.

In study 2 (N = 110), customers were randomly-intercepted in twelve coffee shops pre-selected to vary in interior complexity. Different than study 1, we additionally incorporated a direct measure of processing fluency, and used a different embedded figures test. Results of this field study were nearly identical to those of study 1. Specifically, tests of simple mediation corroborated the mediating role of pleasure, and pointed at a key role of processing fluency. Tests of moderated mediation confirmed that the influence of complexity
was muted when customers had a hedonic shopping motivation and was enhanced with individuals in a holistic processing mode.

Very little prior research has investigated effects of retail environments' interior visual design complexity on customers. In addition, fluency research has focused almost exclusively on consumer processing of products, packages, or more abstract objects with little relevance for retail environments. By integrating both streams, this research presents initial evidence for the theoretical importance of processing fluency in the context of retail environments. It also offers a theoretically grounded perspective on the experience of pleasure. One of the most intriguing findings of the two studies is evidence that fluency can be applied to consumer processing of environments, an insight not yet being reported by fluency researchers. Practical implications lay on aiding retailers in more confidently employing interior design for attracting and retaining customers in line with the nature of their business and target customers. In particular, stores catering to hedonically motivated customers would be well-advised to design more visually complex interiors, whereas firms with more utilitarian offerings should employ designs that are simpler and easier to process by customers.

The battle of extrinsic cues: Just what does it take to convey quality? A cross-country ‘wine store’ experiment

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This cross-country study investigates the influence of five extrinsic and one intrinsic product cues on consumer quality and price expectations via a conjoint analysis experimental design. Wine product profiles were presented in a simulated wine store display conducted in Singapore, Australia, Germany, China and the USA. Results show consistently that all extrinsic cues are likely to contribute more to quality and price expectations than the intrinsic cue tested.

Long Abstract: Consumers make judgments of product quality, pre- and post-purchase, through their evaluation of both intrinsic and extrinsic product cues (Bredahl, 2003). Whilst intrinsic cues should be more powerful than extrinsic in swaying consumer opinions, consumers are not always able to accurately evaluate these cues prior to purchase and may even employ them inappropriately to judge quality post-purchase (Alba 2000; Kardes, Kim et al. 2001).

Although the extent literature suggests that consumers are able to discriminate ‘good’ from ‘bad’ wines, often citing ‘taste’ and ‘variety’ as important intrinsic attributes influencing their assessment of quality and subsequent purchase decisions, research also has established that many extrinsic factors can actually be more influential (Verdu-Jover, Montes et al. 2004; Veale 2008; Veale and Quester 2009; Veale and Quester 2009). Specifically, recent work has demonstrated that taste rated a poor third (behind COO and price) in determining consumers’ quality ratings (Veale and Quester 2009). This is perhaps not so surprising given many empirical studies demonstrating the overwhelming impact of extrinsic cues on consumers’ taste evaluations, across a wide variety of other food products, such as beef, orange juice, and breakfast bars (Pechmann and Ratneshwar 1992; Aaron, Mela et al. 1994; Gruenert 1997; Bredahl 2003). Specific to wine, empirical evidence shows that the following extrinsic attributes can be expected to significantly influence consumer evaluations of wine quality: country of origin, where ‘old world’ producers such as France and Italy are generally believed to produce better quality products (Veale and Quester 2009); shelf position (horizontality and verticality), where (generally) positions that are ‘central’, ‘higher rather than lower’ and ‘right rather than left’ are expected to result in higher sales (Valenzuela and Raghbir 2009); awards, where wines receiving prizes are likely to be more highly regarded by consumers (Orth and Kraska 2002); label style, where design and personality have been found to be influential (Boudreaux and Palmer 2007) and bottle closure, where the traditional cork closure is associated with better quality (Orth and Kraska 2002). Hence, these extrinsic attributes, at levels replicating some of those found in wine products commercially, were deemed appropriate for testing. Grape variety was chosen as the one intrinsic cue included in the study as it has been found in previous research to be a significant factor in wine evaluation and choice (Orth and Kraska 2002; Verdu-Jover, Montes et al. 2004).

The growing importance of established and emerging international markets has made understanding the influence of extrinsic cues such as country-of-origin (COO), price, brand and packaging on consumer perceptions of quality and subsequent choice even more significant and complex (Wansink, Park et al. 2000; Brodowsky, Tan et al. 2006). Much of the research in this area has used limited number of product cues (and levels within each) and relied on virtual presentations, pictures or descriptions of product offers. This research contributes to our existing knowledge by testing a comprehensive range of wine product attributes in a realistic, but controlled, simulated retail setting. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to identify which extrinsic product attributes, from as comprehensive a list as possible, impacts quality and price expectations most consistently, when consumers are considering a variety of alternative options on the ‘shelf’. To add further validity to the study, the design also includes an intrinsic cue to measure its respective importance when simultaneously presented with the other cues. A second dependent variable in the study was consumer expectations of price for each product. This enabled empirical quantification of the strength of the relationship between price and quality. Price is well documented in the literature as a surrogate cue indicating quality to buyers (Zeithaml 1988; Dodds 1991; Horowitz and Lockshin 2002). However, to the authors’ knowledge the degree to which this heuristic may be employed specifically has not been empirically tested, particularly in a cross-national study. Moreover, whilst we know that important product attributes will each make a contribution to expectations of both price and quality, whether or not each attribute contributes similarly to these dependent variables has not been simultaneously tested. Hence, this research conducted in five diverse geographical and cultural locations, through the use of a full profile conjoint analysis, fractional factorial experimental design is able to investigate these questions empirically.

In this methodology, ‘expected quality’ or ‘expected price’ is derived from respondent judgment of intrinsic and extrinsic cues as measured by the rating given to each profile assessed. Hence, ‘quality’ and ‘price’ are the subjective opinions of each respondent and represents their belief in the ability of the product before them to meet their particular needs (Opdhus and Trijp 1995; Acerbom and Dopicco 2000; Becker 2000) and what they think they would have to sacrifice to obtain it. The outcome in each case is a set of additive part-worth ‘utilities’ derived from the quality scores that are basically index numbers, corresponding to regression coefficients, measuring how valuable or desirable a particular product feature is to the respondent (Dean 2004). The Ordinary Least Squares Regression (OLS) approach to ratings-based conjoint analysis is commonly used for this analysis as it offers a straightforward, yet robust, method of deriving the different utility values for each respondent (Hair, Anderson et al. 1987). Based on the literature and an analysis of typical commercially available wine products appropriate levels of each attribute were determined, resulting in a fractional factorial design comprised of 27 wine profiles. All bottles were presented to respondents in their designated location on a three-shelf display, nine...
bottles wide in a simulated wine store situated at a large tertiary organization in Singapore (Figure 1.). The horizontal shelf positions stipulated in the experimental design placed three bottles in each of specified horizontal shelf locations. In order to minimize any order effects, rotations of each of the three bottles in each ‘left’, ‘center’ and ‘right’ position was undertaken at regular intervals.

Respondents (over the age of 18 of course) were recruited from the general population using convenience, snow-ball sampling methods in each location. Those taking part were provided with a full briefing and taken through a practice exercise to ensure their understanding and consistency. Then, each respondent was taken to the wine shelf display where a blank ‘tag’ had been placed under every bottle. Firstly, they were asked to indicate the price they would expect to pay for each bottle on the shelf (prices were then standardized to US dollars for analysis), then they rated each bottle on a scale of one (very poor quality) to nine (very good quality) and indicated this rating by writing it down on the appropriate tag. The task took approximately fifteen to twenty minutes to complete. Results show consistently that all extrinsic cues are likely to contribute more to quality and price expectations than the intrinsic cue tested. Specifically, shelf position, awards, traditional labels and ‘old world’ COO are all likely to induce higher expectations.
Paper #1: Consider this: The effects of recommended choice feature consideration on brain activity and behavior during consumption and interpersonal decisions

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Paper #2: Is food and money the same? Behavioral and neural similarities when choosing different product types

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Paper #3: How incidental affect alters subsequent judgments: Insights from behavioral and fMRI studies

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Paper #4: Integrating perceptual and consumer decision-making: Eye-tracking experiments

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SESSION OVERVIEW

The decision-making process is influenced by a number of situational and personality factors. For example, food-related choices are influenced by social determinants (such as culture, family, peers and meal patterns), biological determinants (such as hunger, appetite, and taste), economic determinants (such as cost, income, availability), physical determinants (such as access, education, skills, and time), psychological determinants (such as mood, stress and guilt), and attitudes, beliefs and knowledge about food (European Food Information Council). The current session will discuss how some of these factors modify the decision-making process.

In study 1, Hare and colleagues show that explicit instructions to consider higher level, abstract decision attributes can shift choices in favor of these attributes. More specifically, they find that neural systems implicated in intrinsically motivated self-control behavior are also recruited for externally cued consideration of long-term decision outcomes. This study thus improves our understanding of how social factors, such as family or peer recommendations, affect the decision-making process.

In study 2, Levy and Glimcher examine how the brain represents and compares the subjective values of different product types, i.e., food and money, inside the fMRI scanner. Further, they examined behaviorally how changing the satiety and thirst levels affect consumers’ choices for these same goods. They found that there are partially distinct value representations in the brain for food and money. Specifically, the posterior cingulate cortex mainly represents the subjective value of money and the hypothalamic region mainly represents the subjective value of food. Furthermore, they found evidence for a common currency representation of value. Sub-areas of the vmPFC and striatum represented both subjective values on a single common activity scale. Finally, they found that someone who is very risk averse when satiated will become less risk averse when deprived, and that someone who was risk tolerant while satiated will become more risk averse when deprived. In other words, all humans tend to converge to a similar, weakly risk-averse attitude when deprived. This study thus improves our understanding of how biological factors, such as hunger, affect the decision-making process.

The third project, presented by Hilke Plassmann, looks at how the receipt of unrelated rewards affects subsequent judgments. In three studies, subjects are asked to evaluate how much they enjoyed the consumption of a food – in the particular case, the taste of wine - and they are showing biased judgments based on the prior receipt of unrelated rewards such as monetary gains or exposure to affective pictures. Plassmann and colleagues also show that this effect is altered by the motivational state of consumer. Interestingly, both behavioral and neural measures of valuation show this bias, but in different directions. In sum, this project sheds further light on how affective and biological factors, such as unrelated primary and secondary rewards and hunger state influence subsequent judgments about the quality of the consumption experience and in turn the decision-making process.

Finally, in study 4, Mormann and colleagues show that perceptual factors influence the decision-making process. This study introduces a neuro-computational model of bottom-up visual attention from visual neuroscience to measure the effects of bottom-up visual features on attention and choice. The results show that consumers indeed choose their most preferred items most of the time. However, among the food items that they like (liking-rating of 4 or 5 out of 5), subjects are more likely to choose those that are visually salient, i.e., their packaging stands out compared to that of the alternatives, and they are showing biased judgments based on the prior receipt of unrelated rewards such as monetary gains or exposure to affective pictures. Plassmann and colleagues also show that this effect is altered by the motivational state of consumer. Interestingly, both behavioral and neural measures of valuation show this bias, but in different directions. In sum, this project sheds further light on how affective and biological factors, such as unrelated primary and secondary rewards and hunger state influence subsequent judgments about the quality of the consumption experience and in turn the decision-making process.

Consider this: The effects of recommended choice feature consideration on brain activity and behavior during consumption and interpersonal decisions

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Recommendations for healthy eating, efficient exercise, responsible spending, and proper social behavior abound. Consumers, and decision-makers in general, must frequently evaluate the validity and appropriateness of various forms of advice for themselves given their current states. Sometimes the advice is relevant, trustworthy, and should be followed, but other times it is irrelevant or untrustworthy and should be ignored. In previous work, we have shown that encouraging the consideration of healthiness before food consumption choices can promote healthier eating behavior during the experimental session (Hare et al., 2011). Furthermore, we used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to examine brain activity patterns during these healthier choices and found greater activity in neural networks similar to those utilized by dieting individuals employing active self-control (Hare et al., 2009). In contrast, behavioral choice patterns and neural activity did not differ from control ses-
sions when subjects were encouraged to consider the taste of foods before choosing. Note that we explicitly recruited only subjects who reported liking to eat junk food and not currently restricting calorie intake for any reason. These initial findings raised interesting questions about the relationship between complying with suggested evaluation strategies when they differ from one’s natural decision process and effortful, self-initiated control mechanisms at the neural level. Here we extend this work to examine decision situations involving compliance with social norms.

Twenty-five participants played a modified version of the Ultimatum game in the role of responder where choices were made in three conditions. The responder’s role in the Ultimatum game is to decide whether to accept or reject the division of monetary reward suggested by the proposer on each trial. In one set of blocks, participants were instructed to explicitly consider how fair the current offer was in terms of the percentage of the total money given to themselves and the unknown proposer, highlighting the social norm of fairness (FAIR), while in a second set of blocks they were told to consider how much money they would earn by accepting the proposed offer regardless of its fairness, highlighting self-interested profit (MONEY). The last set of choice blocks contained no instructions to focus on either fairness or monetary gains (CONTROL). A mixed effects regression analysis showed that choices were influenced by both the monetary value and relative fairness of the offers (p < 0.001). Moreover, participants were less likely to accept unfair offers in the FAIR blocks (p < 0.001) and that there were positive interactions between the MONEY condition and the monetary value of the offered split and the FAIR condition and the percentage of the total pot offered (p < 0.001).

The fMRI data revealed brain regions that paralleled the effects of decision context on choice. Activity in the right temporal parietal junction (TPJ) reflected the relative fairness of offers across all trials, while the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (dlPFC) was more active during FAIR block choices compared to control (p < 0.05, whole brain corrected). The ventral medial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC) showed interactions between MONEY blocks and monetary value and FAIR blocks and relative fairness (p < 0.05, whole brain and small volume corrected). Thus, instructed evaluation strategies recruited dlPFC, a region associated with higher order goals and executive control (Miller and Cohen 2001), and changed the relative correlation strength of decision factors and vmPFC activity, a region shown to reflect stimulus value and willingness to pay (Plazzmann et al 2007) for decisions based on social norms (i.e. fairness) in much the same fashion that we showed for health based dietary consumption decisions. Together these data suggest an important role for dlPFC and vmPFC systems in adapting decision computations to fit the current goal context.

Is food and money the same? Behavioral and neural similarities when choosing different product types

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

How do we choose between an apple and two apples? This is relatively straightforward. If we assume that consumers prefer more of a given product, then two apples have a higher value and they will choose the two apples over one apple. But what happens when we need to choose between an apple and an orange? Or whether to buy a snack or to buy a bottle of soda? Consumers make these kinds of choices every day. The product types consumers face in these situations are different. It means that just counting how many items of a given product they have will not help. What they need to do is to take into consideration many different attributes of each product (like color, size, taste, health benefits, etc.), assess the value of each of the attributes and combine all these attributes into one coherent neural value representation of that product.

However, how does the brain compare between a snack and a bottle of soda? What we need, at least in principle, is a single common currency of valuation for comparing these different product types. In order to search for evidence of this common currency representation in the human brain, we have developed a unique experimental method that allows us to estimate the subjective values and risk preferences of each of our subjects for different products and the representation of these values on a common currency.

In this study, subjects made risky choices for money, food, and water. For example, they were asked to choose between 5 pieces of M&M’s for sure or 20 pieces of M&M’s but with only a 50% chance of getting them (and a 50% chance of getting nothing). This allowed us to estimate subjects’ utility functions (the mapping between objective and subjective values) for all three reward types and measure their risk preferences. We demonstrated that people are idiosyncratic in their preferences and risk averse not only for money (as been shown previously) but also for food and water. Interestingly, across subjects the level of risk preferences was highly correlated. That is, a subject that is more risk averse in a given reward type will likely be more risk averse in another reward type. The measured degree of risk aversion for one reward type can thus be used to predict the degree of risk aversion that subject will show for a different reward type relative to other choosers – something which had never before been demonstrated. Importantly, these behavioral findings of similarities in how values are represented within an individual also support the notion of a core common valuation system involved in choices for every reward type. This is, of course, the kind of system one would require for comparing between apples and oranges.

Next, we wanted to see if we could find value representations in the brain for specific reward types and hoped to gather evidence for a core common valuation system in the brain that can trade off between apples and oranges. For this aim, we employed functional magnetic resonance imaging and examined subjects while they made choices for food and money as described above. We found that there are, in fact, partially distinct value representations in the brain for food and money. Specifically, we found that the posterior cingulate cortex mainly represents the subjective value of money and the hypothalamic region mainly represents the subjective value of food. Furthermore, we found evidence for a common currency representation of value. Sub-areas of the vmPFC and striatum represented both subjective values on a single common activity scale.

The decision whether to buy a snack or a bottle of soda is also affected if the consumer is hungry or thirsty. In the fMRI study we showed that the hypothalamic region is representing subjective value for food. It is widely known that the hypothalamus is mediating homeostasis mechanisms and is crucial for controlling hunger and thirst signals (Schwartz, Woods, Porte, Seeley, & Baskin, 2000). Therefore, in the next step of this project we wanted to determine how internal states, like hunger or thirst, interact with value to guide choices.

Fifty-six subjects conducted two behavioral sessions separated by at least a week. In one session they were in a deprived condition (they arrived to the lab after fasting for 4 hours) and the other time in a satiated condition (they arrived to the lab after consuming a full meal plus a drink). We replicated the existing observation in the literature that, on average, deprived humans become more risk tolerant as compared to the satiated state. Our data indicate, however, that this average change in risk attitude is a general phenomenon and it affects the valuation of monetary rewards in addition to the valuation
of the deprived reward (food and water). That is, hungry people are significantly more risk tolerant with regard to money (on average) than they are sated. This again supports the notion of a core common valuation system in which manipulations like food deprivation alter valuations throughout the choice architecture. In fact, this observation may prove foundational for explaining what is called in Arab stock markets ‘The Ramadan Effect’, the observation that macroeconomic volatility decreases and the average daily return jumps three times during the month-long fast of Ramadan (Bialkowski, Etebari, & Wisniewski, 2012; Seyyed, Abraham, & Al-Hajji, 2005).

Most importantly though, we showed that this shift in risk attitude is not as straightforward as had been previously believed. Our data revealed a structured within-subjects change in risk attitude. While it is true that someone who is very risk averse when satiated will become less risk averse when deprived, we found that someone who was risk tolerant while satiated will become more risk averse when deprived. In other words, all humans tend to converge to a similar, weakly risk-averse attitude when deprived. The fact that a small majority of humans are more risk-averse than this convergence point under satiation, accounts for previous between-subject findings. When humans are sated they show heterogeneity of risk preferences, but as they become deprived a single convergence point appears to emerge (Levy, Thavikulwat, & Glimcher, 2012).

There are several consumer implications from these studies. First, when consumers make decisions for different products they eventually use a common valuation system. Therefore, anything that will influence or change the neural activity of this common valuation system will affect consumer behavior. Second, internal state matters for consumers’ preferences and choices. Although, this seems obvious, we showed that changes of internal state in one domain (e.g. hunger) affects risk preferences for a non-deprived good like money. This has important implications regarding when it is best (in relation to ones current internal state level) to make certain kinds of decisions. For instance, we showed that changes of internal state in one domain (e.g. hunger) affects risk preferences for a non-deprived good like money. This has important implications regarding when it is best (in relation to ones current internal state level) to make certain kinds of decisions like health, investments or insurance. Therefore, if we truly want to understand consumers’ preferences we must take into consideration both the internal state and the context in which consumers are making their choices.

How incidental affect alters subsequent judgments:
Insights from behavioral and fMRI studies

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

People do not have stable, coherent and readily accessible preferences that can be reliably measured through self-report. Instead, judgments are constructed on the spot and recent, contextual factors exert a disproportional influence on judgments (Payne, Bettman, and Johnson, 1992; Slovic, 1995). These contextual influences include feelings that are unrelated to the judgment (such as moods, emotions, and expectation of receiving a reward, Schwarz & Clore 1996). Why is the brain susceptible to these types of rewards that engender such changes in revealed preferences? To address this question, we studied the impact of incidental affect on behavioral measures of experienced value (studies 1a-3) and the neural representation of experienced value (study 1b), an essential computation in the process of value-based decision-making.

In study 1, we scanned human subjects’ brains (N=19, 6f, aged 21-46 years) using fMRI while engaging in a task that first involved the receipt of a monetary reward ($0, $50, $200) for real using a one-armed bandit task and subsequently the receipt of a food reward (two different liked wines). During the tasting task, subjects were instructed to evaluate how much they liked the taste of each wine. Behavioral analysis showed that the incidental rewards (i.e. amounts won from the slot machine) significantly biased participant’s judgments of how much they enjoyed the wines (F(1, 18) = 7.46, p=.013). No effect on reaction times was found. We replicated these effects on behavioral measures of valuation in two follow-up studies. In study 2 (N=80, 41m, aged 18-29 years), we tested whether our effects were due to anchoring by the higher monetary gains on the subsequent liking ratings of the wines and could not find evidence for such an anchoring effect. Instead we found that wines tastes significantly worse after losing 5 EUR as compared to winning 5 EUR (planned contrast: F(1,77)=5.16, p=.026) and to winning 10 EUR (planned contrast: F(1,77)=6.82, p=.010). In study 3 (N=160, all females, aged 18-36), we conceptually replicated this effect for a different type of reward (i.e. exposure to affective vs. neutral print ads) and also investigated whether these effects depend on the motivational state of the consumer (i.e. hungry vs. satiated state). We could replicate our findings also for such primary rewards (main effect: F(1,151)=6.76, p=.010) and showed that the effects depend on the motivational state in the high affect ad but not in the low affect ad condition (planned contrast for motivational state in high affect group F(1,147)=5.29, p=.023).

We ran a set of different univariate fMRI analysis. First, we looked for brain areas correlating with the size of monetary reward and found that the size of incidental rewards triggered activity changes in different brain areas previously found to be involved in reward processing (i.e. vStr, dStr, amygdala, insula, inferior OFC). Second, we investigated brain areas that correlate with the size of reported experienced value (EV) and found that EV was encoded in brain areas that also have been previously found to encode EV (i.e. vmPFC, the inferior lateral OFC, anterior insula). Third, we analyzed the neural correlates of how the judgment of the consumption experience is biased by the size of the incidental reward. Interestingly, we found that incidental rewards affect EV through a negative correlation in two of the EV areas mentioned above, the insula and the inferior lateral OFC. Our own data and also previous studies could show that activity in these brain areas correlate negatively with taste pleasantness.

Our results show that incidental rewards have an effect of reported EV. Interestingly, our fMRI results reveal that incidental affect bias taste processing on an earlier stage as compared to more cognitive cues (i.e. the price of the wine, semantic label of an odor, Plassmann et al. 2008). Finally, it seems that incidental affect “make subjects dislike the wines less” instead of liking them more as compared to other papers that have looked at a cognitive modulation of EV.

Integrating perceptual and consumer decision-making:
Eye-tracking experiments

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We show that consumers frequently choose alternatives, i.e., food items, that are visually salient, sometimes even when the less salient alternatives are more liked. Three properties of visual attention give rise to this effect: people look earlier, more often, and longer at visually salient alternatives, irrespective of their reward value.

In today’s cluttered world, attention is a scarce resource (Simon 1971). How consumers allocate their scarce attention has a profound effect on their choices (Janiszewski, Kuo, & Tavassoli 2013; Bettman 1979). Recently, a senior expert on consumer and shopper insights from a major global consulting company pointed out that consumers frequently engage in “zero second shopping” spending minimal amounts of attention as they make every-day purchases.
Therefore, a major objective for marketers is to gain consumer attention (Atalay, Bodur, & Rasolofoarison 2012; Milosavljevic & Cerf 2008).

Two types of factors drive consumer attention at the point-of-purchase: bottom-up, visual features, such as the color or brightness of packaging (Milosavljevic, Navalpakkam, Koch, & Rangel 2012; Chandon, Hutchinson, Bradlow, and Young 2009; van der Lans, Pieters, & Wedel 2008; Rosbergen, Pieters, & Wedel 1997) and goal-dependent, top-down features, such as consumer goals or preferences (Chandon et al., 2009; Rayner, Miller, & Rotello 2008; Pieters & Wedel 2007). However, it is not clear what the relationship between bottom-up and top-down features is and how they affect attention and choice. Recently, Chandon et al. (2009; p. 16) suggested for future decision-making research to “directly measure the effects of brand accessibility and liking and to examine how they interact with in-store factors.” This is the goal of the current research. The key questions are: What drives consumer attention during decision-making at the point-of-purchase? Do people look at the most visually salient, i.e., brightest, choice alternatives? Or does their attention go to the most liked and thus goal-relevant options? In other words, what are the effects of bottom-up and top-down features on attention allocation? And how does this allocation of attention influence consumer choices?

Research in marketing and economics suggests that top-down consumer preferences are a strong predictor of consumer choice. What is less well understood is how bottom-up visual features influence attention and decision-making. We here introduce a class of neuro-computational models of visual saliency from visual neuroscience (Nuthmann, Smith, Engebret and Henderson 2010; Walther and Koch 2006; Itti, Koch, and Niebur 1998) to measure the strength of bottom-up automatic attention. A typical model analyzes each pixel in a given image and assigns to it a set of values for a number of different visual features, such as color or brightness. Next, a complex algorithm groups visually interesting pixels into areas in the visual scene that are visually salient, i.e., different from the rest of the image. In this manner, a heatmap is created that identifies the key regions in the visual image where attention will be deployed automatically (Steger, Wilming, Wolfsteller, Höning, and König 2008; Itti, Koch, and Niebur 1998). In the current study, EyeQuant Attention Analytics software provides bottom-up attention analysis that we use to predict where bottom-up visual attention will be allocated during the decision-making process, and to examine how said visual attention influences consumer choices.

We present hungry subjects with high-resolution photos of store shelves filled with typical snack food items and investigate the extent to which top-down preferences vs. bottom-up visual features drive subjects’ eye-movements as they search and choose a food item that they want to eat out of twenty-eight possible alternatives. During the entire decision-making task, we record moment-to-moment measures of attention, at a rate of 1000 times per second. We use the predictions of the neuro-computational model of visual saliency to measure bottom-up automatic attention to the images of store-shelves, and liking-ratings of 41 different snack food items, such as Doritos and Snickers, to measure subjects’ preferences for each item.

The results show that consumers indeed choose their most preferred items most of the time. However, among the food items that they like (liking-rating of 4 or 5 out of 5), subjects are more likely to choose those that are visually salient, i.e., their packaging stands out compared to that of the alternatives, as predicted a priori by the neuro-computational model of visual saliency. Further, using eye-tracking with high temporal resolution, we demonstrate three distinct mechanisms of bottom-up visual attention that give rise to this effect of visual saliency on choice: subjects look earlier, more often, and longer at visually salient items than at visually less salient alternatives even if the latter are more liked.
The Influence of Framing on Willingness to Pay as an Explanation of the Uncertainty Effect

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Paper #2: People Pay More When They Pay-It-Forward
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Framing has originally been used to describe equivalent outcomes as gains or losses by changing reference points. In the famous “Asian disease problem”, for example, participants exhibited risk-aversion when outcomes were framed as gains, but exhibited risk-seeking when outcomes were framed as losses (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). Similarly, people are willing to incur a sure loss when it is framed as an insurance premium, but are less willing to do so when the sure loss is incurred in a gamble (Hershey, Kunreuther, & Schoemaker, 1982).

Framing not only changes reference points and affects risk-attitudes, but also affects cooperation and willingness to contribute. Cooperation/contribution have been found to be much lower when prisoner’s dilemma or public goods games are labeled “business transaction”, “economic bargaining”, or “Wall street game”, than when they are labeled “social exchange”, “international negotiation”, “interpersonal interaction”, or “community game” (Batson & Moran, 1999; Eiser & Bhavnani, 1974; Kay & Ross, 2003; Liberman, Samuels, & Ross, 2004; Rege & Telle, 2004).

The special session presents two advances in research on framing that extend framing effects beyond risk attitudes and cooperative behavior. Framing is shown to influence willingness to pay.

The first paper by Yang, Vosgerau, and Loewenstein demonstrates that framing a risky prospect as “lottery” as compared to “uncertain gift certificate” substantially reduces WTP. Importantly, people do not subjectively value the lottery ticket less than the uncertain gift certificate (as expressed by similar WTA). Rather, they are willing to pay less for the lottery ticket because it evokes a lower reference price than the uncertain gift certificate (as expressed by a lower WTP).

The second paper by Jung, Nelson, Gneezy and Gneezy demonstrates a surprisingly simple but highly effective nudge to increase pay-what-you-want (PWYW) amounts. When consumers are told that somebody else already paid for them, and they can pay for the next consumer (so-called pay-it-forward pricing or PIF), people pay more than when they are simply asked to pay as much as they want. Note that both pricing schemes are equivalent, a consumer can decide to pay any amount including 0. But as Jung et al. show, the two pricing schemes invoke different social norms which increase WTP under the PIF pricing scheme.

The proposed session deepens our understanding of how framing influences judgment and decision making. The session should thus be appealing to researchers who are interested in monetary valuations, donations, and investments, as well as those interested in judgment and decision making in general.

All papers in this session are completed research projects, and participants have agreed to present if the symposium is accepted.
erence price ($r$, i.e., the market value) even when they subjectively value ($v$) the good more, because this would constitute a bad deal. Formally, $WTP = \min (r; v)$. $WTA$, however, is equal to the maximum of the reference price and valuations, and should not thus be affected by the low reference price under the lottery frame. Formally, $WTA = \max (r; v)$. This suggests: $WTA$, in contrast to $WTP$, should not be affected by the framing manipulation. In Experiment 7, we test this prediction by manipulating the frame (lottery vs. gift certificate) and endowment status buyer vs. seller. Consistent with the reference price account, results show that lottery framing reduces $WTP$ but not $WTA$.

Experiments 8 and 9 extend the previous findings to other frames. In Experiment 8—as in Experiment 2—$WTP$ was found to be little affected by the amount of uncertainty in an offer, but was largely determined by what the offer is called. $WTP$ was substantially lower when offers were framed as lottery, coin flip, raffle, or gamble compared to gift certificate and voucher. The results support the frame-mismatching hypothesis. The $UE$ occurs when frames mismatch (i.e., the certain outcome is called a gift certificate or voucher and the uncertain outcomes are called a lottery ticket, a coin flip, a gamble, or a raffle), but no $UE$ is observed when frames match (both certain and uncertain outcomes are called the same way).

Experiment 9 shows that $WTP$ is substantially reduced when offers are framed as lottery, coin flip, raffle, or gamble compared to gift certificate and voucher (replicating results from Experiment 7 and 8). In contrast, $WTA$ is largely unaffected by how an offer is framed, supporting the hypothesis that the frames lottery, coin flip, raffle, and gamble invoke lower reference prices than the frames gift certificate and voucher.

Concluding, in a series of 9 studies we demonstrate that framing a risky prospect as “lottery”, “coin flip”, “gamble”, or “raffle” compared to “uncertain gift certificate” or “voucher” substantially reduces $WTP$ and causes the $UE$. Importantly, framing does not affect subjective valuations of the prospects but evokes different reference prices. We conclude with a discussion of implications for measuring risk preferences and $WTP$.

People Pay More When They Pay-It-Forward

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

People often follow the norms of market exchange: seeking the lowest possible prices to find the highest possible value. This narrative neglects the fundamental social forces at play in an exchange. Our research considers the consequences for a shift from market-determined fixed prices, to customer-dictated flexible prices. What happens when a company asks its customers to simply pay whatever price they want? That shift—from a pure market transaction to one steeped in fairness and giving—upends established knowledge about consumer behavior, and opens questions about how such a market could work, and when it could thrive.

Pay-what-you-want pricing has grown in popularity, and is most frequently seen in its basic format: a company offers a good or service and the customer can pay any price including zero. Past research highlighted how small variants can influence the success of such a program. For example, in one large experiment, when people learned that half of their payment would go to charity, people paid six-times as much (Gneezy et al. 2010). That treatment offered a better product to the customer; the customer derived both functional and social utilities from using the product and supporting a charitable cause, all for a price they chose. It was also maximally profitable for the firm and yielded a substantial charitable surplus. In sum, this small pricing tweak uniformly increased total social welfare.

Our research considers an even more fundamental change to pay-what-you-want pricing ($PWYW$). What if payments were gifts? What happens when people have an option to pay for someone else (and are told that someone has already paid for them)? Such pay-it-forward pricing ($PIF$) has identical commercial features (e.g. the option to pay $0$), but invokes very different sets of social norms. We predict that people pay more when they pay-forward than pay-what-they-want. In six studies we test this prediction and investigate factors that might explain higher payments under $PIF$.

In Study 1, museum visitors ($N=311$) saw either $PWYW$ or $PIF$ admission prices. As we predicted, people paid more for their admission under $PIF$ than $PWYW$ ($M=3.60 \text{ vs. } 2.68$). To increase the generalizability of this finding beyond a non-profit setting, we conducted a second field experiment with a for-profit company, a local coffee vendor. We asked customers ($N=173$) at a farmers’ market to either $PWYW$ or $PIF$ for a cup of coffee. Replicating the results in Study 1, customers paid more under $PIF$ than $PWYW$ ($M=3.01 \text{ vs. } 2.46$).

Perhaps people paid more because they felt an obligation for the other customers? Prior research has shown that social preferences are heavily influenced by knowledge of, and experience with, the givers and recipients of prosocial acts (Small & Loewenstein 2003; Small & Simonsohn 2008). In Study 3, we tested how social interactions influence payments under $PWYW$ and $PIF$ in a lab setting. Perhaps increased social interaction would differentially influence $PWYW$ and the comparatively socially-oriented $PIF$. Participants ($N=294$) interacted with the previous participant (the gift-giver under $PIF$), the next participant (the gift-receiver under $PIF$), or no one, immediately prior to the experiment. At the end of the session, participants were presented with a mug and asked to either pay-pay-they-want or pay-it-forward to the next participant. Participants paid more for a mug under $PIF$ than $PWYW$ ($M=1.79 \text{ vs. } 1.27$). However, social interaction did not influence payments under both $PWYW$ and $PIF$. Perhaps the social interaction manipulation did not increase payments because all payments were perceived to be anonymous.

In Study 4, we tested the role of signaling generosity under $PIF$. Participants in the treatment conditions explicitly expressed their generosity to the person they were paying-forward on a card. Specifically, they were asked to write a message, the amount paying forward, or both. Participants in the control condition did not write anything. As we predicted, participants who left a message ($M=2.23$) or wrote their payment amount ($M=2.33$) paid more than those in the control condition ($M=1.56$). This suggests that when people can express their generosity, they pay more under $PIF$.

Interestingly, there was a persistent effect across all conditions in Studies 3 and 4 of participants believing that other participants paid more than they did. Furthermore, those estimates of others’ payments were heavily influenced by the payment manipulation: people think that others will pay more under $PIF$ than $PWYW$.

These results suggest that $PIF$ operated in two stages. Something about the manipulation led participants to believe that other people were paying more. Based on that assessment, participants raised their own payments to match their new perceived norms. If that is true, we should be able to eliminate the influence of $PIF$ by informing participants about the payments of others. In Study 5, we tested this prediction by telling half of the participants ($N=198$) that the previous participant had paid $1.50$, whereas the remainder were not told this. Consistent with our prediction, when participants did not know how much the previous participant had paid, they paid more under $PIF$ than under $PWYW$ ($M=2.48 \text{ vs. } 1.19$). In contrast, when participants knew how much the previous person had paid this effect was eliminated.
In Study 6, we tested whether it is the giving or receiving feature of PIF that produces higher payments. Customers (N=94) at a restaurant were asked to PIF. After their meal, they received a card that reminded them of either receiving or giving a gift. Customers who were reminded of giving paid more (M=$20.42) than those who were reminded of receiving a gift (M=$11.09).

In summary, Pay-it-Forward leads to higher payments than does Pay-What-You-Want. This effect was not influenced by social interaction with the gift giver or receiver. Consumers paid forward higher payments when they expressed their generosity. However, the PIF effect was eliminated when participants had a clear reference price of others’ payments. Consumers appear to believe that, because PIF must increase the payments of others, they should increase their own payments to match. Lastly, consumers pay more when reminded of giving than the receiving a gift.
In his influential article, Grant McCracken (1986) provided a framework for the structure and movement of cultural meaning. In this model, the meaning of goods shifts to the individual consumer through the act of acquiring and using a good. Consumers obtain, utilize, and enhance the meaning of goods, in order to align their sense of self and identity with the meaning embedded in a particular product (Holt 1997). Through possession, exchange, grooming and divestment rituals, goods become individualized by consumers with new symbolic meanings (McCracken 1986). Possession rituals of goods include activities such as “cleaning, discussing, comparing, reflecting, showing off and even photographing” (McCracken 1986, p. 79). These activities allow the consumers to claim possession of the item as their own, and these rituals allow individuals to transfer cultural meaning from their goods into their lives and sense of self. In this way, a manufactured anonymous good becomes a personalized possession belonging to the consumer (Belk 1988).

In today’s digital age, consumers lead second lives online claiming ownership to virtual goods and images, using social media to create, control and consume content (Hoffman and Novak forthcoming, cited in Hoffman, Novak and Stein 2013, p. 29). Currently, technological advancements are changing the modes of consumption activities (Siddiqui and Turley 2006, p. 647), and material objects are being replaced by electronic versions of these items. This replacement brings with it the question of how the consumers’ self and relationship to their possessions are affected and reformulated due to the virtual possession phenomena.

The Internet allows the individuals to become window-shoppers of images, stimulating desire and allowing the actualization of consumer daydreams through digital consumption. (Denegri-Knott and Molesworth 2010). Individuals find “the experience of simply viewing goods online to be pleasurable, as they consume idealized images attached to goods” (Denegri-Knott, Molesworth 2010, p. 119). Consumers browse the online environment primarily due to the continuous and extensive supply of new images, which provides an ever-changing series of innovative, elusive and desirable goods (Falk and Campbell 1997; Campbell 2004). Therefore, in digital spaces, such as Pinterest, consumers are continuously motivated to explore, discover, and acquire new images (Denegri-Knott and Molesworth 2010; Zwick and Dholakia 2006).

Denegri-Knott and Molesworth (2010, p. 109) state that digital virtual consumption differs considerably from traditional consumption since the object is experienced as owned within the boundaries of specific digital space, and cannot be utilized in material reality. By reflecting on the traditional model of meaning transfer, we recognize that this prior framework needs to be modified to more accurately represent how consumers claim ownership of goods in the virtual realm.

### METHODOLOGY

**Context**

For the context of this study we chose Pinterest, due to its growing popularity among consumers, recently becoming the third largest social media site in the US after Facebook and Twitter in March 2012.
Possession Rituals of the Digital Consumer: A Study of Pinterest

(Todd 2012). Pinterest is a social bookmarking and image-sharing website where individuals create virtual “pinboards” of digital images. These images are organized into collections which users name based on themes, topics, or categories. The website enables users to discover new products, share ideas, and inspire one another. Initially Pinterest was considered a niche social network, but the site has quickly expanded its user base to become one of the fastest growing websites to date (King 2012). During the time period of October 2010 to October 2011, membership increased from 40,000 users to over 3.2 million. In February 2012, Pinterest was hailed as the “social media site to watch this year” (Helweh 2012).

Data Collection

Semi-Structured Interviews. We conducted ten semi-structured long interviews (McCracken 1988) with female user-participants of Pinterest between the ages of 21 and 65 to better understand how they utilize the website. We specifically chose only female participants because according to statistics 80% of Pinterest users are women (Smith 2013). Our interviews began with a general overview of the participants’ backgrounds and lifestyles and then progressed to more specific questions regarding their collections and collecting behaviors as they emerged through dialogue (Arsel and Bean 2012; Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989). To provide a context to the interview, we began with open-ended questions about the participants’ selection and arrangement of images in their collections and then allowed the course of the interview to be largely set by the participant. During these interviews, we also included our commented observations (Emontspool 2012) in which the participants gave the interviewers a tour of their Pinterest boards, describing images chosen and taste preferences (Epp and Price 2010; Hoskins 1998; Kopytoff 1986).

Netnography. Netnography, a qualitative research method, utilizes ethnographic research techniques to study online communities through computer-mediated communications (Kozinets 2010; Kozinets 2002). This process is based upon observation in online cultural websites, blogs, and chatrooms. Since Pinterest is an online community site, the use of Netnography in this study was crucial to understanding the true nature of the group activities and the level of community engagement. Netnography provides information on the trends, symbolism, meanings, and communication patterns of online communities. Individuals participating in the community virtually, share in-depth insights on themselves, their lifestyles, and the reasons behind the choices they make. Using Netnography allowed us to keep record of interactions, and perform analysis on the collected data. The type of data collected includes the text that online participants type directly into “comments” section, and observational data from us as researchers.

Participant-Observation. Finally, we used participant-observation and introspection (Wallendorf and Brucks 1993). One of the authors has been a regular user of Pinterest since November 2011. This in-depth study allowed us to subjectively experience collection activities. Using this method led us to better understand how the value system of this taste taxonomy becomes “internalized and naturalized through ritualization” (Arsel and Bean 2012).

FINDINGS

Our research revealed that consumers spend a great deal of time on image-sharing sites creating collections of their tastes. Consumers spend a considerable amount of this time utilizing possession rituals, which include: claiming, storing and hoarding, personalizing, and sharing their collections. These behaviors may be considered updated versions of McCracken’s description of the possession rituals where the “consumers spend a good deal of time cleaning, discussing, comparing, reflecting, showing off, and even photographing many of their possessions” (1986, 79). Below we discuss the four main possession rituals of our participants.

Claiming

One of the unexpected habits of these users we discovered was the claiming ritual. In the claiming process consumers assert territoriality through ownership, which has interesting implications to the notion of possession. Does an item actually belong to you if you only possess an image of that item, rather than the physical item itself?

For example, our respondents claimed that they possess an item on Pinterest board, and some of the respondents said that they did not like when someone would re-pin their items and “copy” them. They felt that something that they had found first was being taken away from them.

“At first I didn’t pin them on my board, I would pin them to my sister’s board because I didn’t want the other teachers to see what I was going to do and copy me” (Katrina).

“I think I must have copied that from somebody. I go in to see what other people like that I can just save for myself” (Loretta).

Intangible images in their Pinterest collections became tangible manifestations of identity for our respondents. By claiming the images, these items became a source of meaning and if the images were re-pinned they felt like something was taken from them. Respondents used these items to represent identity placeholders, and when the image was “re-pinned” by another member they felt that their space in the online social sphere had been removed or changed. Also although image-sharing sites are public, a few respondents still felt that their privacy was violated when people did not know chose images from their boards.

“It’s like waiting in line outside of something and it’s like hey... I was here” (Rachel).

“It’s a little bit weird because it’s kind of like why would someone reach in and look into your day. Honestly I’m uncomfortable when someone I feel like... even though some of my stuff is public, I don’t like people to like it if I feel like I’m being invaded on is private” (Korie).

Personalizing

In accordance with the literature on collecting (Campbell 2005; Belk 1995), our respondents actively re-contextualized the images they collected, situated them in a larger collection and gave them new meanings and significance. This involved the consumer’s self to be invested in the process.

Studying how digital virtual goods transform into meaningful possessions, transformation begins with the “domesticating process”, as one becomes familiarized with the technology (Denegri-Knott, Watkins and Wood 2013). Our respondents said that when they first began using Pinterest, they did not know how to use the site features and so they just clicked on the “like” button which left the items uncategorized and difficult to find. Once they spent more time on the site, they learned how to create boards and edit comments, they were better able to personalize the images and make the items their own.
“You know what’s interesting, these are all things I had a long time ago. I didn’t know where I put them” (Loretta).

Consumers also engage in crafting activities to personalize virtual goods in ways similar to the traditional possession rituals (Denegri-Knott, Watkins, and Wood 2013, p. 82). Through the crafting process consumers de-commodify the goods and attach their own symbolic meanings. The first of these activities is to categorize the images by labeling the item and creating board names. Next, consumers organize their images on boards, sometimes rearranging the order of images or boards to reflect level of importance of item. The Pinterest users would also remove comments from others and develop their own comments such as: how one plans to use this item, amendments (i.e “add more eggs to this dish”) or who to pass info onto (i.e “share this with Lindsay”).

Storing and Hoarding

Virtual hoarding characterized by the excessive acquisition of images, also seemed to be a trend among our respondents. Through our research we found there was a sense of sacrifization through the ritual of pinning. The images collected became stored and respondents did not wish to engage in divestment rituals, even though it would be an easy process to do with just one click of a button. Below is one respondent whose comment suggests that she would like to keep all of the images she pinned on her boards.

“Because I don’t think you should throw anything away” (Katrina).

Respondents admitted that they themselves or people they know have become highly involved in the acquiring and storing process. Many participants saw this involvement as potentially negative.

“Some people get too wrapped up in it. I think that when they just go on and they just pin, pin, pin, pin and then they like have thirty boards” (Alicia).

“Sometimes I don’t even know…I didn’t even realize I had so many things on here” (Loretta).

Although prior research found emotional attachment as a missing attribute for virtual versions of the tangible possessions (Siddiqui and Turley 2006), we discovered high levels of emotional attachment with digital image collections. Aside from functionality of the collections on Pinterest, our respondents found pleasure, pride, aesthetics, and value in their image collections. Informants from our study believed it just as difficult to delete an image, as it would be to throw away the physical object. In fact, our respondents had a feeling of attachment to their items and perceived their importance to be of high value even if they had no intended purpose for them.

“Not really even knowing what it is but I would just probably pull it up and put it under party… Just to have it” (Loretta).

“And there’s some things that I can tell that I probably pinned that I might not use but at the time I didn’t want to lose it. The ideas were so genius that it was like I didn’t really want to pin it cause I don’t really care but then I was like I’m going to go, something I was going to go back and be like gosh I would have… I wish I could have remembered half of those things” (Rita).

Sharing

Embracing the cultural properties of a possession provides insights to the consumers’ value systems. Respondents disclosed that they collected a particular image because it represented their taste, or presented an ideal self that they wished to be perceived as by others. The images chosen also reflect consumer’s attitudes towards certain cultural categories considered feminine, such as recipes and home décor. In this way, users extract the cultural meaning from the images and adopt them as part of the digital self-representation, while communicating multiple selves (Belk 2012), displaying taste (Bourdieu 1984), and consuming conspicuously (Veblen 1899).

One reason consumers want to share their collections is to fulfill unmet social needs. For example, one respondent said:

“It’s real interesting because I know somebody that she’s out of work, her husband’s not working, her life’s not really good at all and I see that she spends probably three, four hours a day on this. And it’s so interesting when you look at her pins. When you look at the things she’s in to, they’re all about the same. They’re all white. So here she has all these great beautiful things like life is beautiful. Well maybe I guess this is her way of escaping” (Loretta).

Another reason Pinterest members share boards is to compete against others. This competition can be seen in the high number of boards created and frequent pinning of images.

“Somebody had more boards than I did... so that’s when I got more boards” (Katrina).

Social visibility was another dimension of sharing images on Pinterest. A prior research has shown that using self-defining possessions in a digital state reduces the social visibility function (Siddiqui and Turley 2006, p. 647), but in our study social visibility for informants was not reduced. In fact there is heightened social visibility as unlike many other social media sites, Pinterest is accessible by all public and account owners are not allowed to block anyone from seeing their boards. However, two years after its launch, Pinterest introduced “secret boards” in November 2012 which allow its users to have three boards that they can keep private. Many of our respondents admitted to using these boards for items they didn’t wish others to see either due to their private nature or to counteract the fear of being copied.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this study was to explore how the traditional framework for the structure and movement of cultural meaning changed in the digital age, what the possession rituals digital consumer adopt are and how consumers find symbolic meaning and value in digital goods such as images. The preliminary findings suggest that digital consumers of online image sharing sites engage in possession rituals that are in some ways similar to the traditional ways. They show that on a virtual platform, such as Pinterest, there are several processes happening at once from the consumer’s perspective. While the digital consumers are collecting and organizing images according to their subjective, yet culturally influenced categories (McCracken 1986) they are also communicating their multiple selves (Belk 2012), displaying their taste (Bourdieu 1984), and consuming conspicuously (Veblen 1899).

One of the limitations of our study was the number of informants we interviewed and the lack of diversity among our informants. We plan to further expand our research by expanding our informant base and investigate digital consumers and addiction. Addiction is a theme...
that was brought up several times in our interviews and seen repeatedly in netnography. This “addiction” was characterized by daily use, accessing the site several times a day, and staying on the site for sometimes hours at a time. And this addiction was not just to Pinterest but to other image sharing sites such as Instagram. In other future studies we plan to delve deeper into the digital hoarding phenomenon to better understand this area.

REFERENCES


Does Acculturation Affect Brand Preference? A Study of British Indians

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ABSTRACT

Acculturation and its impact on consumer behaviour in the UK merit greater scrutiny. This research investigates whether established theories of acculturation are applicable to British Indians and what impact acculturation has on their brand preference. After classifying British Indians according to the acculturation framework devised by Berry (1980), the paper considers whether membership of different acculturation categories has a bearing on British Indians’ consumer behaviour, as indicated by their brand preferences for a range of host and ethnic products and services. Data collected from a quantitative survey are analysed using one way ANOVA and cluster analysis. The findings reveal that separated consumers prefer ethnic brands more than host brands, assimilated consumers prefer host brands more than ethnic brands and integrated consumers have brand preferences falling between these two. Although this study focuses on British Indians, there may be wider implications for other ethnic groups. There are also implications for the marketing strategy and tactics practitioners use to market their products and services to ethnic minorities.

KEYWORDS


INTRODUCTION

During the last 60 years, an influx of people from former British colonies and elsewhere has altered Britain’s demographic profile (Burton 2002; Rudmin 2003). Immigration of this kind leads to cultural interpenetration (Andreasen 1990), as immigrants become acculturated and adopt cultural traits that differ from those with which they grew up (Emslie, Bent and Seaman 2007). Such cultural traits can influence immigrants’ consumer behaviour (Engel, Kollat and Blackwell 1973; Hair and Anderson 1972), resulting in product preferences and consumption patterns reflecting the acculturation status of these individuals (Maldonado and Tansuhaj 2002; Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer 2005; Takhar et al. 2010). Although the need to better understand subcultures is acknowledged (Burton 2002; Emslie, Bent and Seaman 2007; Nwankwo and Lindridge 1998), there has been relatively little research examining the impact of acculturation on brand preference. What studies there are tend to focus on the process of acculturation itself, with less attention devoted to the relationship between consumption and cultural values (Lindridge 2001; Pankhania, Lee and Hooley 2007). Consequently there are calls for more work examining broad acculturation outcomes and their influence on consumer behaviour (Odgen, Odgen and Schau 2004), and of the implications for targeting ethnic audiences (Sekhon and Szmidt 2009).

This paper addresses the need for more research examining the outcomes of acculturation and the implications for consumption. British Indians, the largest ethnic minority population in the UK, are the focus for the quantitative study. The upward social mobility of British Indians is reflected in their emergence as one of Britain’s wealthiest ethnic groups (Lindridge 2001). The study investigates whether established theories of acculturation are applicable to British Indians, using this theoretical backdrop to understand what impact acculturation has on their consumer behaviour. Several contributions to knowledge are made. Firstly, the relevance to British Indians of established methods for assessing acculturation levels of immigrants are considered. Secondly, there is a contribution to what is known about the links between acculturation categories and consumption outcomes. Although this study focuses on British Indians, there may be wider implications for other ethnic groups. Finally, there are implications for the strategy and tactics practitioners use to market their products and services to minorities.

The paper begins by reviewing relevant acculturation and consumer acculturation literature. Classification schemes and measures of the key concepts are also examined, leading to the presentation of a research framework and hypotheses. Following the description of method, the results are presented and then discussed. Finally, avenues for further research and the conclusions are considered.

LITERATURE REVIEW: MODELS OF ACCULTURATION

A group of people, who believe in the commonality of their ancestry, possibly due to similarities in their customs or physical type or because of their collective memories of colonisation or immigration, has been described as an ethnic group (Lindridge and Dibb 2003). Ethnic groups are socially derived minorities within a larger host society whose members participate in shared activities built around their common origin and culture (Yinger 1986). Over time, albeit to varying degrees, these groups adapt their behaviour to reflect the dominant host culture; a process usually known as ‘acculturation’. Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936, 149) define acculturation as ‘those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups’.

In recent times the acculturation phenomenon has become better understood, largely through North American studies of Hispanics and Native Americans. Two distinct streams of thought regarding the process of acculturation have emerged. The first views acculturation as a uni-dimensional process, with the immigrant population positioned on a spectrum ranging from un-acculturated to fully acculturated (Gans 1979; Gordon 1964; Hair and Anderson 1972). Proponents of this view refer to a continuum of acculturation, with the ethnic minority and the host cultures at either end of the scale. The uni-dimensional model assumes that with the passage of time, members of ethnic minorities gradually lose aspects of their original culture and move closer to the host culture (Gans 1979; Gordon 1964). Taken to its extreme, the ethnic group becomes absorbed into the mainstream culture, its identity as a separate entity disappears, and its distinctive values evaporate (Gordon 1964). Thus Hair and Anderson (1972) describe an acculturation range from the ‘un-acculturated extreme’ where ethnic cultural patterns prevail, to the ‘acculturated extreme’, where the behaviour patterns of the host culture are fully adopted. Eventually, the ethnic minority is considered to merge into the host population, relinquishing its traditional values, customs, beliefs and behaviours (Garcia and Lega 1979). When an immigrant fully adopts mainstream values and gives up their cultural heritage, they are said to have ‘assimilated’ (Odgen, Odgen and Schau 2004).

The bi-dimensional model of acculturation is the second and more widely-held view (Berry 1980; Mendoza and Martinez 1981; Ryder, Alden and Paulhus 2000). This approach considers ethnic identification levels amongst acculturating immigrants in conjunction with their degree of participation in the host culture. A number of
different acculturation outcomes result, with immigrants positioned at either end of the acculturation spectrum or integrated between the two. While uni-dimensional models focus on the degree of immersion into an alternate culture, bi-dimensional models look at levels of immersion into both the host and the ethnic cultures. A study comparing the two models across different ethnic minority groups found the bi-dimensional view provided a more valid and information-rich framework (Ryder, Alden and Paulhus 2000). The detailed insights provided by this framework enabled acculturation to be better understood. Advocates of the bi-dimensional approach argue that it better reflects the changes in an individual’s self-identity as they strive to accommodate the old and new cultures. Following this approach, individuals can be categorized according to their levels of acculturation. Thus Berry (1980) proposes a four-fold taxonomy of acculturation based on immigrants’ levels of cultural identification and their degree of participation in the host culture. Under this scheme, individuals are grouped into one of four acculturation categories: separation, integration, assimilation or marginalisation.

CONSUMER ACCULTURATION AND BRAND PREFERENCE

Consumer acculturation concerns the application of general acculturation ideas to the consumption process, what Penaloza (1994, 33) describes as "the general process of movement and adaptation, to the consumer cultural environment in one country by persons from another country". Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer (2005, 85) propose that "consumer acculturation is a process by which an individual raised in one culture acquires thorough first-hand experience the consumption related values, behaviour, and customs of a foreign country". Consumer acculturation relates to the learning of the attitudes and behaviours of the host culture by the consumer (O’Guinn, Lee and Faber 1986). This then has implications for the consumption behaviour of these individuals.

Some consumer acculturation studies adopt the socialisation perspective, focusing on the process of consumer acculturation itself (Lindridge, Hogg and Shah 2004; Sekhon 2007), while others consider identity formation through acculturation (Askegaard, Arnold and Kjeldgaard 2005; Ustuner and Holt 2007). Research in this area includes some studies that focus on the acculturation process and others that are concerned with acculturation outcomes. The focus in this paper is on consumer outcomes, specifically on variations in consumption patterns according to the degree of acculturation. Other studies show that the consumer behaviour of ethnic consumers differs according to acculturation status (Kang and Kim 1998; Kara and Kara 1996; Souiden and Ladhari 2011; O’Guinn, Lee and Faber 1986; Shim and Chen 1996). For example, Ownbey and Horridge (1997), suggest that Asian Americans with low levels of acculturation have a higher propensity to adopt gender-based stereotypes in shopping roles; while Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer (2005) find that American Asian Indians with low levels of acculturation show higher levels of involvement when purchasing Indian ethnic apparel. Several authors consider the issue of situational ethnicity (O’Guinn and Faber 1985; Stayman and Deshpande, 1989), suggesting that consumption patterns of the same ethnic minority groups vary according to the context in which a purchasing decision is made.

Consumption values arising from an individual’s culture are difficult to directly measure (Penaloza 1989). Material goods can be a vehicle for carrying cultural meaning, making it possible to record consumption outcomes based on culture (McCracken 1986). For example, because brands are symbolically important to consumers, consumption outcomes are manifested in those which are preferred (Farquhar 1989; Levy 1959). The relationship between a consumer’s self-image and a brand’s perceived image is important (Zinkam and Hong 1991). Consumers prefer brands that have images that are compatible with their perceptions of themselves (Belk, Bahn and Mayer 1982; Ericksen 1996; Solomon 1983; Zinkam and Hong 1991). The more comparable the individual’s self-image is with the brand image, the more positively they will assess that brand (Graeff 1996). Thus consumers buy brands which are perceived to be similar to their own self-concept (Graeff 1996). This leads to the so-called self-image product-image congruence (Sirgy 1982; Sirgy et al. 1991; Sirgy et al. 1997). More importantly, consumers are known to use products to express their self-concepts to themselves (Sirgy 1982; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988). Therefore, acculturating minorities are likely also to express their cultural identity through their consumption patterns.

Previous studies (Kang and Kim 1998; Kara and Kara 1996; Shim and Chen 1996; amongst others) have shown that the consumption patterns of ethnic consumers vary according to the extent of their acculturation. This is because in endeavouring to adapt to new circumstances, ethnic consumers often try to modify their lifestyles and

![Image](72x318 to 281x527)

consumption behaviour, which includes their preferences for particular brands (Maldonado and Tansuhaj 2002; Mathur, Moschis and Lee 2003). Furthermore, consumers prefer brands that are used by others they perceive as similar to themselves (Ross 1971; Watchravesingkan 2011), such as those within their acculturation category.

Jun, Ball and Gentry (1993), in their study of Korean Americans, suggest that consumers seeking to identify with their traditional culture may have different product preferences to those wishing to associate with the host culture. In the former case, a traditionally ethnic consumption pattern may be seen, with consumers showing strong attachment to possessions which provide cultural meaning and which may reflect their past. In contrast, the consumption patterns and preferences of consumers who wish to identify and blend with the host culture may feature products from the host society. Maldonado and Tansuhaj (2002), for example, find that assimilated individuals choose host brands more often than separated consumers who prefer ethnic brands; while Takhar et al. (2010) argue that acculturated British Indians re-negotiate their ethnic identity through the consumption of ethnic brands such as ‘Bollywood’ films. The notion of integrated individuals negotiating between both cultures (Chattaraman, Lemon and Rudd 2010; Lindridge, Hogg and Shah 2004) suggests that they are comfortable with brands from both cultures (Gbadamosi 2012; Lee 1993; Shim and Chen 1996).

Similar patterns have been observed in studies examining ethnocentrism, a concept that is related to acculturation (Berry and Kalin 1995). Ethnocentrism is concerned with the preference of the ‘in-group’ over the ‘out-group’ (Sumner 1906), concepts that are related to the notion of reference groups in the consumer behaviour literature. Ethnocentrism studies suggest a link between openness to a new culture and consumption patterns. Consumers who are more open to the alternate culture (e.g. out-group) will show a greater degree of acculturation and less consumer ethnocentrism (Sharma, Shimp and Shin 1995), thus preferring brands they regard as from the host society.

Lindridge (2001) suggests that British Indian individuals exist in cultural terms between Indian and British cultures; living and intermingling between the two cultures and drawing on both sets of cultural values to varying degrees. He further proposes that British Indians follow Berry’s (1980) bi-dimensional model of acculturation, since they co-exist between Indian and British cultures to varying degrees. These observations about the collectivist nature of Indian culture as against the individualist nature of British culture are relevant here because the study is concerned with the acculturation of British Indians and the consequences for consumer behaviour.

Since the main difference between British and Indian cultures in the UK relates to the possible relative cultural loading of the products considered, the inclusion of multiple product types in the research design is crucial. Most previous studies examining the impact of acculturation on consumer behaviour consider a single product type: Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer (2005) studied clothing, while Podoshen (2006) studied automobiles. Therefore, the need for research which examines a broader range of product types is widely acknowledged (Burton 2000; Laroche et al. 1997; Odgen, Odgen and Schau 2004; Omar, Hirst and Blankson 2004). Examining both host and ethnic brands for different product types also mitigates the fact that product types such as food can be more culturally loaded than others, which can alter consumer behaviour outcomes.

This research will thus examine the brand preferences expressed by British Indians, focusing on a range of ethnic and host brands, in order to establish whether the three acculturation categories exhibit different patterns of preference. Using Berry’s (1980) taxonomy, this research considers British Indians from an acculturation perspective, focusing on acculturation ‘outcomes’. The main hypotheses are as follows:

**Hypothesis 1a**: British Indian consumers in the Assimilation category prefer host brands more often and ethnic brands less often than consumers in the other categories.

**Hypothesis 1b**: British Indian consumers in the Integration category prefer host brands more often and ethnic brands less often than consumers in the Separation category; and prefer host brands less often and ethnic brands more often than consumers in the Assimilation category.

**Hypothesis 1c**: British Indian consumers in the Separation category prefer ethnic brands more often and host brands less often than consumers in the other categories.

A research framework derived from the literature review and capturing the hypotheses is presented in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: A research framework**

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**MEASUREMENT OF ACCULTURATION CATEGORIES**

A tool or scale is required to measure acculturation in order for Berry’s taxonomy to be used to classify an acculturating population. Some scales have been designed for specific ethnic groups, such as for Cubans (Szapocznik et al. 1978), Chicanos (Olmedo, Martinez and Martinez 1978) and Mexican Americans (Cuellar, Harris and Jasso 1980). Many acculturation scales emphasise the behavioural dimensions of acculturation, often focusing on language questions (Marin and Gamba 1996; Tsai, Ying and Lee 2000); while others emphasise the attitudinal dimensions (Felix-Ortiz, Newcomb and Myers 1994; Sanchez and Fernandez 1993).
One problem associated with many of these scales is that they either incorporate a single measure, such as language, or use a cluster of highly correlated variables, which are neither grounded in theory nor rigorously tested (Lerman, Maldonado and Luna 2009). The use of socio-demographic characteristics, such as age, gender and generation as acculturation measurement variables, rather than as correlates of acculturation, can be an added problem. Such an approach is problematic since these socio-demographic factors do not have one-to-one correspondence with the process of cultural change. Furthermore, when a validation criterion like ‘generation’ is included in the instrument, it tends to produce abnormally high correlations between the criterion and the scale (Marin et al. 1987). Therefore, a scale is needed that is based on indicators of cultural customs, with socio-demographic characteristics being used to support the external validity of the instrument (Mendoza 1989). Some authors (Jun, Ball and Gentry 1993) have suggested including both attitudinal and behavioural dimensions of acculturation in the instrument. Together, these dimensions provide the necessary information about the extent of an individual’s acculturation (Deshpande, Hoyer and Donthu 1986; Gentry, Jun and Tansuhaj 1995; Hui et al. 1992; Maldonado and Tansuhaj 2002; Padilla 1980). The Cultural Lifestyle Inventory (CLSI), a scale designed by Mendoza (1989) and inspired by Berry’s (1980) framework, addresses many of the concerns about measuring acculturation. The CLSI differs from scales that measure levels of assimilation; instead measuring categories of acculturation.

Although Mendoza (1989) uses different terminology, the acculturation categories he uses reflect those described by Berry (see Figure 1). Mendoza’s CLSI proposes three acculturation patterns that match Berry’s framework: (i) cultural resistance, (ii) cultural shift, and (iii) cultural incorporation. Cultural resistance is similar to Berry’s separation category, with individuals in this category against the acquisition of alternate cultural norms, while upholding ethnic customs. Mendoza’s cultural incorporation is equivalent to Berry’s integration category, which involves an adaptation of customs from both ethnic and alternate cultures. The cultural shift acculturation type considers a deliberate substitution of alternate cultural norms for ethnic customs which can be compared with Berry’s assimilation category.

The value of including the marginalisation outcome in acculturation studies has often been questioned. Berry and Kim (1988) suggest that marginalised individuals lose vital elements of their original culture but that these are not replaced by aspects from the mainstream society. Similarly, Maldonado and Tansuhaj (2002) explain that marginalised individuals are unlikely to be contactable through mailing lists or reachable by telephone. Furthermore, these individuals tend to resist the pulls of both the mainstream and the ethnic culture (Penaloza 1994), making it difficult to interpret much from their preferences for brands. In keeping with previous researchers using Berry’s (1980) model (Maldonado and Tansuhaj 2002; Mendoza 1989; Phinney, Lochner and Murphy 1990), it is important to acknowledge that not including the marginalised individuals may not be a problem for a consumer behaviour study based on survey technique. This is because the individuals in the marginalisation category are largely inaccessible and therefore unlikely to be part of marketing sample frames (Maldonado and Tansuhaj, 2002; Lerman, Maldonado and Luna 2009).

**METHOD**

The research design involved a qualitative phase during which the research instrument was developed, followed by a quantitative online survey. The qualitative phase, which comprised three focus groups and three dyad interviews with members of the target population, was also used to classify a series of product and service brands into ‘ethnic’ and ‘host’ groups. These brand groups were referred to in the subsequent quantitative phase. The qualitative phase also provided feedback on other aspects of the research, such as assessing participants’ openness to an e-mail questionnaire format.

The CLSI (Mendoza 1989) was used in conjunction with Berry’s framework (see Figure 1) to categorise respondents to both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the research. As explained above, CLSI proposes three acculturation patterns that match Berry’s framework: (i) cultural resistance is similar to Berry’s separation category (ii) cultural shift is similar to Berry’s assimilation category and (iii) cultural incorporation relates to Berry’s integration category. Moreover, the scale is able to readily measure the dynamic complexities of acculturation, such as the fact that ethnic minority consumers may move from separated to assimilated positions according to their context and situation (Jamal and Chapman 2000). Thus individuals can show cultural shift on one set of behaviours, while displaying cultural resistance in relation to another (Stayman and Deshpande 1989).

The CLSI categorises respondents into three acculturation categories using 29 questions. The instrument includes response alternatives corresponding to the three acculturation categories. For example, the question ‘What language do you use when you speak with your parents?’ has response options of ‘(a) only or (b) mostly in Indian’ for the separation category; ‘(c) mostly or (d) only in English’ for the assimilation category; and ‘(e) both in Indian and English about equally’ for the integration category. Individuals are allocated to acculturation categories on the basis of their highest numbers of answers in a particular response category. For example, a respondent who answered (a) or (b) seventeen times, (e) five times and (c) or (d) seven times is categorised in the separation category. The CLSI used in the online survey phase was adapted for British Indians based on inputs from the focus groups and dyad interviews and then pretested on 50 individuals. Cronbach alpha values were calculated to assess the reliability of the CLSI, yielding alpha coefficients of 0.797 for the 21 behavioural questions and of 0.700 for the 8 attitudinal questions. These values are within the acceptable range (Kline 1999), indicating good scale reliability.

Central to the research design was the notion that respondents’ acculturation category might be reflected in their preferences for host or ethnic brands. While each pair of brands (ethnic and host) within each product type, aims to satisfy the same basic needs, the cultural meanings and level of importance associated with these options are likely to be markedly different for the ethnic and the host populations. Bristow and Asquith (1999) confirm that the differences in the lifestyles of various cultural groups, which in the current study relate to the acculturation categories, are reflected in the level of importance that each group attach to the brand names. This implies it is appropriate to use brand pairs containing ethnic and host options to study differing preferences between acculturation categories.

A series of brand pairs from a range of product and service categories was needed; each containing one ethnic and one host brand. Several options for developing these pairs were considered. One option was to use the ‘manufactured in’ (country of origin) label to identify whether the brands to be included were host or ethnic. This approach was, however, deemed unreliable since the group interviews conducted during qualitative phase revealed that country of origin did not necessary reflect whether a brand was viewed as host or ethnic. In order to better reflect British Indians’ perceptions about the brands, the qualitative phase was used to identify which brands were deemed ethnic and which were seen as host by the participants. The brand pairs chosen were also those where the participants perceived a real demarcation between ethnic and host dimensions. Table 1 presents the results.
During the quantitative phase an online questionnaire was applied (see Appendix 1). The research instrument was derived from the literature as well as from insights gained during the qualitative phase. The questionnaire was pre-tested by relevant experts and potential respondents; with online suitability being assessed by an expert in online data collection. The questionnaire comprised three sections: the first included the CLSI acculturation measurement scale, the second explored brand preferences while the last captured respondents’ demographic details. The respondents were asked to choose one brand for each option that they would consistently prefer to buy. They were told to assume that the two brands under each case were similar in price, packaging and availability, thus controlling these extraneous variables within the method. The sample was made up of British Indian consumers, who form the largest ethnic minority subgroup in the UK (Census, 2001) and are one of Britain’s wealthiest ethnic groups (Lindridge 2001). This group can legitimately be studied using a bi-dimensional model of acculturation since they co-exist between Indian and British cultures to varying degrees (Lindridge 2001). An online database comprising of 2505 British Indian names was obtained from a commercial manufacturer of consumer food products. Individuals identifying themselves with the definition of British Indians were deemed eligible to complete the online survey. For the purpose of this study, ‘British Indians’ are defined as: ‘Individuals born in or migrated to Britain and living in Britain, but with a common ancestry from India’. A pilot study targeting 222 individuals yielded a 10% response rate. The main survey of 2505 questionnaires produced a similar response rate, with 255 responses returned.

RESULTS

The data were analysed in three stages. First, respondents were grouped by acculturation category using the CLSI instrument. As explained above, this involved allocating individuals on the basis of their highest numbers of answers in a particular response category. Second, one-way ANOVA was used to examine the brand preferences of individuals across the acculturation categories. Third, the data were subjected to cluster analysis to establish whether the same three acculturation categories emerged. Using this approach to replicate the categories enabled their robustness to be checked.

The grouping by acculturation category resulted in 59.2% of respondents being allocated to the separation category, 25.1% to the integration category and 15.7% to the assimilation category (see Table 2).

Table 2: Brand Preference across Acculturation Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Host Brand Preference</th>
<th>Ethnic Brand Preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>19.347</td>
<td>19.347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation %</td>
<td>40.4*</td>
<td>59.6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration %</td>
<td>62.5*</td>
<td>37.5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation %</td>
<td>90.0*</td>
<td>10.0*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The analysis of brand preferences shows significant differences (p < 0.05) in the mean scores across the three acculturation categories. Respondents in the separation category prefer ethnic brands 59.6% of the time compared with 37.5% and 10.0% in the integration and assimilation categories respectively, the Post Hoc Tukey-HSD test being statistically significant (p<0.05). Respondents in the integration category prefer host brands 62.5% of the time compared with 40.4% and 90.0% in the separation and assimilation categories respectively and ethnic brands 37.5% of the time compared to 59.6% and 10.0% in the separation and assimilation categories respectively. The Post Hoc Tukey-HSD test shows integrated individuals are significantly different (p<0.05) from both the assimilation and the separation categories. Furthermore, respondents in the assimilation category prefer host brands 90.0% of the time compared with 62.5% and 40.4% in the integration and separation categories respectively, with the Post Hoc Tukey-HSD test being significantly different (p<0.05) from both the integration and the separation categories. Thus all three hypotheses are supported.

Furthermore, hierarchical cluster analysis was applied to the data in order to identify the number of clusters that existed. Although the cluster solution revealed a number of small naturally occurring clusters, three large clusters were considered optimum since they accounted for 87.5% of the sample. Having established the optimum number of clusters using hierarchical clustering, a K-Means clustering method was applied to the data since the distance measure used was well-suited for a large data file. The corresponding chart builder (see Figure 3) reveals that the means of these three clusters correspond to the separation, integration and assimilation acculturation categories, supporting the validity of the findings. Both the CLSI and the cluster analyses generated the same number of acculturation categories and contained similar numbers of individuals. This addresses concerns expressed by Rudmin (2003) who said that the ‘a priori’ determination of acculturation categories is less accurate than empirically-derived solutions which do not predetermine the number of acculturation categories.
DISCUSSION

The acculturation of immigrants has created subcultures within British society with distinctive habits and consumption behaviours. However, very few UK studies have sought to understand the consumer acculturation phenomenon. This study was thus motivated by the need for more UK-based studies of ethnic consumers (Burton 2002; Seligman 2001) with a focus on acculturation and consumption outcomes among British Indians. The results show a significant relationship between categories of acculturation and preferences for host and ethnic brands for this ethnic minority. As well as highlighting the importance of acculturation category as legitimate reference group, the research suggests that such groupings warrant attention in consumer studies in their own right.

This study differs from previous research showing variations in consumption by acculturation level (e.g. Kang and Kim 1998; Kara and Kara 1996; Shim and Chen 1996), because it reveals variations in the consumption outcomes of micro-cultures within the separated, integrated and assimilated acculturation groups. These differences are reflected in the preferences of those from each category for host and ethnic brands. The results amplify the need to consider acculturation when studying the consumer behaviour of ethnic minorities. While the importance of culture in explaining consumer behaviour is well recognized (Manoochehr, Ahmad and Ali 2010), these findings yield new insights into the particular value of acculturation category. Specifically, the study provides evidence that the consumption behaviour of ethnic consumers varies according to their acculturation category (e.g. Kara and Kara 1996; Maldonado and Tansuhaj 2002; Padilla 1980; Shim and Chen 1996). Separated consumers were found to be more ethnocentric and to prefer ethnic brands such as Zee TV and Bollywood more than host brands such as ITV and Hollywood. Integrated consumers had a preference for host brands more often and ethnic brands less often than those in the separation category; and preferred host brands less often and ethnic brands more often than those in the assimilation category. This finding corroborates the view that integrated individuals negotiate between the two cultures according to context (Chattaraman, Lennon and Rudd 2010; Lindridge, Hogg and Shah 2004; Sekhon and Szumigin 2009), and suggests they are comfortable with brands from both cultures (Ghadamosi 2012; Gupta 1975; Lee 1993; Maldonado and Tansuhaj, 2002; Shim and Chen 1996; Sodowsky and Carey 1988). Finally, assimilated consumers were found to prefer host brands such as McVities biscuits and Ribena juice more often than ethnic equivalents, such as Parle-G biscuits and Rubicon juice. This group was characterised by lower levels of consumer ethnocentrism, probably as a result of greater participation in the host culture.

The study has a number of implications for research and practice. In terms of research implications, Berry’s (1980) acculturation model and Mendoza’s (1989) CLSI scale have been successfully adapted for use with the British Indian population. The findings add further support for the use of bi-dimensional acculturation measures, confirming the existence of sizeable ‘separated’ and ‘assimilated’ consumers whose behaviour is distinct and different from the ‘integrated’ group. The fact that these British Indian sub-groups have distinct and different consumption outcomes adds weight to the notion that ethnic minorities from a common ancestral country should not be treated as a single homogeneous group (Lindridge 2010). Furthermore, previous studies have tended to focus on single products or brands (Podoshen 2006, Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer 2005) or consider culturally-loaded items such as food or clothing. Since some product categories such as ‘food’ are more culturally loaded than others which could affect the consumer behaviour outcomes, different product types have been included in the current study in order to address this limitation and to increase confidence in the results, while also answering the various calls for such a research study (Burton 2000; Laroche et al. 1997; Omar, Hirist and Blankson 2004).

Turning to the practical implications, considerable potential is indicated for practitioners to adapt their marketing and targeting strategies on the basis of acculturation categories. For example, by specifically targeting separated consumers who are relatively unacculturated and who prefer ethnic over host brands, host brand manufacturers could enjoy first-mover advantage by establishing their brands and potentially creating brand loyalty amongst this group. Because consumption patterns adopted in the separation stage may be habit forming in the longer run, such strategies may provide the basis for future competitive advantage. Alternatively, brands designed to cater for separated consumers could reach out to the integrated and assimilated consumers by offering brand extensions that meet the requirements of the other two categories. For example, one of the brands used in this research, Shana, is preferred by separated consumers for the range of frozen foods that it offers. Possible strategies for reaching out to assimilated consumers could include extending the brand into a chilled, fresh product range with short shelf-life. Since assimilated consumers are unlikely to live in the same geographical areas as separated individuals (Emmслиe, Bent and Seaman 2007), this product extension could be supported with an online retail format to be able to reach them. Finally, understanding the consumer behaviour of integrated individuals could help marketers to release the untapped potential of consumers whose preferences swing between host and ethnic brands. Thus marketing programmes could be significantly modified for different acculturation groups and there is potential for targeting products and services both within acculturation categories as well as between them.

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

British Indians were successfully segmented into three acculturation categories using the CLSI, with acculturation category membership having a bearing on British Indians’ consumer behaviour. The separated consumers preferred ethnic brands more than host brands, assimilated consumers preferred host brands more than ethnic brands and integrated consumers had brand preferences falling between these two. Acculturation category thus has a potential for use as a segmentation variable.
As the study focuses on the British Indian population, it is unclear the extent to which the results are generalisable to other ethnic minority populations. Future studies could replicate this methodological approach with other immigrant groups and in other contexts. Furthermore, although the results establish the existence of Berry’s (1980) three acculturation categories amongst British Indians, the study uses cross-sectional data and therefore does not consider how consumer behaviour is shaped by acculturation over time. A longitudinal study examining immigrants for a longer time period would yield a better understanding of the transition through acculturation categories and the implications for consumption outcomes.

This research included products or services where comparable offerings for host and ethnic brands were available. Future research could try to understand role of those product types where meaningful ethnic brand options may not be available to the British Indian consumers, such as cars and consumer durables, examining how separated, integrated and assimilated consumers differ in their brand preferences for such products. While this study has focused on brand preference, future research might also reflect upon other aspects of consumer behaviour such as shopping orientations, media preferences, consumer satisfaction, brand loyalty, the consumer decision-making process and customer service expectations.

APPENDIX 1
A study of people of Indian origin living in the UK

Section One
Cultural Life Styles Inventory (Version 3.0) by Richard H. Mendoza, PhD [Amended, with permission, by Rohini Vijaygopal, Doctoral Student, Open University Business School, UK]

The questions in this questionnaire are designed to describe certain aspects of your particular cultural life style. There are questions concerning the foods you like to eat, the language you use when speaking with your friends and relatives, and the various preferences that you have in many other areas. This is NOT a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Please read each question carefully and provide your response to each item by selecting the relevant option or typing in the relevant box. Try not to skip any item and answer as accurately as you can.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please Note: By ‘Indian language’, I mean any language (other than English) spoken in India such as Hindi, Gujarati, Punjabi etc.

1. What language do you use when you speak with your GRANDPARENTS?
   (Please select one only)
   o Only Indian
   o More Indian than English
   o More English than Indian
   o Only English
   o Both Indian and English about equally
   o Only or mostly another language - (please specify):
   o I do not have grandparents

2. What language do you use when you speak with your PARENTS?
   (Please select one only)
   o Only Indian
   o More Indian than English
   o More English than Indian
   o Only English
   o Both Indian and English about equally
   o Only or mostly another language - (please specify):
   o I do not have parents

3. What language do you use when you speak with your BROTHERS and SISTERS?
   (Please select one only)
   o Only Indian
   o More Indian than English
   o More English than Indian
   o Only English
   o Both Indian and English about equally
   o Only or mostly another language - (please specify):
   o I do not have brothers or sisters

4. What language do you use when you speak with your SPOUSE or PERSON you LIVE WITH?
   (Please select one only)
   o Only Indian
   o More Indian than English
   o More English than Indian
   o Only English
   o Both Indian and English about equally
   o Only or mostly another language - (please specify):
   o I am not married or living with anyone

5. What language do you use when you speak with your CHILDREN?
   (Please select one only)
   o Only Indian
   o More Indian than English
   o More English than Indian
   o Only English
   o Both Indian and English about equally
   o Only or mostly another language - (please specify):
   o I do not have children

6. What language do you use when you speak with your CLOSEST FRIENDS?
   (Please select one only)
   o Only Indian
   o More Indian than English
   o More English than Indian
   o Only English
   o Both Indian and English about equally
   o Only or mostly another language - (please specify):
   o I do not have any close friends
7. What kind of RECORDS, TAPES, DVDs or COMPACT DISCS (CD’S) do you own? (Please select one only)
   o Only Indian-speaking records, tapes, DVDs and CD’s
   o Mostly Indian-speaking records, tapes, DVDs and CD’s
   o Mostly English-speaking records, tapes, DVDs and CD’s
   o Only English-speaking records, tapes, DVDs and CD’s
   o Both Indian and English-speaking records, tapes, DVDs and CD’s about equally
   o Only or mostly records, tapes, DVDs and CD’s in another language (please specify the language of the records, tapes, DVDs or CD’s):
   o I do not own any records, tapes, DVDs or CD’s

8. What kind of RADIO stations do you listen to? (Please select one only)
   o Only Indian-speaking radio stations
   o Mostly Indian-speaking radio stations
   o Mostly English-speaking radio stations
   o Only English-speaking radio stations
   o Both Indian and English-speaking radio stations about equally
   o Only or mostly radio stations in another language (please specify the language of the radio station):
   o I do not listen to radio

9. What kind of TELEVISION stations do you watch? (Please select one only)
   o Only Indian-speaking television stations
   o Mostly Indian-speaking television stations
   o Mostly English-speaking television stations
   o Only English-speaking television stations
   o Both Indian and English-speaking television stations about equally
   o Only or mostly television stations in another language (please specify the language of the television station):
   o I do not watch television

10. What kind of NEWSPAPERS and MAGAZINES do you read? (Please select one only)
    o Only newspapers and magazines in Indian
    o Mostly newspapers and magazines in Indian
    o Mostly newspapers and magazines in English
    o Only newspapers and magazines in English
    o Both newspapers and magazines in Indian and English about equally
    o Only or mostly newspapers and magazines in another language (please specify the language of the newspapers and magazines):
    o I do not read newspapers or magazines

11. In what language do you PRAY? (Please select one only)
    o Only in Indian
    o More in Indian than in English
    o More in English than in Indian
    o Only in English
    o Both in Indian and English about equally
    o Only or mostly in another language - (please specify):
    o I do not pray

12. In what language are the JOKES with which you are familiar? (Please select one only)
    o Only in Indian
    o More in Indian than in English
    o More in English than in Indian
    o Only in English
    o Some are in Indian and some are in English about equally
    o All or most are in another language - (please specify):
    o I am not familiar with any jokes

13. What kind of FOODS do you typically eat AT HOME? (Please select one only)
    o Only Indian foods
    o Mostly Indian foods
    o Mostly Non-Indian, British Mainstream foods
    o Only Non-Indian, British Mainstream foods
    o Both Indian and Non-Indian, British Mainstream foods about equally
    o Only or mostly other types of foods (please specify the origin of the other types of food):
    o I do not eat at home

14. At what kind of RESTAURANTS do you typically eat? (Please select one only)
    o Only at Indian restaurants
    o Mostly at Indian restaurants
    o Mostly at Non-Indian restaurants
    o Only at Non-Indian restaurants
    o Both at Indian and Non-Indian restaurants about equally
    o Only or mostly at other kinds of restaurants (please specify the origin of the other kinds of restaurants):
    o I do not eat at restaurants

15. What are the ethnic backgrounds of your CLOSEST FRIENDS? (Please select one only)
    o All are Indian or Indian-British
    o Most are Indian or Indian-British
    o Most are British Mainstream
    o All are British Mainstream
    o Both Indian / Indian-British and British Mainstream about equally
    o All or most are of another ethnic group - (please specify):
    o I do not have any close friends
16. What is the ethnic background of the people you have dated?
(Please select one only)
- All are Indian or Indian-British
- Most are Indian or Indian-British
- Most are British Mainstream
- All are British Mainstream
- Both Indian / Indian-British and British Mainstream about equally
- All or most are of another ethnic group - (please specify):
- I have not dated anyone

17. When you go to social functions such as parties, dances, picnics or sports events, what is the ethnic background of the people (including your family members) that you typically go with?
(Please select one only)
- Always with Indians or Indian-British
- Mostly with Indians or Indian-British
- Mostly with British Mainstream
- Always with British Mainstream
- Both Indians / Indian-British and British Mainstream about equally
- Always or mostly with individuals from another ethnic group - (please specify):
- I do not go to social functions

18. What is the ethnic makeup of the neighborhood where you live?
(Please select one only)
- Only Indian or Indian-British
- Mostly Indian or Indian-British
- Mostly British Mainstream
- Only British Mainstream
- Both Indian / Indian-British and British Mainstream about equally
- Only or mostly other ethnic group(s) - (please specify):
- I do not know my neighborhood well

19. Which national anthem do you know the words to?
(Please select one only)
- Only the Indian national anthem
- Mostly the Indian national anthem
- Mostly the British (U.K.) national anthem
- Only the British (U.K.) national anthem
- Both the Indian and British (U.K.) national anthems about equally
- Neither the Indian nor the British (U.K.) national anthems
- I do not know the words to any national anthem

20. Which national or cultural heritage do you feel most proud of?
(Please select one only)
- Unquestionably my Indian heritage
- Primarily my Indian heritage
- Primarily my British (U.K.) heritage
- Unquestionably my British (U.K.) heritage
- Both my Indian and British (U.K.) heritages about equally
- Other national or cultural heritage - (please specify):
- I do not feel proud of any national / cultural heritage

21. What types of national or cultural holidays do you typically celebrate?
(Please select one only)
- Only Indian holidays
- Mostly Indian holidays
- Mostly British (U.K.) holidays
- Only British (U.K.) holidays
- Both Indian and British (U.K.) holidays about equally
- Only or mostly other national or cultural holidays - (please specify):
- I do not celebrate any national or cultural holidays

22. What is the ethnic background of the movie stars and popular singers that you most admire?
(Please select one only)
- All are Indian or Indian-British
- Most are Indian or Indian-British
- Most are British Mainstream
- All are British Mainstream
- Some are Indian / Indian-British and some are British
- Mainstream about equally
- All or most are from another ethnic group - (please specify):
- I do not admire any movie stars or popular singers

23. If you had a choice, what is the ethnic background of the person that you would / did marry?
(Please select one only)
- Most definitely an Indian or Indian-British
- Preferably an Indian or Indian-British
- Most definitely a British Mainstream
- Preferably a British Mainstream
- Either an Indian / Indian-British or British Mainstream, it would not matter to me
- Neither an Indian / Indian-British nor a British Mainstream.
- Other ethnic group: (please specify):
- I cannot imagine being married
24. You are a parent / Imagine you are a new parent. What type of NAMES would / did you give your children?
(Please select one only)
- Most definitely Indian names
- Probably Indian names
- Probably English or English Mainstream names
- Most definitely English or English Mainstream names
- Either Indian or English / English Mainstream names, it would not matter to me
- Neither Indian nor English / English Mainstream names. Other ethnic names: (please specify):
- I cannot imagine being a parent

25. You are a parent / Imagine you are a new parent. If you had children, in what language would / did you TEACH them to READ, WRITE and SPEAK?
(Please select one only)
- Only in Indian (with no English)
- Primarily in Indian (with some English)
- Primarily in English (with some Indian)
- Only in English (with no Indian)
- Equally in both Indian and English
- Only or primarily in another language - (please specify):
- I cannot imagine being a parent

26. Which culture and way of life do you believe is RESPONSIBLE for the SOCIAL PROBLEMS (such as poverty, teenage pregnancies and gangs) found in some Indian-British communities in the U.K.?
(Please select one only)
- Only the British Mainstream culture
- Mostly the British Mainstream culture
- Mostly the Indian culture
- Only the Indian culture
- Both Indian and British Mainstream cultures about equally
- Only or mostly another culture, social condition or way of life (please specify):
- I do not know

27. At what kind of STORES do you TYPICALLY SHOP?
(Please select one only)
- Only at stores that have Indian-speaking workers
- Primarily at stores that have Indian-speaking workers
- Primarily at stores that have English-speaking workers
- Only at stores that have English-speaking workers
- Both, at stores that have Indian-speaking and English-speaking workers about equally
- Only or primarily at stores with workers that speak another language (please specify the language):
- I do not go shopping

28. How do you prefer to be IDENTIFIED?
(Please select one only)
- Most definitely as an Indian, Indian-British
- Preferably as an Indian, Indian-British
- Preferably as a British, British Mainstream
- Most definitely as British, British Mainstream
- Either as an Indian / Indian-British or as a British / British Mainstream, I have no preference
- Neither as an Indian / Indian-British nor as a British / British Mainstream. Other group: (please specify):
- I do prefer not to be identified in this way

29. Which culture and way of life would you say has had the MOST POSITIVE INFLUENCE on your life?
(Please select one only)
- Most definitely the Indian culture
- Probably the Indian culture
- Probably the British Mainstream culture
- Most definitely the British Mainstream culture
- Both Indian and British Mainstream cultures about equally
- Neither Indian nor British Mainstream cultures. Other culture: (please specify):
- No culture / way of life has had any positive influence on me

Section Two
Please choose one brand for each option that you would consistently prefer to buy. Please assume that the two brands under each option are similar in price, packaging and availability. If you are not familiar with any sets of brands, please skip that particular option and move on to the next one.

a: (Please select one only)
Jet Airways          British Airways
b: (Please select one only)
Bollywood            Hollywood
c: (Please select one only)
ICICI Bank           Barclays Bank
d: (Please select one only)
KTC Cooking Oil      Flora Cooking Oil
e: (Please select one only)
Zee TV               ITV
f: (Please select one only)
Star Tours           Thompson Travels
g: (Please select one only)
Parle- G Biscuits    McVities Biscuits
h: (Please select one only)
Mysore Sandal Soap   Dove Soap
i: (Please select one only)
Rubicon Juice        Ribena Juice
j: (Please select one only)
Shana Frozen Food    Bird’s Eye Frozen Food
k: (Please select one only)
Pride Olive Oil       Filipo Berio Olive Oil
l: (Please select one only)
Tilda Rice           Uncle Ben’s Rice
Thank you for taking time to participate in this research! Please give consent to submit your responses for this research by clicking on the button below.

If you have any technical problems accessing or submitting this questionnaire, please email: The OU ELSA Team.

REFERENCES:


Hens in the Cock House: Towards an Understanding of Female Identity Renegotiation within a Male Dominated Marketplace Culture

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ABSTRACT
This ethnographic study investigates a male dominated marketplace culture and finds that female participants have successfully renegotiated their previous passive ‘eye candy’ role within the culture. Male participants originally constructed female participants as ‘playthings’ – primarily as objects of male desire. However, following female participants’ adoption and co-option of masculine behavioural roles, they have redefined their role within the culture. Female participants are no longer viewed as playthings but instead as legitimate and authentic cultural members – ‘players’. This study suggests that within the liminoid zone of a marketplace culture that ‘player identity’ appears to be a more dominant behavioural influence than gender identity – each voluntary actor within the zone, regardless of gender, aligns behaviour according to the communal construction of authentic ‘player’.

INTRODUCTION
The most dominant identity that defines a human, in the multitude of identities offered to the postmodern consumer, remains that of being male or female, masculine or feminine (Avery, 2012). However, gender identity is not a fixed entity rooted in the body or in personality traits of individuals. Thus, we understand that gender is constructed by social relationships, cultural representations, and consumption (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995; Patterson and Elliott, 2002; Holt and Thompson, 2004; Schroeder and Zwick, 2004; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Martin, Schouten, and McAlexander, 2006; Avery, 2012). Furthermore, consumer researchers have shown that possessions, brands, consumption practices, and consumption activities are symbolically gendered (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995; Belk and Costa, 1998; Fournier, 1998; Hirschman, 2003; Sherry, Kozinets, and Borhini, 2007; Littlefield and Ozanne, 2011). Also, while gender has been described as “a system of social relations or a social institution ... enacted through the consistent adoption of gendered practices” (Littlefield and Ozanne, 2011), questions arise as to how both multiple possible masculinities and femininities might be expressed in particular consumption contexts.

For this paper, our interest lies in the expression of multiple possible femininities in a communal space that seems at first glance to be characterised by notions of utopian atavistic masculinity. We note by way of introduction that many marketplace cultures discussed in the marketing literature tend to be male dominated (Leigh, Peters, and Shelton, 2006; Cova, Pace, and Park, 2007; Martin et al, 2006; O'Sullivan, Richardson, and Collins, 2011). In addition, not only are many of the marketplace cultures male dominated, many of the communal consumption spaces documented in the literature tend to exhibit strong or even extreme forms of masculinity (Belk and Costa, 1998; Kozinets, Sherry, Storm, Duhacheck, Nuttavuthish, and DeBerry Spence, 2004; Sherry et al, 2007; Hickman and Ward, 2007; O'Sullivan, Richardson, and Gillen, 2010). Behaviours are aggressive and loud, accoutrements are unmistakably laden with machismo, and extreme rather than moderate forms of masculinity tend to prevail (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995; Holt and Thompson, 2004; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Martin et al, 2006; Littlefield and Ozanne, 2011; Canniford, 2011; O’Sullivan et al, 2011; Avery, 2012).

However, while for instance Littlefield and Ozanne (2011) record how young men progress toward “the construction of their own masculine and consumption identities through the manipulation of guns, hunting accoutrements, and rituals” we seek instead to address the question of how women consumers can potentially perform multiple feminine identities in a hyper-masculine setting, using male-gendered activities and products (Hirschman, 2003; Littlefield and Ozanne, 2011) to participate as full members of a hyper-masculinised culture, and manage their relative ‘gender paradox’ (Martin et al, 2006).

In short, rather than exploring a context or contexts similar to that of the Stockholm brat enclave, where “women appear content with playing only supportive roles in the males’ identity game” (Ostberg, 2006) we are interested instead in exploring women’s rejection of such confinement, and their participation as full rather than marginal members of a culture.

Full participation by women consumers in hyper-masculinised marketplace cultures have been documented several times in prior research, most notably by Martin et al (2006) and Schouten et al (2007). For instance Schouten, Martin, and McAlexander (2007) address questions of meaning for women consumers in a hyper-masculine consumption community, the question of whether women in such a community embrace or reject hegemonic masculinity, and the question of feminine versus masculine practices in regard to the activity.

Women bikers present reject many of the practices of male bikers outright. For example, when on road trips, instead of only stopping for absolute necessities such as food or gas, they reserve the right to stop at antique shops for a browse. They do not seem to feel obliged to abide by the ‘rules of the game’ but rather construct their own rules. Another theme of note, as documented by Schouten et al (2007), is that of overt resistance by women bikers to male control. They note for instance the prevalence of helmet stickers bearing such legends as ‘I got a Harley for my husband – it was a good trade’. In the case of our study, one question that therefore arises is that of whether women beer pong players engage in similarly resistant practices, or whether they simply seek to participate as equals ‘at the tables’ without any overt acknowledgement of or resistance to prevailing norms of utopian masculinity.

Further evidence of women bikers participating in biker culture on their own terms is enacted through accessorising their motorcycles in what might be seen as traditionally feminine ways, with female accessories. However, this is not a uniform practice across all women bikers, and some participants deliberately embrace hyper-masculine styles as a means to express and experience their own independence. As noted by Martin et al (2006), many women bikers self-immers in the cultural play space to facilitate self-creation, realization, and authenticity (for a more extensive discussion on how communal consumption can facilitate feelings of authenticity see Leigh et al, 2006). Female participation in the Harley Davidson brand community and their personalised use of the Harley Davidson brand allows them to construct a sense of identity associated with freedom, overcoming challenges, mastery, risk taking, and independence (Martin et al, 2006). This independence can either be expressed through the mimicry of male biking styles, adoption of feminine biking styles, or various combinations thereof. Hence, women bikers embrace hyper-masculine practices, to a varying degree, depending on their own personal preferences.

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION
The findings of Martin et al (2006) and Schouten et al (2007) thus point to the potential for diversity and complexity of motives among women participants in masculinised communal spaces. Do some participants self-immers in hyper-masculinity in order to express independence and temporarily separate themselves from other, more traditionally feminine, aspects of self, for instance? Alternatively, do some women beer pong players manifest a re-working of the norms that govern the communal space, consciously retaining their femininity in a manner analogous to the identity projects of women bikers, or do they simply adopt all the practices that prevail among the male members of the culture, without any concern for retention of femininity?

Also – if “hunting (deer) is the quintessential masculine activity (Marks 1991, as cited by Littlefield and Ozanne, 2011)” then is ‘hunting’ beer pong cups an opportunity for female consumers to experiment with the hunting ritual for themselves (Morris, 2002)? Do ‘she pongers’ temporarily engage with this communal space solely for reasons of hedonic enjoyment, or is it potentially a subconscious assertion of the right to join in the hunt and to play?

A further question of interest is that of the lengths women ‘pongers’ will go to, in order to engage with this hyper-masculinised identity. It may be that some women participants will seek to emulate not only full participation in the climactic carnival that is the World Series of Beer Pong (O’Sullivan et al, 2010) but will also put in the long hours of beer pong practice engaged in by the more competitive of the male participants. So it is no longer just a question of presence in the communal play space, it also becomes a question of the lengths that women participants will go to, to thrive in that space – as players. While long hours of practice would indicate adoption of hyper-masculinised levels of competitiveness, it does not necessarily follow that female participants would uncritically adopt all other hyper-masculinised practices, or uncritically embrace all other aspects of the liminoid zone, such as excessive consumption of alcohol. Hence, we also seek to explore how these particular aspects of the gender paradox are resolved.

Finally, the consumer culture theory literature also suggests that within liminoid zones, consumers engage in liberatory behaviours, as a form of catharsis from the pressures of cultural expectations and representations (Turner, 1979; 1982; Kozinets et al, 2004; Holt and Thompson, 2004; Sherry et al, 2007; O’Sullivan et al, 2011; Tumbat and Belk, 2011). Is it the case that women beer pong players expect equal access to the catharsis potentially offered by this communal space? That they expect equal licence to engage in the liberatory behaviours indulged in by their male counterparts? Is there a sense of emancipation to be derived from enacting what would normally be regarded as masculine roles in structured society (Turner, 1982)? Do ‘she pongers’ derive hedonic gratification from temporarily inverting social norms and notions of how they should behave? What, in short, are the issues that arise as ‘she pongers’ negotiate the hyper-masculinised communal terrain, in order to move from a secondary to a fully participative role within the communal play space?

METHODOLOGY
An ethnographic investigation of the professional beer pong marketplace culture began when the lead author attended the World Series of Beer Pong (WSOBP) V in Las Vegas, Nevada, from 1-5 January 2010. Since attending WSOBP V the lead author has become fully immersed in the professional beer pong culture and has also attended WSOBP VI (2011) and VII (2012). Data collection at the WSOBP included participant and non-participant observation, visual ethnography (Pink, 2006), which included both photography (Schwartz, 1989) and videography (Belk and Kozinets, 2005), and various opportunities for informal conversations with the range of actors present (Stewart, 1998). The lead author also conducted a ‘netnography’ (Kozinets, 2002) of the Bpong.com forum, a number of Facebook discussion groups dedicated to professional beer pong, and a number of consumer initiated blogs, which discussed a broad range of ‘hot topics’ central to professional beer pong culture, a number of which discussed the gender divide. The investigation into professional beer pong included a multi-sited international aspect (Kjelgaard, Faurot, and Ger, 2006); the lead author immersed himself into the beer pong culture in the USA and Canada (participation), and also the emerging beer pong cultures in Ireland (participation), Holland (participation), and France (netnography). All data was analysed according to the guidelines of Spiggle (1994).

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH CONTEXT: WHAT IS BEER PONG?
The modern use of alcohol has its cultural origins in rituals and religious belief systems; today the consumption of alcohol remains a highly symbolic activity, directly related to a variety of life stages such as birthdays, graduation parties, and weddings (Beccaria and Sande, 2003). However, within youth culture alcohol is a dominant means for accessing the liminoid (Turner, 1979; 1982). Hackley, Bengry-Howell, Griffin, Massist, Szmigin, and Hackley see Tiwakul (2012), go so far as to suggest that a ‘culture of intoxication’ is emerging. There is an obvious connection between the intoxicated complexion of youth culture and the emergence of many ‘drinking games’ (Borsari, 2004). Drinking games have emerged in youth culture as a form of edgework practice (Lyng 1990; 2005), in which consumers play with the limits of intoxication and possibly death (Beccaria and Sande, 2003). Drinking games are roughly defined as situations in which alcohol is consumed with definite, standardized, and previously agreed rules (Beccaria and Sande 2003; Borsari, 2004; Borsari, Boyle, Hustad, Barnett, Teyyaw, and Kahler, 2007). Alcohol consumption is mandatory during drinking games.

Drinking games have emerged as a considerable influence on North American college alcohol consumption since the 1950s (Borsari, 2004; Applebaum and DiSorbo, 2009). There are over 150 types of drinking game popular on college campuses and they all share a central goal – to ensure intoxication. Wechsler, Davenport, Dowdall, Moeykens, and Castillo (1994) suggest that almost half (47%) of frequent binge drinkers experience five or more drink related problems, which can include liver disease, stomach disorders, mood changes, and in extreme cases alcohol poisoning, coma, brain damage and even death. Thus, participation in ‘drinking games’ has serious health consequences. One of the most popular drinking games is that of beer pong.

Beer pong is played on college campuses through North America; it has over 100 websites dedicated to the rules and even brands dedicated to providing ‘official’ beer pong equipment have emerged (Applebaum and DiSorbo, 2009). Beer pong normally involves two players per team, an 8ft long table, and ping-pong balls that are thrown into a triangle formation of ten cups slightly filled with beer on the opposite side of the table. Once a ball is ‘sunk’ in an opponent’s cups, that cup is taken away and the beer drunk. Victory is achieved when all an opponent’s cups are taken away. In beer pong, distracting an opponent from aiming is allowed, encouraged, and expected. When a competitor is taking a shot, distractions often include so-called ‘trash’ and ‘smack’ talk, and trying to upset opponents’ aim by waving limbs. Conduct during beer pong is far from gentlemanly or even decent (Applebaum and DiSorbo, 2009). Thus beer pong is understood as a highly carnivalesque and masculine affair, due to its’...
associations with intoxication and boisterous behaviours (O’Sullivan et al, 2010). In 2006, the BPONG brand emerged, and with it the World Series of Beer Pong (WSOBP), the world’s largest professional beer pong tournament. Since, the popularity of professional beer pong has grown rapidly: WSOBP VI (2011) hosted over 1000 participants from fifteen different countries and offered a grand prize of $50,000.

**FINDINGS**

**The Male Gaze: Women as ‘Playthings’**

The professional beer pong culture can be considered a community bound by the utopian ideals of an atavistic masculinity (Holt and Thompson, 2004). The culture maintains associations with the traditional hyper-masculine associations of beer, women as sexual objects, competition, and revelry (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Avery, 2012). The ethos of women as entertainment evolved from the early stages of the WSOBP, when BPONG, the organising brand, partnered with strip clubs and dating websites for additional sponsorship revenue. For instance, the official after party of WSOBP V (2010) was held in Sapphire Strip Club, Las Vegas. Typically, strip clubs and dating websites contributed to WSOBP sponsorship and entered a ‘stripper team’ or ‘novelty team’, which served as a promotional tool while simultaneously creating an atmosphere dominated by ideals of hegemonic masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Thus, female participation in professional beer pong was in a highly objectified manner, whereby women were primarily included for their sexual aesthetics and for male competitors to gaze upon. Below is a description of a photograph on the BPONG.COM website from WSOBP II:

“There is an action shot of a women’s team playing beer pong, it was a team entered to play by one of the tournament sponsors – ‘Vixens Versus’. The female players, in order to generate attention, are wearing skimpy white shorts, they are pulling the shorts down to expose even skimpier underwear beneath. One female, with her back to the shot, is topless and another of the women has her bikini undone but has tape covering her nipples. Directly behind this female team is a line of four male participants gazing intensely at the female participant’s clothing, or the lack thereof.” – Visual Nettographic Observation (Photograph may be accessed from: www.bpong.com/wsobp-archive/the-world-series-of-beer-pong-ii)

While the inclusion of such ‘novelty’ teams served to maintain an aspect of the carnivalesque, already associated with the consumption setting of Las Vegas (Belk, 2001) and provided for an opportunity for male players to enact the male gaze (Patterson and Elliott, 2002). The following quotation from ‘Dub’ highlights the value of these hyper-masculine play opportunities for male consumers wishing to indulge in them. He suggests that conduct at the WSOBP, and during beer pong, cannot be likened to other sports, and that the WSOBP is an inherently different play space, in which ideals of masculinity are to be enacted without stigma attached:

“Let’s not forget what this is, people. It’s f***ing BEER PONG. Not f***ing chess, cricket or water polo. Not only do I condone the strippers and penthouse after parties, I also propose that next year we add midgets to that mix.” – Dub, posting in BPONG.COM, Forum

‘JStud’ highlights how the WSOBP is far from ‘friendly family fun’ and suggests that if it were not so centred on satisfying male play desires that more female players would attend. She highlights that the WSOBP is a male centric play space full of ‘testosterone battles and juvenile antics’, which fails to accommodate for female players in an acceptable manner – thus it is not a feminine play space. However, male participants desire these play forms, and relish the opportunity to enact the male gaze (Patterson and Elliott, 2002). The following quotation from ‘Dub’ highlights the value of these hyper-masculine play opportunities for male consumers wishing to indulge in them. He suggests that conduct at the WSOBP, and during beer pong, cannot be likened to other sports, and that the WSOBP is an inherently different play space, in which ideals of masculinity are to be enacted without stigma attached:

“... the only thing I was disappointed in is the fact that I didn’t see any stripper teams or really any girls that were there (WSOBP VI) just to distract... in the future we need to pay some strippers and escorts to come play...” – Strider, posting in BPONG.COM Forum

‘Strider’ states explicitly he would like employed ‘strippers and escorts’ present in the play space, solely for his visual stimulation desires. So while BPONG brand management attempt to provide for an atmosphere less dominated by ideals of hegemonic masculinity, some male participants’ desire to act out novel roles remains, regardless of the play limitations this places on female participants. However, rather than accept confinement to ‘eye-candy’ and ‘plaything’ roles, female participants have begun to adopt hyper-masculine roles as a means to renegotiate the limitations of their feminine roles within the play space. This renegotiation has increasingly begun to result in the inclusion of female participants as players in their own right rather than as passive resources for play.

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As the beer pong culture is dominated by hyper-masculinity, the adoption of masculine roles and appropriation of masculine identities enables female participants to meet the community’s norms (Martin et al, 2006; Schouten et al, 2007; Avery, 2012). Tactics of appropriation often include altering between enacting male and female gender roles (Martin et al, 2006; Schouten et al, 2007; Avery, 2012). Women may adopt aspects of masculinity in renegotiating identities (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Women within the professional beer pong culture thus use tactics of adoption and co-option of hyper-masculinity, similar to those co-option tactics observed in the Harley-Davidson community (Martin et al, 2006).

Adopting Hyper-Masculine Roles: “It’s Always a Little Sweeter Victory When You Beat the Boys”

“Our opponents came up to me afterwards and said ‘wow, you’re really good’, which although meant as a compliment made me cringe. Making three cups a game is not a good game for me, but because I am a girl in beer pong, that was considered ‘good’. I understand that in general, this is a male dominated sport, but it drives me crazy to be separated in it... I feel like there are still plenty of people who are still reluctant to play with me over a boy who isn’t as good as me, but so it goes, because the stigma is there.” – Bee, Pongstars.net Blog, March 19th, 2012

‘Bee’ discusses how such a male/female separation in the play space ‘drives her crazy’, that she is a competitor and a player, and during play, gender should not be a concern. Within professional beer pong culture, the optimum means to construct a masculine identity is through enacting the competitor role: female participants thus enact hyper-competitive roles as a means to achieve a redefinition of women in beer pong – to achieve a form of play-ground equality, to be understood and accepted as active players rather than passive playthings:

“Kate uploaded the Facebook status: ‘Getting ready for the weekend with a change in profile picture’ the updated profile picture was Kate standing next to a BPONG beer pong table wearing a ‘Real Pong Wife’ t-shirt’” – Netnographic Observation, Facebook, March 28th, 2012

‘Kate’ suggests a ‘real pong wife’ no longer sits and watches, or entertains – she plays and competes, she is active in the play space. The tactic of adopting a hyper-masculine role of being hyper-competitive serves to liberate female members from the ‘eye-candy’ role, it justifies their place in the play-ground as players:

“For the weeks, days, and hours leading up to the satty (satellite tournament), I was so excited because of how deeply I wanted this win; all of Arizona will tell you. The win was more gratifying because I participated and competed more than I had anticipated. Knowing that I won that tournament because I played my heart out is a phenomenal feeling. Now that I am deeper into the scene, I see how few females there are. Although it may be true that guys are better, I believe it is because girls don’t take it as serious. There is no better feeling than being underestimated and winning against guys who think I’m nothing but talk.” – ‘Halleg’, Female (Age Unknown), Pongstars.net, Blog, November 8th, 2011

The above passage displays how ‘Halley’ enacts masculine roles via her style of play, stating she ‘played her heart out’, and that she is extremely competitive – there is more to her than just ‘talk’.

She relishes in the fact that she proves male competitors wrong by beating them, thus she feels she belongs in the play-ground as a true member, and not as a toy per se. Female members relish being victorious over male players, as it allows for greater opportunities for prestige - and thus player equality to emerge (Huizinga, 1955):

“Playing in a girls tournament is always a lot of fun and it’s always great to win, but it’s always a little sweeter victory when you beat the boys. Hopefully at WSOBP VII we will see a lot more girls playing at a higher competitive level.” – ‘Britt’, Female (Age Unknown), Pongstars.net Blog, November 8th, 2011

“Nothing is more entertaining to me than to walk up to a table, see my male opponents start smiling and getting all excited about ‘playing a girl and an easy win’. Nothing is more satisfying than proving them completely wrong and watching them walk away stunned and disappointed.” – ‘Shell’, Female (26), Pongstars.net, blog, November 8th, 2011

Beating the ‘boys’ affords female competitors an opportunity to construct a more powerful feminine identity via the construction of their beaten competitors as subservient men – in fact they are constructed as mere ‘boys’. Female competitors receive satisfaction from proving male competitors ‘wrong’: female competitors are viewed as weaker, not serious competition, and often referred to as ‘easy wins’ by male members. However, by beating male competitors, and refusing to be ‘easy wins’, female members justify their place within the masculine play-ground as competitors and opponents. Female community members crave legitimacy as ‘real’ players; they believe that winning games and enacting hyper-masculine roles is the prime source to achieve female empowerment within the culture:

“Regardless of her (Nugget) size, she is feisty and holds her own on and off the beer pong table... Our most eventful game was against ‘Dallas 49ers’. They hit last cup, giving us one shot to go into overtime. I pulled ‘Nugget’ aside and told her she is the best clutch (perform under pressure) female I’ve ever seen and this was her cup to bury. She proved me right and took the game into its first overtime. Second overtime they closed us out at 2. I shot first burying the angled 2 because it is my favourite rack in the game. Again I told ‘Nugget’ that this was her cup. Before she stepped up to the table ‘Ed’ began putting his jacket on to leave. But she buried the cup, ran over and ripped his jacket off with both of us yelling “you’re not done yet”...” – ‘Halley’, Female (Age Unknown), Pongstarts.net, Blog, May 5th, 2012

‘Halley’ discusses a highly competitive game against a male team at the WSOBP VII as the highlight of her tournament; mainly due to her female partner’s aggression and will to win, and their combined attempt to intimidate male competitors, regardless of inferior physicality. Their aggressive behaviour, hence, justifies their inclusion in the play-ground – they are true beer pong players and tough opponents. Female members enact the hyper-masculine role of ‘Give Em Hell’ (Avery, 2012) during the WSOBP as a means to achieve a degree of legitimization and empowerment (Martin et al, 2006). The collective construction of masculinity within the play space influences how females interact with each other during competition also. Female players adopt hyper-masculine vernacular when competing in order to emphasis their player equality and right to be in the play space (Martin et al, 2006; Avery, 2012):
“... But you better believe I’m coming after you two next year, so don’t get too comfortable.” – ‘Halley’, Female (Age Unknown), Pongstars.net Blog, March 5th, 2012

“Abbie eventually won that endurance test of a tournament, against SoCal’s Tammy. The verbal abuse between the two girls during the game was epic, as was the shooting.” – ‘Clawless’, Pongstars.net, Blog, November 8th, 2011

“Mel explained that after I left the co-ed tourney two of the Dunn sisters got in a fracas with each other. She said they were getting involved in ‘serious smack talk, and then ran at each other and began scrapping while their two male team mates just watch and let them at it’.” – ‘Mel’, Female (28), Informal Conversation, WSOBP VI, January 3rd, 2011

Female members’ language, phraseology, and symbolism carry masculine and aggressive tones. ‘Halley’ states she is ‘coming after players’, ‘Clawless’ reports ‘epic verbal abuse’ during the female competition, and ‘Mel’ discusses a physical fight occurring between two female competitors (physical fighting is a rarity among male competitors, the lead author recorded only one such instant during the 36 month ethnography). The hyper-masculine aggression involved in tournament play requires female members to enact more masculine roles, such as ‘trash and smack talk’ and physical fighting, in order to achieve a degree of acceptance as legitimate play-ground participants. However, carnivals are unisex, and this allows for a more natural strategic co-option of situational masculinity and selective feminine roles. Thus, female players can also enact some feminine roles associated with the carnival in tandem with hyper-masculine roles.

Co-opting Hyper-Masculine Roles:
“Skilled in every position”

While female members enact hyper-masculine roles during game-play, in an attempt to renegotiate the female ‘eye candy’ role in the play-ground, female members also enact carnival roles, which serves to critique their previous assigned role. Female participants use humour to negotiate the gender paradox experienced in the play-ground (Martin et al, 2006). Female members bear humorous sex-ist team names and engage in the grotesque terminology central to the carnival (Bakhtin, 1984) in order to poke fun at their previously sexually objectified status within the community. Team names have included: 99 Problems but a Bitch Ain’t One, We Swim Naked, Slut competition, and ‘Mel’ discusses a physical fight occurring between masculine and aggressive tones. ‘Halley’ states she is ‘coming after their identity paradox (Martin et al, 2006):

a form of ludic autotely (Sherry et al, 2007) and a tactic to manage the culture continues in other spheres of consumption also, as both

creativity and consummation norms within the community.

Incorporation of Traditional Feminine Accessories

Through full participation in masculine roles and the critique of their previously established role, female participants have begun to introduce more desired femininity into the communal play space. While clothing, make-up, and appearance are all universally linked with female identity (Martin et al, 2006; Avery, 2012), female beer pong players co-opt the notion of male gendered beer pong t-shirts and combine them with traditional feminine practices such as choosing an outfit:

“I love going for a t-shirt and the first 4 I pull are beer pong shirts” – ‘Sam’, Female (32), Facebook Status, August 1st, 2010

It is common for female members to conform to play-ground It is common for female members to conform to play-ground It is common for female members to conform to play-ground

It is common for female members to conform to play-ground norms (Martin et al, 2006), especially with regards to clothing. As stated, this implies a preference for masculine items of attire such as jeans and t-shirts. However, Female members tend to employ a tactic, as discussed by Martin et al (2006), of underscoring their femininity subtly while wearing clothing appropriate to the masculine norms within the community.

It is common for female members to conform to play-ground norms (Martin et al, 2006), especially with regards to clothing. As stated, this implies a preference for masculine items of attire such as jeans and t-shirts. However, Female members tend to employ a tactic, as discussed by Martin et al (2006), of underscoring their femininity subtly while wearing clothing appropriate to the masculine norms within the community.

"‘Jasmine’ was wearing a black beer pong t-shirt, with the logo of her local beer pong organizer blazoned across it, she wore this with blue jeans, this is similar attire to what male players wear. However, ‘Jasmine’ was also wearing a bright silver watch and bracelet on her left wrist, which were jewel encrusted, these were very ‘bling’. She also had her hair groomed in an extravagant ponytail, was wearing a full face of make-up, and stylish branded glasses. ‘Dani’ and ‘Ely’, were wearing their local beer pong organisers t-shirts but with short denim shorts, pink ribbons in their hair and one of which had a digital camera hanging from her wrists as an accessory.” – Visual Netnographic Observation, March 12th, 2012

The vast majority of female participants resort to co-option tactics to achieve degrees of legitimacy, emancipation, and empowerment within the male dominated play space. As a quintessential male-gendered consumption activity, the reinforcement of typical male gender stereotypes is expected (Kozinets et al, 2004) via full participation in carnivalesque play (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). However, the relative desire of female participants to enact various masculine roles, both competitive and carnival, has resulted in the acceptance of females as competitors by male play-ground members. This can be considered an evolutionary step towards player equality (Martin et al, 2006) within the play-ground and thus the culture. Female attendance at beer pong events is increasing rapidly and the culture appears to be embracing more emancipatory styles of female participation.

DISCUSSION

Within the confines of the hyper-masculine play space, traditionally women were viewed as objects of play, in the form of strippers and novelty teams. Women were included in the play-ground to ensure that male participants could enact the male gaze (Patterson and Elliott, 2002) and subsequently the ‘Playboy’ role (Avery, 2012).
Women within the play-ground were not viewed as legitimate players, but instead as a resource for hegemonic play. In order to renegotiate their role within the community, and be accepted as legitimate players, female members adopted and co-opted a number of masculine roles. The relative ease of transition from ‘women as entertainment’ to ‘authentic’ members can be credited to females enacting masculine roles within the play-ground and to the carnivalesque nature of the WSOBP experience. Carnivals are unisex (Martin et al, 2006), and hence, require female participation to support the variety of play rituals enacted (Bakhtin, 1984; Thompson, 2007). However, the WSOBP has an embedded hyper-masculine ethos governing play, which all players are expected to adhere to, regardless of gender. Thus, any female or male participants that enter the play-ground must play by the previously established play rules or else the whole play world will collapse (Huizinga, 1955). Thus, the masculine roles enacted by female members should not be viewed as symptomatic of hegemonic masculinity, but instead viewed as signs of emergent player equality.

On a related note, we also posed the question earlier in this paper of whether female participants derived a sense of emancipation from appropriating roles and behaviours normally perceived as hyper-masculine. We now believe this to be very much the case. Female participants relish the opportunity to compete, to contest, to dominate, and to win – in some cases, particularly against male participants, all the more so if their male counterparts had hegemonic expectations of an ‘easy win’. However, the manner of their participation is selective, in ways that are reminiscent of the conduct of women bikers in the Harley Davidson subculture. They do not simply imitate the behaviours of male participants but instead retain overt reminders of their femininity – a femininity defined on their terms, rather than on terms involving submissive acceptance of a decorative secondary role.

While, to a large degree, this study corroborates with Martin et al (2006), it differs in the degree to which female members are attempting to renegotiate their gender role within the community, rather than to be merely accepted within it. While the female members are not attempting to achieve a sense of gender equality per se, they seek player equality, and regardless of gender wish to be accepted as legitimate play-ground members. Female members of the culture seem, on the face of it, to be predominately concerned with accessing the communal play space as legitimate and equal players rather than as women consumers seeking to assert a feminist position. However, the search for gender equality comes in many different forms, and thus, in the current context we note that there may be a legitimate feminist subtext even within a hyper-masculine culture. However, while some of our study participants articulate a strong challenge to the phallic-centric nature of the culture, the primary concern of all participants was equal access to the play space.

Thus while communal consumption contexts can be understood as a ‘battle of the genders’, in which male consumption may dominate the behaviours of female consumers, the authors suggest that in order to more fully understand the current context, we turn our attention back to the underlying principles of liminoid (anti-structure) play spaces (Turner, 1982, Tumbat and Belk (2011), suggest that when discussing the liminoid, we should not discuss categories and demarcations central to structured society – for example, gender identity. We should be more concerned with player identity: all players that voluntarily enter the play-space to play are required to play by the ‘rules of the game’ (Huizinga, 1955).

The tactics of female adoption and co-option of masculine roles, within the play-ground appears not so much to be concerned with portraying a strong or independent feminine identity, but more so about portraying authentic player identity and achieving player equality. Thus, to a large degree, within the beer pong culture, one can instead discuss behaviour in terms of player identity, and the enactment of player identity appears directly related to the process of learning to be a tribal player (Goulding, Shankar, and Canniford, 2012). Thus, the female members of the community have not necessarily sought gender equality, so to speak, but something that appears more important within this particular liminoid zone – player equality. Female members have successfully redefined their role within the community from ‘playthings’ to players – not by confronting the rules, but instead playing by them.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research is not without its limitations. While female beer pong participants were given a naturalistic voice though blog comments, forum posts, and numerous informal conversations, it is felt that this research could have benefited from further in-depth interviews with female participants. While one interview was conducted with a female member, as a means to seek out disconfirming observations (Stewart, 1998), further interviews with female members could have served to strengthen the themes discussed and to verify the degree to which player equality took precedence over other concerns. It is also significant to note that both authors are indeed male. It is felt that the involvement of a female researcher to aid data collection and analysis, as a form of gender triangulation may have strengthened the sophistication of this study’s findings. While this study worked towards an understanding of the renegotiation of identity, the contribution of a female researcher could have resulted in the contribution being communicated with greater academic conviction. The findings of this study introduce a number of important notions regarding the relationship between play ethos and gender enactment. It appears that gender performance within the liminoid zone of marketplace cultures appears to be a supplementary form of play – both male and female participants have to align their gender performance in relation to the rules of their play space. Further research intends on examining the roles male consumers enact within the same hyper-masculine play space, in order to advance further our understanding of player identity. In doing so, we hope to further advance our understanding of gender performance within the liminoid zones of marketplace cultures.

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ABSTRACT
Avatars are a key factor for immersion in a consumption experience. Though, little is known about the customer-avatar relationship in a commercial context through time. Two studies were conducted. Findings relate to understanding ongoing avatar personalization, influence of identification on immersion and satisfaction, and the specific identification-immersion relationship throughout time.

KEY-WORDS:
avatar, creation, identification, personalization, dynamics

INTRODUCTION
After being widely criticized for its virtuality and lack of “humanity”, the Internet now offers Internet users the possibility to be represented on the screen and the ability to interact with other human representations. Each individual might now “possess” one or several avatars, graphic representation of oneself. The use of avatars on the Internet is multiple and multiplies in practice: avatars on virtual communities, avatars “living” in life-simulation virtual worlds, avatars in online or social network games, virtual models on apparel websites or avatars on commercial or touristic 3D websites. Increasingly, avatars have been adopted to express our identity; establish a social presence; communicate; interact and collaborate within this emergent space (Hamilton 2009).

As virtual worlds develop, grow and challenge marketing practitioners and academics (Hemp 2006; Parmentier and Rolland 2009; Ward and Sarren 2011), researches are needed to better understand the impact of those hyperreal settings (Baudrillard 1984) on our reality. More especially, as commercial 3D virtual universes now appear, they question previously existing knowledge on virtual world from a merchant perspective.

As stated by Biocca (1997) or Taylor (2002), the avatar is a key element as it represents the individual on the interface and reintroduces the body in a context in which it is not much solicited (Merle, St-Onge and Senecal 2011). This is particularly striking in a commercial perspective, as the body is highly mobilized in traditional consumption situations, as a processor of stimuli and information (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), and is also strongly linked to identity and consumption (Belk 1988). Stakes of using avatars in marketing are then a relevant and important topic for practitioners as well as academics in marketing.

This research focuses on the case of avatars created and used in 3D commercial universes that recently appeared on the Internet (see Appendix 1 for illustrations). First, we define the conceptual framework around the concept of avatar creation and identity construction and its specificities in a merchant context. A longitudinal study that associates qualitative and quantitative data on the subject is then presented. Finally, results on the dynamics of identification to an avatar and its consequences are presented and discussed.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
As stated by Taylor (2002), the digital body anchors the self in the virtual and social space. This embodiment is a potential source of perceived presence, immersion and socialization (Taylor 2002; Choi and Kim 2004; Turkle 2007; Garnier and Poncin 2009; Davis, Murphy, Owens, Khazanchi and Zigurs 2009; Schultzze 2010). Indeed, among the various so-said Rich Media technologies and tools that can improve the online experience, the avatar has early been identified as a key factor of engagement in the virtual universe (Biocca 1997; Taylor 2002; Tisseron 2009). From an experiential point of view, the avatar allows the consumer to play an active and productive role, this involvement being a key factor of immersion in a commercial space (Carù and Cova 2003, 2006). Academic literature has then regularly demonstrated the positive effects of using an avatar on the virtual experience and its components such as immersion or presence and its consequences (satisfaction, intentions, attitudes,...) (Taylor 2002; Choi and Kim 2004; Feldon and Kafai 2008; Garnier and Poncin 2009; Jin and Park 2009; Lim and Reeves 2010; Suh, Kim and Suh 2011; among others).

Avatar creation and identity dynamics
Creating that virtual body is a fundamental element that strongly influences the experience lived by the consumer (Choi and Kim 2004; Feldon and Kafai 2008; Lim and Reeves 2010) and its consequences on the global evaluation of the virtual universe, perceived quality and value, satisfaction or intentions (to come back, to buy, to be loyal,...) (Arakji and Lang 2008; Kim and Forsythe 2008, 2009; Malter, Rosa and Garbarino 2008; Garnier and Poncin 2009; Merle, St-Onge and Senecal 2009, 2011). Creating the avatar is, in practice, the first thing a new user will do: as such, it is clearly the first contact with the universe. Creating the avatar is also a relatively long decisional process (Tisseron 2009), especially in online video-games and life-simulation virtual universes such as Second Life. Park and Chung (2011) stress the importance of tools that allow good conditions for self-presentation.

Regular modifications can be observed, on the appearance as well as on the personality of the character (Bessière, Seay and Kiesler 2007). The avatar is then a tool of dynamic identity construction that allows individuals to experiment identities and to express multiple aspects of their selves (Turkle 1994, 1995). Avatars, as Turkle understands them, provide an opportunity for (extended) identity formation. In this case, even when they are part of role-play, they are not separate from, but part of, an expanded production and expression of self (Hamilton 2009).

Individuals usually tend to reproduce either their real self or an improved or idealized self (Tisseron 2009; Bessière et al. 2007; Taylor 2002; Jin 2010). Underlying motivations to those identity works pertain to: either a self-confirmation perspective or a simple (promotion of a positive self-concept) or compensatory (distortion of negative information in a more positive way) self-enhancement perspective (Messinger, Ge, Stroulia, Lyons, Smirnov and Bone 2008) a search for consonance with the physical and/or psychic self-concept (Suh et al. 2011), according to the self-congruity theory developed by Sirgy (1986).

The main aim of the identity construction process is identification to one’s avatar, defined by Suh et al. (2011) as “the cognitive connection between an individual and an avatar, with the result being that the individual regards the avatar as a substitute self or has such an illusion”. Parmentier and Rolland (2009) highlight that this relationship between an individual and his avatar is not rigid and is set within an identity construction dynamics. They identify four dynamics: (1) duplication, in which the avatar is a loyal graphical and behavioral copy of the individual who created it, (2) enhancement, in which the avatar in an extension of the individual that essentially...
represents the more positive aspects of the individual and that can differ in or enhance the physical appearance, (3) transformation, in which the avatar really differs from the individual on a physical and behavioral plan, but the link is preserved by allowing the individual to erase or overcome some aspects of his personality, and (4) metamorphosis, in which the avatar is a totally imaginary self, physically different and for which the individual plays a character part.

Furthermore, this dynamic construction of the avatar is part of a construction process regarding the virtual world (Parmentier and Rolland 2009). The context is then liable to influence the creation of the avatar and the identity dynamics (Vasalou and Joinson 2009; Garnier and Poncin 2009; Yee, Ellis and Ducheneaut 2009; Suh et al. 2011; Sung, Moon, Kang and Lin 2011), just as creation of the avatar and identity dynamics can influence the relationship (feelings, behaviors, etc.) with and within the virtual world (Yee and Bailenson 2009; Yee et al. 2009). According to Hamilton (2009), we no longer “enter” digital worlds. Avatars are increasingly being deployed to form contiguity between our “online” and “offline” selves. In an increasing number of games and forms of networked communication, the role of the avatar is not anonymity and masquerade, but its opposite: self-representation. Hence self-presentations on the internet are tools people use to express themselves. For this reason, online users try to make their avatars exhibit the images they desire by dressing their avatars in clothes and accessories as if they were adorning themselves (Park and Chung 2011). The influence of the commercial setting on this process should then be discussed.

Avatars in a commercial context

Contexts in which an avatar can be used are varied in nature (playful universes, collaborative work, commercial environments, online discussions...) and in the role the avatar can have. The context of use then necessarily influences the creation of the avatar and the identity process. More specifically, Lim and Reeves (2010) or Suh et al. (2011) highlight the importance of the context and the task in and for which the avatar is used. Vasalou and Joinson (2009) show that the context of use of the avatar and its aims (in their case, blogging, gaming or dating) has a predominant effect on self-presentation and its consequences.

Within websites or virtual universes with a commercial voca-
tion, realism of the avatar, that is to say its capacity to loyally repro-
duce the reality of a human body and the appearance of the individu-
al (Garnier and Poncin 2009) should then be of a major importance. Indeed, any commercial context implies concrete consequences such as buying a real product that will be received at home, or financial transactions. So individuals tend to create an avatar as realistic as possible (Suh et al. 2011). This was shown for virtual models in the case of online apparel/clothes purchase (Kim and Forsythe 2008, 2009; Merle et al. 2009, 2011), so to ensure the fit between the avatar, the individual’s own body and the product that will be bought. As stated by Yee et al. (2009), some virtual universes are more then favorable than others to the necessity of a human and realistic emo-
bodiment as well as the presence of familiar artifacts.

Beyond those utilitarian aspects, some commercial websites such as 3D shopping malls can entail social and recreational aspects. Indeed, by wandering around the shopping mall, the individual can meet other persons – all being represented by their own avatar, talk to them or participate to playful activities offered by the commer-
cial mall. Consequently, the personalization of the avatar plays a so-
cial role of self-presentation and construction and transmission of one’s social identity, the body being a primary marker of identity and a mean of self-presentation and socialization (Thompson and Hirschman 1995; Kolko 1999; Anderson 2000; Schultze 2010). Ulu-
soy and Viedan (2008) highlight the exploration of the symbolic and experiential construction of the body and the self through the avatar and the experiences lived thanks to that virtual body. They use the term symembodiment to refer to the presence of the body in the virtual environment, without physical constraints but with its symbolic and identity meanings.

It is important to point out that, in online gaming or life simulations, an individual might possess several avatars on a same account1. Multiple lifes and avatars are possible. He can then test multiple em-
bodiments and parallel identities and as such separate or multiply the identity dynamics among those different characters (Maffesoli 2008; Cogerino 2009). This is a major potential difference with 3D commercial universes. Indeed, if it’s possible for an individual to have several accounts, the commercial aim of the website encourages consumers to have only one account, as on a “classical” merchant website, and so one and only avatar. The whole process and dynamics of personalization and identification will then be invested in that single avatar that will be the only representation / embodiment of the individual in that universe.

Though, if the traditional typology of the real vs enhanced self-rep-
resentation or Parmentier and Rolland (2009)’s identity dynamics are interesting, they were mainly developed within online gaming or life-simulation context. It seems interesting to question that dynam-
ics to the light of a commercial consumption context such as a 3D shopping mall and to assess its consequences on the consumption experience.

Furthermore, an extensive observation of methodologies used to study avatars show that most researches are realized through one-shot studies or on the basis of life narratives. This does not allow to apprehend and to empirically validate the dynamics of creation and identification that should be. However, as observed by Hamilton (2009), the projection of identity, as well as identification to an avatar has to be framed at the outset as contextual, fluid, and socially con-
tinuous. Our research then focuses on the exploration of the process and the dynamics of avatar creation and identification, in the specific context of a 3D shopping mall, from a longitudinal perspective.

METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSES

The exploratory nature of our research, that is, to our knowledge, the first one to deal with the process of creating an avatar in a 3D com-
mercial universe, led us to adopt an exploratory methodology associat-
ing qualitative and quantitative data. Two studies were conducted in order to study the creation of the avatar during the first visit of a 3D shopping mall and the dynamics of personalization throughout time.

First, 286 students, aged 19 to 24, were recruited to participate to a visit of a newly developed 3D shopping mall (launched in France in 2012). This virtual universe reproduces a commercial shopping center, with shops where it’s possible to buy and spaces to move inside and outside (see Appendix 1 for illustrations)2. Each respondent had to create his/her avatar and then visit the website as long as he/she wished to, in a totally open way. After the visit, each respondent had to immediately fill a qualitative logbook, composed of ten or so open questions on the experience he/she had just lived3, among

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1 Indeed online gamers can play several characters with different abilities and appearance on a same account, each one being an avatar to personalize and make live.

2 This universe also offers consumers the possibility to have an apartment and to personalize it with products of brands being sold in the mall. It also offers a social network tool focused on purchase recommendations and sharing. Playful events are also organized in the mall (artistic events, animations, games). However, those different possibilities were not investigated within the framework of this research.

3 The study was globally dealing with the experience of visiting the 3D shop-
which some of them focused on the personalization of the avatar. Namely, respondents were to state if they had personalized their avatars or not, and if yes, describe how and why they had personalized it. Respondents had also to insert a screen copy of their avatars, so to check reality of the visit (in addition with individual login tracking) and reality of discourses in logbooks.

The methodology of logbooks was used on the basis of Carù and Cova’s (2003, 2006) suggestions to study experience with limited biases (no interferences with an interviewer that could inhibit the experience, immediate description right after the experience). We coupled this qualitative methodology with an associated questionnaire respondents had to fill directly after the logbook. The questionnaire measured, among other variables, identification to the avatar (Hefner, Klimmt and Vorderer 2007), immersion (as a proxy to measure experience) (Fornerino, Helme-Guizon and Gotteland 2008) and consequences such as satisfaction and intentions (combined measures of individual items of global satisfaction and intentions to return, intention to recommend and intention to purchase) (see Appendix 2 for details on measurement validity and reliability).

In the second study, 32 participants from the first study voluntarily continued the experience4 through a longitudinal study composed of at least 3 other visits over a 2-months period. As for the first study, each participant had to fill for each visit a logbook and an online questionnaire, with identical themes and identical scales for repeated measures. The logbook included a complementary theme on possible modifications of the avatar and motivations to do so (or not).

Qualitative data analyses followed an interpretive process. In order to analyze the collected textual corpus, data were coded by two independent coders thanks to the NVivo8 software, on the basis of themes issued from literature (avatar creation, identity dynamics) and same coding units. Flexibility was preserved thanks to open coding, in order to identify and integrate possible new themes that could emerge from data. The two independent coding were then confronted and discussed and a satisfying level of inter-coders reliability was reached.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results articulate around two major elements: avatar creation during the first visit and the dynamics of personalization happening - or not – throughout the following visits.

Avatar creation strategies during the first visit

Three main strategies have been identified:

1. the realistic representation of the individual (real self reproduction)

“I chose to personalize my avatar so that it fits me. Possibilities of personalization are large enough so that we can make an avatar that looks like us as much as possible. You better take it over like that.” (F); “I find it nice to be able to move with an avatar that looks like me as much as possible, it makes things more real. It makes the visit more interactive.” (M)

60% of our sample opted for representing their real self, especially through physical resemblance and adequate clothing style.

2. the representation of an enhanced or ideal self

“I've made her a little bit taller and with a little more breast but otherwise, she looks like me.” (F); “I've tried to put physical characteristics that are often put down to beauty: blue eyes, cheekbones, tall and tanned.” (F); “I think that this character can physically attract and can motivate his group of friends to go out.” (F); “I think that my avatar is typical of the young active guy, just graduated, with a relatively high purchasing power.” (M)

37% of our sample created an enhanced or ideal self, mainly by improving their physical characteristics or by representing who they would like to be in a near future.

3. the “fantasy” representation

“I wanted to have fun by inventing an original bearded character, with sunglasses and an "afro" haircut.” (M); “I wanted to personalize my character to make it unique and original. It’s like a game, I wanted to use the different possibilities offered.” (M); “I put a cowboy hat because I think it’s original and I wouldn’t dare wear it in real life, even if it’s nice. I took advantage of the fact that it is virtual to dare wear that.” (F)

This type of representation is highly a minority (1 respondent at the first visit, and 2 respondents that added more fantasy stuff later on).

These results in a commercial context are in line with literature on avatar personalization strategies in other contexts (Parmentier and Rolland 2009; Valasolou and Joinson 2009) and on possible underlying motivations (Messinger et al. 2008; Suh et al. 2011) of self-confirmaion or self-enhancement.

If the representation of a real self is a majority, ideal or event “fantasy” representations also appear, contrary to what we could suppose previously. However, arguments in favor of a realistic representation are not necessarily linked to the utilitarian commercial context (as we thought). They seem to be mainly linked to the need for clinging on to reality and making up for the virtuality of the universe.

Enhanced representations can be explained by the social aspect of the universe. They allow individuals to reveal a positive social identity, to play a role or to pass a message on their identity. This enhancement is in line with what Yee and Bailenson (2007, 2009) name the Proteus Effect: self-representation has a double identity effect, individual (on one’s own behavior) and social (on others’ behavior) and makes the individual get in an identity role play. This includes a behavioral confirmation phenomenon regarding avatar appearance so that a tall and handsome avatar is socially more attractive and can lead its user to behave in a more extrovert way during social interactions with other avatars (Yee and Bailenson 2009).

Finally, fantasy representations mainly lie on the playful aspect of the commercial universe and on the subsequent desire to depart from self-presentation social norms.

From identification to the avatar to immersion

Building on the quantitative data collected during the first visit on 286 respondents, we predict in line with literature that the stronger the relationship between the consumer and his own avatar (identification with the avatar) the more he is likely to dive/immerge in the new environment and in turn to be satisfied with the experience. Figure 1 illustrates the relationships we planned to observe during the first visit.

As expected, identification to the avatar explains more than 57% of the immersion variable (R²Adjusted=0.573, t=19.51, p<0.001). It means that the more the consumer feels embodied in his avatar, the more he/she is able to live an experience in the new environment. Moreover, building on literature, it may be that immersion is
mediator of the relationship between identification with the avatar and satisfaction. However, conversely to our expectations, the three conditions (Baron and Kenny 1986) necessary for the mediating role of the immersion are not gathered. As expected, we observe that identification to the avatar and immersion significantly explains satisfaction but both variables remain significantly if they are in the same regression. Nevertheless, building on the work of Preacher and Hayes (2004), we applied the Sobel test (1982) (macro of Preacher and Hayes (2004)) to confirm a partial mediation of immersion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Sobel test on mediation effect of immersion on satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immersion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, we conclude that only a partial mediation of immersion between identification to the avatar and satisfaction exists. However, the process of embodiment in the avatar may be dynamic and the relationship between immersion and identification with the avatar circular. Therefore this relationship may evolve when the customer has appropriated the new environment, feels completely embodied in his own avatar and is able of fully immerse in the virtual environment.

**Process and dynamics of avatar personalization**

25% of the sample modified their avatar at the second visit. Respondents that have first created a realistic avatar tend to modify it more than people who created an idealized/enhanced one: 32% of respondents that created a realistic avatar modified it (vs 16%). Different profiles of personalization dynamics were observed according to motivations to modify the avatar:

1. Variety seeking and fun procured by avatar personalization

   “I’ve changed clothes of my avatar. First, I wanted to see if there were new ones and I find it quite funny to change according to my mood.” (F); “I’ve kept the same body, but I changed clothes. I wanted to see if there were new things in the “Appearance” section.” (F); “During the first visit, I had made an avatar that looked like me as much as possible. This time I wanted to try the opposite, to change.” (F)

2. Improvement of self-likeness

   “I wanted to change haircut so that it fits me better.” (M); “I’ve changed the haircut of my avatar because meanwhile I’ve really changed it.” (F)

3. Adaptation to physical and/or behavioral reality

   “I’ve added sunglasses because summertime is coming and I meet more and more people with sunglasses in shopping malls.” (M); “I’ve adapted my clothes to shopping for a waffle iron. If I go out to ponce around a shopping mall as for the first visit, I would dress more elegantly. But to go and buy a waffle iron is more a bit of shopping so a tee-shirt fits better, all the more it is hotter than for the previous visit.” (F); “Yes, I’ve changed my avatar as it is colder. I wanted to wear a jacket to adapt my avatar to the context I was at the moment (in reality). (…) As hopefully in real life we change clothes and make-up every day, why keeping the same avatar if it assumed that the avatar is just like me?” (F)

The most widespread aim among respondents is the maximal search for realism, through the progressive improvement of avatar realism, to adapt it to possible changes in reality and consequently improve identification to one’s avatar. If the playful and variety seeking motivations can seem a priori contradictory with search for realism, they however can match personality traits of the respondent (variety seeking) or support for the recreational aspect of that new virtual universe and desire to discover all offered possibilities.

It is important to note that individuals that modified their avatar during the second or third visit finally stop doing major modifications (only 2 respondents out of 32 modified their avatar continuously at each visit). Indeed, they finally come to consider that they are satisfied with their avatar and that they identify to the avatar enough to keep it as it is.

However, not all respondents modified their avatar: a majority, 75% of the sample, kept the avatar as they created it during the first visit. This questions the supposed personalization and identity dynamics.

**Avatar stability and identification reinforcement process**

68% of people that created a realistic avatar and 84% of those who created an idealized/enhanced avatar kept it identical throughout the visits.

Three motivations to not modify the avatar can be identified in respondents’ narratives:

1. Absence of novelty in the avatar personalization tool

   “First I wanted to change the appearance of the avatar. But once in the “Appearance” tool, I found out that there was nothing new, no new possibilities of transformation of elements that I wanted to change such as haircut or height. So I’ve not modified my avatar.” (F)

2. Time spent to personalize the avatar during the first visit and satisfaction regarding the created avatar

   “I haven’t modified my avatar because I was satisfied with its appearance. I must admit I had spent a lot of time during the first visit to make it fit my expectations.” (F); “I have not modified my avatar since my first visit because I find it funny and acceptable.” (H)

3. Desire for stability and progressive reinforcement of identification

   “No, I haven’t changed my avatar because it’s an avatar that looks like me thanks to its characteristics.
It allows me to totally identify with my avatar and to better control my actions.” (F); “I’ve decided to keep the same avatar because I assume that I’m still the same person visiting the shopping mall. So my avatar already knows the place and how it works. Moreover, according to me, my avatar is still in the same state of mind and must then keep the same traits and the same characteristics.” (F); “The playful pleasure of playing to dress/modify a virtual character left place to the personal pleasure to wander myself (as an extension of the avatar) in the shopping mall. In other words, the character is not that important now, as we really have the feeling to be him. There is not that primary distinction between her and me anymore.” (F); “No I didn’t do it because the previous one fitted me pretty well. It’s with him that I’ve discovered the website and I think he’s become a kind of mark in that virtual universe, as a well-known person. It helps me better absorb the website and to be one with my avatar. In fact he has taken my place in that virtual world.” (M); “I have no reason to do it because I created it to represent myself and to be able to identify to it. It’s my representation in the virtual world and he must remain stable.” (M)

This last motivation is largely a majority among respondents that haven’t modified their avatar. If it’s impossible to talk here of personalization dynamics, the identity dynamics is nevertheless present through a reinforcement of identification to the avatar. This progressive identification then allows individual to build landmarks within the commercial virtual universe and to appropriate it. It also allows respondents to immerse more strongly in the universe and consequently live an experience though their avatar as an extension of themselves.

The identity dynamics is then present throughout visits of the commercial virtual universe and goes through two distinct processes: (1) the personalization dynamics, resulting in modifications of the avatar so that it fits the reality of the individual, and (2) the identity reinforcement dynamics, resulting in a stability of the avatar that allows the individual to identify to the avatar more and more at each visit and to preserve his landmarks and habits. Those two processes can be consecutive: after a personalization phase and successive modifications, the individual then enters an identity reinforcement dynamics by keeping his avatar stable.

Despite taking different ways, these two processes finally meet the same objective, identification to the avatar, in order to be immersed as much as possible in the consumption experience of that commercial virtual universe and to take the best advantage of it. The results of our quantitative data explore that link between identification to the avatar and immersion over time.

**From immersion to identification to the avatar: a circular relationship?**

According to Hamilton (2009), we become coupled with the avatar through the process of embodied interaction. In the qualitative data, we observed that the two dynamic processes of managing one’s avatar (either the personalization dynamics or the identity reinforcement dynamics) is meant to strengthen the relationship with the avatar. Therefore the relationship between identification with the avatar and immersion may evolve during Visit 3 and Visit 4 and be reinforced by these dynamic processes. After a certain level of appropriation of the new environment, this relationship may be either reversed or circular. The more the consumer immerses in the commercial mall, the more he feels present in the environment and embodied in his own avatar, and the more he is satisfied. During the second visit, 1/3 of the sample (10/32) adopts the personalization process but for the last visit, only 3 consumers (3/32) have decided to modify again their avatar. In all cases, consumers were women trying to take into account either a change in their own appearance or due to a change in weather time (haircut or sunshine apparel).

Interestingly, we observe that the strategy adopted during the second visit significantly impacts the level of identification with the avatar during Visit 3 and Visit 4. (Visit 3, Personalization=3.38; Stabilization=2.56; F(1, 31)=4.74; p<0.05; Visit 4, Personalization=3.04; Stabilization=1.99; F(1, 31)=7.59 ; p<0.01)). The action to personalize again the avatar firstly seems to reinforce embodiment in the avatar. However, the strategy adopted during the last visit has no more impact on the level identification with the avatar felt during that last visit (Visit 4, Personalization=3.16; Stabilization=2.23; F(1, 31)=2.05; n.s). If the strategy used in the second visit explains 11% of the variance of the identification to the avatar (R’adjusted=11%, t-test =-2.18, p<0.05), this is no more significant to predict neither immersion nor satisfaction. Moreover, the strategy used in Visit 4 is non-significant to predict identification to the avatar, immersion and satisfaction during Visit 4.

However, interestingly and as expected, the relationship between identification with the avatar and immersion to predict satisfaction appears to be reversed by comparison to Visit 1 both in Visit 3 and Visit 4 (see figure 2 by comparison with figure 1).
In that case, we observe that the three conditions described by Baron and Kenny (1986) for a mediating effect of identification with the avatar between immersion and satisfaction are gathered both in Visit 3 and in Visit 4. As expected, we observe that immersion and identification to the avatar significantly explains satisfaction but only identification remains significantly when the two variables are in the same regression (table 2 and table 3).

Table 2:
R²adjusted=0.280 - Dependent variable: V3Satisfaction
Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Non standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Standard Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2,503</td>
<td>.311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V3identificationavatar</td>
<td>.624</td>
<td>.215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V3immersion</td>
<td>-.262</td>
<td>.187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3:
R²adjusted=0.324 - Dependent variable: V4Satisfaction
Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Non standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Standard Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Constant</td>
<td>1,960</td>
<td>.352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V4identificationavatar</td>
<td>.726</td>
<td>.276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V4immersion</td>
<td>-.193</td>
<td>.264</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interestingly, it appears therefore that the relationship between identification with the avatar and immersion is circular, depending on the level of embodiment in the avatar and appropriation of the environment (see figure 3). For instance, the level of immersion during Visit 3 explains more than 56% of the identification with the avatar in Visit 4 (see table 4).

**Table 4: Circular relationship between identification and immersion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Non standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.458</td>
<td>0.318</td>
<td>1.442</td>
<td>0.160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V3 immersion</td>
<td>0.700</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>6.391</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3: Circular relationship between identification and immersion**

Interestingly, it appears therefore that the relationship between identification with the avatar and immersion is circular, depending on the level of embodiment in the avatar and appropriation of the environment (see figure 3). For instance, the level of immersion during Visit 3 explains more than 56% of the identification with the avatar in Visit 4 (see table 4).
buying real products on the 3D shopping mall as well as an implication on the relationship between the self and consumption in this context. In particular, avatars may be useful resources when direct and voluntary self-disclosure of information by consumers online is limited (Lee, Im, and Taylor 2008). Bélisle and Bodur (2010) concluded that real-life companies that intend to virtual worlds can use member avatars as proxy for members’ personalities and lifestyles. This statement appears even truer in this commercial context.

This research is not free from limits. Some methodological outcomes must be underlined. The logbook method, if interesting for that kind of study, cannot lead to a very deep understanding of underlying mechanisms as deep individual interviews would do. The sample is composed of students and the number of participants to the longitudinal study is relatively low. As such, we were not able to highlight specific patterns between the three creation strategies, underlyings motivations and modification of the avatar, as the number of combinations was too high regarding the number of respondents. Finally, it was not possible to highlight a specific effect of avatar realism in a commercial context. Those limits are as many research perspectives: identification of the identity dynamics according to avatar creation strategy, deepening the understanding of the circular relationship between identification to the avatar and immersion (antecedents, others consequences, potential moderators), taking into account the heterogeneity in motivational drivers of using this type of website (Eisenbeiss et al. 2012). Those researches should be conducted on more important and more representative samples of consumers. It would also be interesting to study in details the impact of avatar realism in that commercial context: does the tyranny of embodiment suggested by Yee et al. (2009) really exist in that context, as some respondents created and then modified or kept fantasy avatars? What would be the impact of totally fantasy avatar (as in MMORPG for example: trolls, elfs, dwarfs, animals, etc.) on the credibility of the universe and the consumption experience?

REFERENCES


Hefner, Dorotheé, Christoph Klimmt and Peter Vorderer (2007), “Identification With the Player Character as Determinant of Video Game Enjoyment”, In L. Ma, R. Nakatsu, and M. Rauterberg (Eds.), Lecture notes in computer sciences (39-48). Berlin, Germany: IFIP.


APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Illustrations of the 3D shopping mall

Avatars in the external space of the shopping mall

Avatar in a 3D shop

Avatar personalization tool
Interestingly, it appears therefore that the relationship between identification with the avatar and immersion is circular, depending on the level of embodiment in the avatar and appropriation of the environment (see figure 3). For instance, the level of immersion during Visit 3 explains more than 56% of the identification with the avatar in Visit 4 (see table 4).

### Appendix 2. Reliability and validity of scales from the quantitative data analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Identification with the avatar</th>
<th>Immersion</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial scale</strong></td>
<td>Adapted from Hefner et al. (2007)</td>
<td>Fornerino et al. (2008)</td>
<td>Adapted from Oliver (1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8-item scale</td>
<td>6-item scale</td>
<td>3-item scale Unidimensional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unidimensional</td>
<td>Unidimensional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final scale</strong></td>
<td>8-item scale</td>
<td>6-item scale</td>
<td>3-item scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unidimensional</td>
<td>Unidimensional</td>
<td>Unidimensional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explained variance</strong></td>
<td>58% V1; 74% V3; 75% V4</td>
<td>56% V1; 83% V3; 77% V4</td>
<td>65% V1; 63% V3; 85% V4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cronbach α</strong></td>
<td>0.90 V1; 0.95 V3; 0.96 V4</td>
<td>0.82 V1; 0.96 V3; 0.94 V4</td>
<td>0.83 V1; 0.663 V3; 0.938 V4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Appendix 3. Evolution of the relationship between Identification with the avatar, Immersion and Satisfaction between Visit 1, Visit 3 and Visit 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Visit 1</th>
<th>Visit 3</th>
<th>Visit 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification with the avatar</td>
<td>$β = 0.983, t = 5.352, p &lt; 0.001$</td>
<td>$β = 0.624, t = 2.896, p &lt; 0.01$</td>
<td>$β = 0.726, t = 2.632, p &lt; 0.05$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immersion</td>
<td>$β = 0.532, t = 2.904, p &lt; 0.005$</td>
<td>$β = -0.262, t = -1.402, N.S$</td>
<td>$β = -0.193, t = -0.730, N.S$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$ of Satisfaction</td>
<td>$R^2_{\text{adjusted}} = 0.329$</td>
<td>$R^2_{\text{adjusted}} = 0.280$</td>
<td>$R^2_{\text{adjusted}} = 0.324$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediation</td>
<td>Partial mediation of Immersion, $Z = 3.026, p &lt; 0.001$</td>
<td>Full mediation of Identification with the avatar</td>
<td>Full mediation of Identification with the avatar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT:

In 1951 James Vicary, a dubious marketing research practitioner, published an article on the research method of brand personification. The method provides the foundation for the modern concepts of brand personality and brand relationships, but the dubious origins of the method raises questions about these concepts.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to seek to better understand the concepts of brand personality and brand relationships through the examination of the origins of the concepts. The idea that examining the history of concepts in marketing might aid understanding of the concepts is not new but there can be no better illustration of how the history of a concept (or idea) can enlighten than Lovejoy’s (1936) seminal history of the idea of the ‘Great Chain of Being’. For example, one appraisal of Lovejoy’s book sees his work as an essential template for understanding of ideas in, for example, philosophy and science and notes that even half a century later, Lovejoy’s work was provoking scholarly debate (Bynum 1975). This paper draws on Lovejoy’s historical approach to ideas and applies them to the concepts of brand personality and brand relationships (sometimes referred hereafter to as ‘the two concepts’).

However, there are two significant critiques of Lovejoy’s work (e.g. see Wilson 1987); the first is that his perspective was shaped by his own philosophical position, and the second was that, despite his discussing the Great Chain as a singular ‘idea-unit’, it was not understood as the same idea in different periods of history. Although this paper is in no way comparable to Lovejoy’s work in terms of scope, these critiques might be applied equally to this paper: the paper is informed and shaped by the philosophy of critical scientific realism, whereby ‘theory should be cognitively successful in the sense that the theoretical entities it postulates really exist and the lawlike descriptions of these entities are true’ (Niiniluoto 1999, p.167). Further, as will be evident, the two concepts are not singular ‘idea-units’ but have instead gone through a process of evolution and part of the purpose of this paper is to examine this evolution.

As a result of the review, the paper contributes to the literature by highlighting that the foundations of the brand personality and brand relationship concepts raise significant concerns. In particular, it is apparent that the foundations of the two concepts are tied to the research method of brand personification, but the origins of this research method should raise concerns for its utility. Further, the conceptualisation of brand personality and brand relationships has evolved, but the evolution has led the concepts into a quagmire. As such, whilst the development and theory surrounding the concepts has been an interesting development in brand theory, theorists should review the utility and cognitive success of the concepts.

THE CONTEXT OF PRACTITIONER LITERATURE

As will become apparent, the brand personality and brand relationship theory are inextricably bound up with literature, research and theory developed by marketing practitioners, and this paper will be critical of some practitioner literature. Although highlighting and emphasising some examples of particularly dubious practitioners, the practices of these particular practitioners are not generalised criticisms. However, there are some points about practitioner literature that can be given as a general context: (1) their views may be bound-ed and guided by commercial interests (Newman 1957); (2) they may be constrained in what they can report through commercial sensitiv-ity of materials (Adler 1956); (3) they may not be familiar with the accepted standards of reporting research. As such, even in the case of reputable practitioners, it seems that they might make an interesting contribution to marketing discourse, but the constraints of context need to be accepted in the evaluation of practitioner literature.

THE CONTEXT OF MOTIVATION RESEARCH

The origins of brand personality and brand relationship theory are founded upon practitioner work which should raise particular concerns. As was be discussed later, both concepts are founded in brand personification research, and the origin of the method can be traced to the motivation research (MR) era of the 1950s. Described as a ‘Barnum and Bailey type circus’ (p.41, Bellenger, Bernhardt, and Goldstucker 1976), the MR era was seen as a new approach to understanding consumer behaviour (Smith 1954) and, although associated with Freudian psychology, was a broader adoption of methods and theory from the social sciences (Martineau 1957). In this respect, the approach was not entirely new; for example, J. Walter Thompson (JWT) were conducting anthropological studies in the 1920s (Schwarzkopf 2009), and a review of the use of psychology in marketing in the US finds literature as early as the 1900s (Coolsen 1947). Indeed, the innovative MR work of Lazarsfeld (e.g. 1934) pre-dated the MR era, and his outstanding work could have been a template for a major advance in marketing research, were it not for the later controversies surrounding MR (e.g. see Fullerton 1990 for an appraisal of his work).

Although not entirely novel, one aspect of the MR era that set the period apart was a widespread adoption and promotion of research methods such as ‘depth’ interviews, as well as the importation of projective techniques (PTs) from clinical psychology (Bellenger et al. 1976; Henry 1958). Further, the period was characterised by a battle between factions of marketing practitioners; on the one side were the MR researchers, and on the other were researchers promoting quantitative research methods, such as surveys (Samuel 2010; Tadajewski 2006). This is not to say that there was no middle ground in the battles between the competing factions of practitioners (e.g. Bayton 1958), but the voices of the middle ground tended to be drowned in the noise of conflict. As an essentially commercial battle for business, the two sides fought in the marketing literature, with both sides cloaking their arguments with the mantle of science (e.g. see Ferber and Wales 1958).

As discussed, the importation of PTs into marketing were novel, but were particularly controversial (e.g. see Williams 1957); even those who accepted these methods in principle, questioned the way in which they were used in marketing due to the lack of validation and the ad hoc nature of the uses (Adler, 1956; Britt, 1950, 1958; Ferber, 1958; Lucas, 1958; Newman, 1957; G. H. Smith, 1954; We-schler & Bernberg, 1958), and these concerns have been on-going (Hassay and Smith 1996; Kassarjian 1974; Supphellen 2000). In essence, a PT is a method in which ambiguous stimuli are presented to a consumer with the theory that the consumer will project their subconscious into the stimuli and reveal their true motivations (Haire 1950). The use of PTs and broader claims by MR practitioners that they were unlocking the secrets of consumer motivations was to see controversy over MR spread to the general public, exemplified

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1 The author of the paper was formerly a marketing practitioner.
by Packard’s (1957) account of marketers as manipulators of consumers. Subliminal advertising served to heighten the controversy (Fullerton 2010) and, as researchers failed to replicate the effects of subliminal advertising (Rogers 1992), brought disrepute upon MR.

Although some of the critiques of MR were misplaced and were simply rejection of qualitative methods (Tadajewski 2006), there were substantive problems with MR, over and above questions about the validity of research derived from PTs. For example, when different research firms were given the same research brief by the same organisation, results were found to be completely different (Brett 1960; Scriven 1958) while Adler (1956) notes interpretation of research was dependent upon which variant of MR was being used. Although endorsing MR, Henry (1958) was particularly critical, arguing that some MR practitioners were using pseudo-science. He also observes that practitioner literature only discussed positive outcomes and that these outcomes were often a matter of chance rather than due to any rigour of method. Henry also expresses concerns about the limited accounts of practitioner research that provided the basis for theory and Adler (1956) expresses similar concerns, noting that commercial sensitivities were preventing the publication of full accounts of research.

As the 1950s progressed, it was apparent that MR was losing impetus and was increasingly viewed with cynicism. Levitt (1960) captures the cynicism, describing MR with terms such as fraud, incompetence, irrelevancy, amateurishness, pretentiousness, silliness (p.80). Although Levitt’s critique is untargeted and a little unfair as such, he nevertheless captures the kind of views that were to see MR fade from academic interest as the 1960s commenced (see Tadajewski 2006 for other factors influencing the decline). However, whilst academic interest in the methods of MR largely disappeared, the interest in the theory and research methods of MR continued in marketing practice and was either unobserved or ignored in the literature. This ‘hole’ in the literature was only filled in the 1980s/90s, and it was during this period that it became evident that (at least some) practitioners never abandoned the theory and practice of MR.

MOTIVATION RESEARCH AND BRAND THEORY

The importance of marketing communication has grown in recent years for several reasons. More and more products and services are seen as being at ‘parity’, having arrived at the maturity stage of their lifecycle. As a result, points of difference to distinguish brands related to inherent qualities of the product or service are hard to come by. (Keller 2001, p.823)

‘One of the difficult problems of that advertising is confronted with is the increasing standardization of products and services. Any differences in quality, price, packaging or service quality have disappeared almost to vanishing point. Bread, milk, meat, clothing, refrigerators, airline service, banks, or what have you: physically they are virtually indistinguishable. And yet more and more is it necessary to for advertising to presell the product by individualizing it-making it more desirable than anything else. ‘(Martineau 1957, p.3)

As can be seen, over fifty years separates the above quotes, but both are proclaiming a recent shift in which the product is no longer enough to differentiate. It is a surprisingly common argument in the branding literature; for example even appearing in de Chernatony’s (de Chernatony, McDonald, and Wallace 2010) recent textbook on branding. It seems unlikely that any of the authors who present this argument would suggest that there have been intervening periods in which the product reverted to being able to differentiate. This raises the question of how it is that two academic authors are making nearly identical arguments to those made by an MR era practitioner.

One answer that may explain the endurance of this argument is that it is actually a very effective practitioner sales pitch: ‘in these times of change, it is ever more necessary that you engage a specialist to guide you through this new terrain. The work of de Chernatony’ provides a clue to how the argument may have percolated into the academic literature, as his work includes many citations of practitioners (e.g. see de Chernatony and Dall’Olmo Riley 1999; de Chernatony and McWilliam 1989), including some of the 1980s/90s practitioner literature that was to provide the foundation for academic brand personality and brand relationship theory e.g. Gardner and Levy (1955), King (1973), Lannon and Cooper (1983), Alt and Griggs (1988). The same can be said of Keller, who for example cites the work of Plummer (1984/1985). As will become apparent later, the practitioner literature of the 1980s/90s drew heavily on MR era literature, but these roots are largely unacknowledged so that MR theory and research methods were to re-enter academic thinking unannounced through the ‘backdoor’ of this literature.

However, the influence of MR is not always so indirect. For example, Puto and Wells (1984) acknowledge the critiques of the work of Ernest Dichter, an MR practitioner, but still draw on his work with the justification that ‘the reasoning underlying his proposals remains quite viable’ (p.639). As another example, Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) accept that there were ‘well-known criticisms concerning their rigour and validity’ in reference to the ‘clinically oriented studies’ but also still draw heavily on Dichter’s work for their theory development. This is surprising, as Dichter used just such ‘clinically oriented studies’ and his theory and research are inseparable from such methods (e.g. Dichter 1958).

The use of Dichter’s work is highlighted as Dichter’s work can be seen as particularly problematic. For example, Dichter claimed that MR was a major step forwards in making marketing more scientific, in one case claiming that psychology could progress marketing from ‘medicine man’ to science (Dichter 1947) but his own work does not conform to his claims: his accounts of his own research were scanty (e.g. see Dichter 1947, 1957), sometimes supported by anecdotes (e.g. see Dichter 1961), and he plagiarised the work of Lazarsfeld (Fullerton 2007). Further, Parkin (2004) highlights examples of Dichter’s use of pseudoscience, such as his citing of a surgeon’s report that patients’ oesophagi would, according to gender, dilate with the mention of salad (female) or steak (male). Henry’s (1958) critique illustrates the concerns of his contemporaries:

‘By contrast, the psycho-analyt (particularly the Freudian variety) is far better fitted for the role of benevolent witch-doctor, with his prattle of repressions, masturbation, phallic symbols, and the like, and a good deal of the early extravagances of Motivation Research arose from excessive concentration on these fascinating gimmicks.’ (p.27)

Henry’s choice of the word ‘gimmick’ is particularly interesting, and implicitly recognises that the work of MR practitioners was as much about salesmanship as it was about seeking genuine insight. Stern, (1990) whilst seeking to re-establish Dichter’s contribution to marketing, nevertheless captures the problem with Dichter’s work when describing that his work ‘suggests a persuasive intent to sell himself and his ideas to the public’ (p.332). Indeed, whilst researchers such as Dichter undoubtedly gleaned genuine insight from exten-
sive research on consumers, the combination of the use of gimmicks with self-promotion makes confident evaluation of their claims impossible. It is a point made by Blankenship (1965) in a scathing review of Dichter’s work, in which he notes that separating out the ‘truth’, ‘half-truth’ and ‘no truth’ is impossible. The criticisms of MR research that more recent authors refer to are exactly these kind of criticisms but, although acknowledging these criticisms, they remain unaddressed, and the literature from the MR period has been imported ‘as is’ into branding theory.

MOTIVATION RESEARCH, PERSONIFICATION AND THE BRAND

Personification is claimed to be a PT, and the method was devised by James Vicary (1951) who, alongside Dichter, was one of the more controversial figures of the MR era. Although one of his core research areas was word association PTs (Vicary 1948), he also undertook very dubious eye blinking research on shoppers, claiming that housewives fell into a zombie-like ‘hypnoidal trance’ whilst shopping (Gray 1959). Indeed, as Samuel (2010) puts it, Vicary was seeking research gimmicks to gain publicity for his practice. However, Vicary was to achieve notoriety for his introduction of subliminal advertising based upon a study that was either fraudulent or entirely invented (Fullerton 2010; Rogers 1992) and Vicary later admitted that subliminal advertising was a gimmick, whilst expressing regret for the whole affair (Danzig 1962).

Although Vicary (1951) first published an account of his personification research method in the trade magazine ‘Printers’ ink’, the method entered the academic literature with a slightly adapted version of the article included in an AMA sponsored volume on MR (Vicary 1958). Notably, Vicary claimed the method was based on Moreno’s PT of psychodrama, but reviews of the psychodrama literature (e.g. Bartlett and Moreno 1951) found no theory or principles that might be linked to brand personification and indicates that the method was a ‘gimmick’. The only other direct reference to his personification method comes in Smith’s (1954) ARF sponsored volume on MR. Other than these three mentions of personification, the review for this paper found no other direct references to Vicary’s personification method. However, Martineau (1957) may also have used the method for newspaper research, but his account is so vague that this is uncertain.

“We ask people to say which newspaper smokes cigars or cigarettes, which ones are masculine or feminine, which ones are married or unmarried, which ones are tall or stocky, which ones are athletic or quiet. When one paper is characterized as ‘unmarried’ while all the others are ‘married,’ what are people trying to say?” (p.154)

If this is indeed a report of personification research, it connects personification to Gardner and Levy’s (1955) paper, in which they discuss the personality of newspapers, as Gardner and Levy collaborated with Martineau on research projects (Samuel, 2010, p.61). If this account is correct, it links MR personification research and the modern conceptualisation of brand personality, as Gardner and Levy’s work is widely cited, including in J. Aaker’s (1997) and Fournier’s (1998) seminal respective papers on brand personality and relationships. However, the linkages between Vicary’s personification method and brand personality and brand relationship theory are more tightly connected than this would suggest.

In particular the work of both Fournier and Aaker (Aaker 1997; Aaker and Fournier 1995; Fournier and Yao 1997) cites a body of 1980s/90s practitioner literature in which theory was being founded on brand personification research and other PTs as follows: Lannon and Cooper (1983), Plummer (1984/1985), Blackston (1993), Biel (1992, 1993) and Alt and Griggs (1988). These practitioner articles have a ‘network’ of cross-citations, and several are linked as contributors to an edited volume on brand equity and advertising (Aaker and Biel 1993). However, in examining the chain of citations, it is apparent that the key source of brand personality theory and the method of personification can all be linked back to the work of King (1973), a practitioner in JWT. King argued that brand personification was the best method for understanding brand personality. He also hints towards the idea that consumers may have relationships with brand, and (with no citation) uses phraseology that is almost identical to that of Henry’s (1958) discussion of brand relationships. It seems likely that Henry was therefore the original source of the idea of brand relationships.

However, the direct link in the chain that is cited by Fournier (1998) is the work of Blackston (1993), who argues that there is a ‘logic’ that if consumers can think of brands as people, they might have a relationship with a brand. In the case of J. Aaker’s (1997) work, the influence of personification is even more direct, as she uses the method as part of her methodology for developing a brand personality scale. Aaker’s work was undoubtedly inspired by the work of Alt and Griggs (1988), who notably quote King’s personification research for Andrex. There are several points where Aaker’s work mirrors that of Alt and Griggs: (1) drawing on human personality theory; (2) importing a factor analysis methodology from human personality psychology; (3) the use of personification in the scale development. However, in addition to Alt and Griggs, Aaker also cites Batra et al’s (1993) work on developing a brand personality scale, and this work appears in the edited volume on brand equity and advertising, thereby connecting this work into the ‘network’.

Although most of the practitioner literature that is cited can be traced back to King’s work, the influence for Plummer’s (1984/1985) highly cited article is unclear as his article does not include any references. However, Plummer’s article may be as important as King’s (1973) work, as it appears to be the primary conduit into the recent academic literature for the method of personification, and also for the concept of brand personality. In particular, D. Aaker (1991) focuses a section of his influential book to discussing Plummer’s research and discussion of brand personality and Keller (1993) also later cites Plummer in his influential article on brand equity.

In summary, there appears to be a network of a small number of practitioners who were influenced by the work of King (1973), who in turn divorced his own theory from its source in MR era practitioner theory and research. It is not clear from where King derived the method of brand personification, but his adoption of the method and linking the method to brand personality were undoubtedly a key influence in more recent practitioner work. It is quite possible that Plummer was also influenced by King, but this is uncertain. However, the use of Plummer’s work by two highly influential academics seems to be the impetus for the interest in personification and the concept of brand personality. However, the MR origin of personification was lost in the transmission of the method through practitioner literature. As a result, two important brand concepts came to be built upon a theoretically dubious research method devised by a dubious practitioner.

Indeed, reflecting the key influences in the development of the brand relationship and brand personality concepts, there is an absence of discussion of PTs in the brand personality and brand relationship literature and an absence of any explanation of why personification is used, or why such an intuitively odd method might produce useful data (e.g. Aaker 1997; Bosnjak, Bochmann, and Hufschmidt 2007;
THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPTS OF BRAND PERSONALITY AND BRAND RELATIONSHIPS

Although this paper has considered the role of MR literature in the development of the concept of brand relationships, the conceptualisation of brand relationships has only very shallow roots in the MR era. For example, Henry (1958) says the following, before discussing types of analogous relationship types:

‘For people like to choose their brands in the same way as they choose their friends, by selecting the personalities that either [match or complement] their own – in either case, creating an association that satisfies a need. The strength and tenacity of the associations will vary according to circumstances.’ (p.92)

Later, Henry discusses that consumer may have an urge to be ‘unfaithful’ to a brand, or to go ‘philandering’ after strange brands, and how the brand image might tie in with a consumer’s own personality. Although Henry is given as the key originator of brand relationship theory, it is possible that Henry was extending on Newman’s (1957) work, though both pieces of work appeared at the same time making this slightly doubtful. However, Newman discusses relationships as follows:

‘Many of the studies, for example, imply an over-all concept of a relationship between the consumer and the product (or the brand, the salesman etc.). Let us consider the matter further in reference to the consumer-product relationship. The latter has several facets including psychological, social, cultural, economic and material. This broad concept serves as a reminder that a product may fill several functions at once. The term “relationship”, implies that the consumer has expectations of a product in terms of his own needs; that he has feelings about it.’

It might be noted that the example given by Newman is for the product, so that it is not possible to establish what he believes the relationship with a brand might constitute. By contrast, Henry’s account makes the key linkage between the relationship and brand choice, and this idea of choosing like a friend is discussed in King’s (1973) extremely similar and unreferenced discussion. As such, it is notable that King later highlights what he sees as Henry’s role in correcting the worst excesses of the MR era (McDonald and King 1996).

Elements of King’s brand relationship conceptualisation are evident in Blackston’s (1993) discussion, but he makes the comparison between brands and people even more explicit. He argues that brand image and brand personality do not, of themselves, represent ‘the totality of a brand’s relationship with the consumer’, and posits that consumers have relationships with brands ‘analogous to those between two people’ (p113). In order to examine the relationship he proposes personification as one of the most effective techniques, and says the following in relation to personification:

‘However, in treating brands as if they were people, we have rarely taken the analogy to its logical conclusion. If we had, we would have noted that people don’t just “perceive” each other; a person does more than process information about the other’s physical characteristics and personality. So why do we treat brands in just this manner? People react and interact with other people; they have relationships with them.’ (p115)

The ‘logical conclusion’ that Blackston proposes is one which he indirectly moves personification from being a research method, to being evidence of the way in which consumers ordinarily think of brands. The ‘logical conclusion’ that he is therefore implying, is that consumers think of brands in animistic and anthropomorphic ways. In framing the relationship this way, it is quite possible that he inspired Fournier’s (1998) formal introduction of brand animism/anthropomorphism theory as an explanation of brand relationships. However, Fournier also proposes that the theory is analogy and metaphor, thereby creating two mutually contradictory foundations and conceptualisations for brand relationships, and subsequent confusion in the broader literature (Avis, Aitken, and Ferguson 2012). These mutually contradictory conceptualisations have yet to be resolved.

The conceptualisation of brand personality in the MR era was very different from the modern conceptualisation and was used as a synonym for other brand concepts. Martineau (1957) provides a good example of ambiguous usage:

‘On the basis of this [study of car buying] and many other studies, it is apparent that any buying process is an interaction between the personality of the individual and the so-called “personality” of the product itself. They are not the same thing of course. Product personality can be called its character, its reputation, its image. Essentially it is the whole set of attitudes that people hold towards it.’ (pp.73-4)

As another example, Dichter (1960) suggests of one of his early studies that ‘[…] it was here that I developed the concept of the “personality” or the “image” of a product’ (p.34) and in a later section on car purchases says ‘Even more important was the personality, the image of the car […]’ (p.34). Both of these examples are notable for the application of both the image and the ‘personality’ to the product. However, when looking at the seminal work of Gardner and Levy, their aim is to separate the product and brand, describing the personality as being with the brand, but Levy (1959) later refers to the
paper as having discussed brand image. Similarly, Newman (1957), in a section describing an automobile case study, appears to use personality in relation to the role of user stereotypes (e.g. p.237) but in other discussions appears to use personality as a synonym for image (e.g. p.239).

The ambiguity in the original MR literature is carried forward into modern understandings of brand personality. Plummer (1984/1985), for example, identifies that there is a confusion about brand image and personality, and clarifies personality as differentiated from the physical attributes and functional characteristics, suggesting that instead brand personality is the characterisations of the brand, such as modern or lively. In presenting brand personality this way, it appears that he is describing the intangible aspects of the brand which might equally be called brand image. It is therefore unsurprising, in consideration of Plummer’s key role in introducing brand personality that the concept was imported into academic marketing as an ambiguous concept. Notably, Aaker and Fournier (1995) ask the question ‘How (or when) is it [brand personality] different from brand and/or user imagery?’ (p.391) However, having framed the problem, they do not actually address it.

The problem of delineation of brand personality from other brand concepts has continued to ‘dog’ the brand personality literature, with many theorists highlighting the problem (e.g. Avis 2012; Dobni and Zinkhan 1990; Patterson 1999), with Hosany, Ekinci, & Uysal’s (2006) discussion of particular note for highlighting the degree of confusion surrounding the concept. Also of note is Azoulay and Kapferer’s (2003) critique of Aaker’s brand personality scale as a ‘pot-pourri’ which included brand identity descriptors. The paper marked an important point in the evolution of brand personality as it was to lead to brand personality being reconceptualised by some theorists as being only ‘proper’ human personality traits applicable to brands (e.g. Bosnjak et al. 2007 use the trait of ‘loving’ in their brand personality scale).

However, although restricting brand personality to human traits was progress in one sense, there is no explanation of why ‘proper’ human personality traits might be salient or useful in understanding consumer brand perceptions. In particular, Avis (2012) argues that the meaning of such words will change with the category being studied, thereby rendering the meaningfulness as questionable, and wonders how a trait such as ‘loving’ might be salient for a purchase such as jeans.

Perhaps the most interesting element of the brand personality concept is that it has become closely tied to the method of personification. Even though King (1973) saw personification as being a good method for eliciting brand personality, it was not proposed as the only method. Also, Plummer (1984/1985) describes asking people to think of brands as entities such as animals and fabrics to develop brand personality perceptions. However, to date, there is no scale developed to measure, for example, brand personality using a scale of animals (e.g. asking consumers to rate the ‘giraffe-likeness’ of brands). There appears to be no logical reason for this absence when considering Plummer’s role in the adoption of the brand personality concept by academic brand theorists.

As such, in consideration of the practitioner literature from which brand personality was drawn, there seems to be no explanation of why brand personality came to be tied to brand personification. It also raises questions about why brand personality has been reconceptualised as ‘proper’ human personality traits. Although, as has been discussed, the word ‘personality’ was attached to the brand, this was completely unrelated to proper human personality. When reviewing the history of the concept, this narrowing of the concept seems to have transformed a vague novel metaphor / synonym for brand image into a concept which becomes inexplicable in light of its history. It was, after all a concept that could be examined by consumers being asked to think of brands as countries, animals and even fabric (Plummer 1984/1985).

When reflecting on the transition to proper human personality traits in some of the brand personality literature, it is apparent that the reconceptualization was a pressing problem with the concept. In this respect, the reconceptualization achieved its goal, but did so without any reference to the history of the concept. If theorists had, for example, carefully examined the meaning of brand personality in the MR literature, the distance travelled from the original conceptualisation and the new conceptualisation would have been apparent and may have raised the following key question. If brand personality commenced as a novel metaphor / synonym for brand image, on what basis might its limitation to proper human personality traits be justified?

THE UTILITY OF PERSONIFICATION, BRAND PERSONALITY AND BRAND RELATIONSHIPS

One obvious question that may be raised in response to this review is why practitioners and academics persist in the use of personification, and why there is enduring interest in the concepts of brand personality and brand relationships. With regards to endurance of personification, it seems likely that the method is one which has positive outcomes in terms of creativity for advertising. For example, Gordon and Langmaid (1988) give an example of a brand of bleach described as a knight in shining armour, and it is not difficult to see the potential for this kind of data to be turned into engaging advertising.

As another example, Plummer (1984/1985) reports the findings from personification and other association ‘projections’ for Olay; ‘the animal was a mink, the occupation was secretary, the activity was swimming, and the magazine was Vogue’ He then interprets this as prompting ‘a picture of someone’s secretary on the Riviera, by the swimming pool, in a silk bathing suit, reading Vogue, with her mink coat on the adjacent chair.’ (p.29) In this example, the interpretation is indicative of how such abstract data can spur Plummer’s creativity rather than generating any meaningful data about consumer perceptions.

Alderson (1958) long ago grasped the creative potential of MR. He was highly critical, for example, of the use of Freudian psychology with the following just one example of a scathing critique: ‘Every copywriter knows that a man buys suspenders to hold up his trousers and not as a “reaction to castration anxiety”’ (p.20). However, he nevertheless saw some value in Freudian approaches: ‘One justification for this type of approach might be the attempt to achieve variety in advertising copy and presentation’ and later suggests that Freudian slants might overcome boredom with ‘instrumental’ advertising (p.18).

Another reason for the persistence of the use of personification is that, in addition to fantasy figures such as the knight in shining armour, it is also considered (uniquely amongst PTs) to generate user imagery (Day 1989; Hofstede et al. 2007). Indeed, Avis (2011) has argued that brand personality may be a redundant conceptualisation of user imagery. This understanding of personification connects neatly with Vicary’s (1951) original account of personification, in which he devotes considerable space to Haire’s (1950) shopping list personification, which was directly designed to generate user imagery. Whilst Vicary does not specify this as the purpose, it seems the likely purpose as there was widespread interest in perceptions of user imagery during the MR era (e.g. Martineau 1957).

With regards to brand relationships, the clue to the enduring
interest in this theory can be found in Fournier’s (1998) original research. In the many quotes from participants in Fournier’s case study research it is apparent that there is widespread use by participants of ‘they’ and ‘it’ and it is clear that the participants are discussing the firm and the products they make. In other words, the participants are not perceiving a relationship with the ‘brand’ but with the firm, and again Avis (2011) has suggested that brand relationships may be a confusion with a perception of a relationship with a firm.

These explanations of the enduring interest in the method of personification and the concepts of brand personality and brand relationships may be seen as a justification for their on-going use. However, as Singh (1991) points out, redundant concepts serve to create problems in the development of research and theory, and using the terms ‘user imagery’ and the ‘firm’ would resolve the current conceptual confusion. With regards to using personification, Henry (1958) proposed long ago that consumers could be asked directly about user imagery, and presumably found this to be an effective method for eliciting user imagery. The rather odd method of personification can only serve to add an unnecessary layer of complexity to those interested in perceptions of user imagery, and some researchers have reported research participants finding personification to be ‘silly’ (Nancarrow, Moskvin, & Shankar, 1996) and embarrassing (Greenbaum, 1988; Nancarrow et al., 1996).

CONCLUSION

When Lovejoy (1936) wrote his classic work, it inspired scholarly debate. This paper seeks to encourage just such a debate. In particular, the discussion has used the history of the concepts of brand personality and brand relationships to question their utility. However, history is a matter of interpretation. For example, whilst drawing on the work of Henry (1958), he has also been considered as a partisan actor in the MR controversies (Tadajewski 2006). As such there is scope for debate, and brand personality and brand relationship theorists may wish to provide their own interpretations of the history of the concepts. However, in reviewing the literature, it seems that there absolutely needs to be a careful evaluation of the claims and (often inadequately presented) research of practitioners.

Although the paper contributes to the literature by raising questions about the cognitive success of the concepts of brand personality and brand relationships, it may be that the paper might make a further contribution by spurring further research. In particular, although focused on two brand concepts, it is impossible not to note that the understanding of the brand concept itself has been strongly influenced by the practitioners from the MR era. In light of the troubled history of brand personality and brand relationships, it may be that a review of the evolution of the brand concept may also present opportunities for clarification. Although there have been some considerations of the history of the brand (e.g. Roper and Parker 2006), the specific influence of the MR era has not yet been considered in depth.

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Fakes and Fashion: Understanding the Counterfeit Crisis in the Middle East
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ABSTRACT
This research examines the determinants of consumers’ willingness to buy counterfeit brands in UAE using a sequence of three methods: a projective technique, an exploratory stepwise regression modeling, and a structural equation model. Of the several variables examined, frequent change in fashion was found to be the dominant driver of willingness to buy counterfeit brands.

INTRODUCTION
The trading of counterfeit goods has greatly expanded in recent years. The International AntiCounterfeiting Coalition estimates global counterfeiting trade to be at least $600 billion a year (IAAC, 2013). This is shown to not only affect legitimate businesses, but also impact society through proliferation of unsafe products, loss in government revenue and the funding of organised crime. The growth of counterfeiting can be attributed to the increase in world trade and emerging new markets, fast-paced technology advancements, and increases in the amount of goods that are worth counterfeiting.

However, the intriguing aspect of the booming counterfeit trade is consumers’ willingness to purchase these brands. This conscious act on the part of consumers to seek fake brands is attributed to their pursuit for status goods and the desire to be attuned with the latest fashions and fads. (Eisend and Schuchert, 2006) Consumers are often seen in conversations about ‘red carpet’ or ‘Kate Middleton fashions’ in various social media communities, both during and after an event has taken place. The increase in media exposure and highly connected consumers are fuelling the urge to acquire high-value products and counterfeits seem to be a perfect alternative. While most previous research on counterfeiting has focused on supply-side issues (Ang et al., 2003; Albers-Miller, 1999) there is renewed interest among researchers to examine the motives behind consumers seeking counterfeits. Initial studies focused on the most obvious variable — price which was viewed as the major determinant of counterfeit purchases (Prendergast, Chuen and Phau, 2002), although later studies have shown many other behavioural and social constructs to influence consumers’ willingness to buy counterfeit brands.

For instance, culture could be seen as an important factor influencing counterfeit purchases. Cultures differ in their ethical, social and moral philosophies, and it is the shared understandings of these philosophies that govern an individual’s behaviour towards society at large. Despite culture’s overarching influence on behaviour, its influence on counterfeit purchase behaviour remains an under researched area. Following a comprehensive review of the literature on counterfeiting Eisend and Schuchert (2006, p. 17) conclude, ‘investigating cultural differences seems a promising further approach when researching determinants of counterfeiting.’ As the majority of studies on counterfeit products are based on consumers in North America, European or East Asian countries we address this call for research by conducting our study in a Middle Eastern country – The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and demonstrate the differences in attitudes of UAE consumers towards counterfeits compared to those of people from other cultures. The UAE has a distinct culture dominated by Middle Eastern philosophies; therefore, we expect our study to reveal variation in terms of UAE consumers’ outlooks towards the counterfeit trade.
perceived behavioural control to be a good predictor of behavioural intention towards piracy. Eisend and Schuchert (2006) established a theoretical framework using the commodity theory, typology of products, mood-based concepts and cognitive dissonance to explain the intention to purchase counterfeits. They suggested mood-based concepts to explain situational factors that enhance purchase intentions, while cognitive dissonance hopes to explain the rational and moral justifications of consumers when purchasing counterfeits. Thus, through a theoretical lens researchers have also highlighted the role played by non-price determinants and called upon more empirical research to explore and test these predictors.

While the counterfeiting literature views counterfeit trading as ‘consumer misbehaviour’ (Miller, 1999, p.1) some researchers have taken a positive perspective on the issue. According to them, non-deceptive counterfeits pose little safety risk (Nia and Zaichkowsky, 2000), help build brand awareness (Schultz and Saporito, 1996) and increase the so-called snob value for both originals and counterfeits (Jugessur and Cohen, 2009). However, (Green and Smith 2002; Olsen and Granzin 1992, 1993) are apprehensive with this view and further argue that it is operationally complex to effectively deter counterfeiting in practice. To develop applicable countermeasures it becomes necessary to understand the issue of counterfeiting as a whole and specifically, the reasons why people buy counterfeit goods (Eisend and Schuchert, 2006).

Interestingly, the literature suggests a distinct variation in the motives of counterfeiters across cultures and within the social classes within said cultures (Gentry et. al., 2006). Research on software pirating has confirmed that culture is a predominant determinant for software pirating behaviour (Husted, 2000; Marron and Steel, 2000). Gentry et. al., (2006) show that being associated with wearing counterfeits is considered embarrassing amongst the Asian middle class and upper classes. These cultures treat counterfeits as available for lower social class and tourists who are after bargain shopping. In this regards, Green and Smith (2000) suggest that moral dilemmas in purchasing counterfeits are derived from cultural roots. Flourishing counterfeit trade is highly collectivistic in nature. The collectivistic societies have less importance for role of individual or company’s contribution and place premiums on the benefits to society at large. Empirical studies have found significant relationship between country’s level of individualism and the degree to which intellectual property rights are protected (Husted, 2000).

Hofstede’s (1991) work on differences in cultural dimensions across nations clearly makes the case that Middle Eastern cultures do not share moral philosophies or cultural and behavioural values with their Western and Far Eastern counterparts. Therefore, we posit that these consumers will differ in terms of their motives for purchasing non-deceptive counterfeits. Moreover, despite the counterfeit dilemma often being attributed to the UAE (IACC, 2008) until now no study on counterfeiting has been conducted in the UAE market.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This research is completed in three stages: (a) measure development, (b) exploratory regression modeling, and (c) confirmatory structural equation modeling. A convenience sample of 95 respondents with an average age 19 was selected for the first stage of the study. 78% of the sample had either bought or used a counterfeit product previously. Sample consisted of 57% females and 43% males. Using the third-person projective technique respondents were asked to write as many factors as possible as to “why people buy counterfeit brands”. Each respondent was asked to come up with a minimum of 10 ideas. This process resulted in a number of reasons why people purchased counterfeits. Some of these reasons, such as price consciousness have already been reported in the literature. These responses were then categorized into eight meaningful themes namely ‘fashion changes quickly, superior quality of counterfeits, triability of new brands, novelty of brand names, aspect of tourism, friendly sellers, availability of counterfeits, and household usability. The two dependent variables were ‘attitudes towards counterfeits’ and ‘intention to buy counterfeits.’ Several of these constructs overlapped constructs identified in prior studies (e. g., Gentry et. al., 2006), and are listed in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clothing changes quickly (3 items, “Fashion changes so quickly it is ok to buy counterfeits”)</td>
<td>α = .78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior quality of counterfeits (3 items, “The quality of counterfeits measure up to the quality of the original brands”)</td>
<td>α = .61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trialability of new brands (3 items, “Some consumers use counterfeits to test it, then buy the original if they like it”)</td>
<td>α = .64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novelty/curiosity of brand names (4 items, “I like counterfeit for the novelty of having that brand name”)</td>
<td>α = .68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspect of tourism (3 items, “It is quite acceptable for tourists to buy counterfeits”)</td>
<td>α = .74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly/approachable sellers (6 items, “Sellers of counterfeit products are friendlier than sellers of original brands”)</td>
<td>α = .66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability/accessibility, (2 items, “Sometimes counterfeits are available before the originals are released”)</td>
<td>α = .76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household usability (2 items, “For rough and in-house wear, I got no problem with counterfeits”)</td>
<td>α = .55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward counterfeit (4 items, “Buying counterfeit goods generally benefits the consumer”)</td>
<td>α = .86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention to buy counterfeit (4 items, “What is the chance that you think about a counterfeit product as a choice when buying something?”)</td>
<td>α = .88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scales were developed to measure these constructs using the procedures suggested by authorities in construct development in marketing (e.g., Churchill, 1979; Nunnally, 1978). Scales for measuring attitudes towards counterfeit (Huang et. al., 2004) and intention to buy counterfeits (Ang et. al., 2001) were adopted from earlier studies. Data was collected from a total of 358 consumers in the UAE using a 7-point Likert scale.

**RESULTS**

In the next exploratory modelling stage, stepwise regression analysis was used to explore the nature of the relationships between the constructs. The items under each construct were averaged to create a single item measure. Using standardized beta coefficients as
a measure of the strength of the predictor variables, the results are summarised as follows:

\[ \text{Attitudes toward counterfeits (R Squared = 0.63, } F = 135, p = 0.000) = \beta_1 \text{ fashion changes } + \beta_2 \text{ trialability } + \beta_3 \text{ superior quality } + \beta_4 \text{ household use} \\
= [.51 \text{ fashion changes}] + [.17 \text{ trialability}] + [.14 \text{ superior quality}] + [.13 \text{ household use}] \]

\[ \text{Intention to buy counterfeits (R Squared = 0.40, } F = 152, p = 0.000) = \beta_1 \text{ fashion changes } + \beta_2 \text{ superior quality } + \beta_3 \text{ household use} \\
= [.33 \text{ fashion changes}] + [.25 \text{ superior quality}] + [.17 \text{ household use}] \]

The R-Square shows that 63% of the total variance in attitudes toward counterfeit is explained by fashion changes, trialability, superior quality and household usability of counterfeits. Other variables mentioned by respondents in the projective technique did not make a statistically significant contribution and were removed from the equation. When it comes to intention to buy counterfeit brands, the result is somewhat different where trialability of counterfeit is not a predictor of intention but the other three are directly predictive.

Further, in order to confirm findings of the projective technique the following hypotheses are proposed:

- **H1**: Perceived frequent changes in fashion has a positive effect on attitudes toward counterfeit.
- **H2**: Trialability has a positive effect on attitudes toward counterfeit.
- **H3**: Perceiving superior quality in counterfeits has a positive effect on attitudes toward counterfeit.
- **H4**: Perceived household use of counterfeit has a positive effect on attitudes toward counterfeit.
- **H5**: Attitudes toward counterfeit has a positive effect on intention to purchase counterfeits.

To test these hypotheses a confirmatory structural equation model was constructed using Amos version 18, and estimated using the Maximum Likelihood Method. After some model trimming based on adjusting item-to-total correlations and modification indices, the model with the best fit to the data was selected. The fit indices for the final model of CMIN/DF = 2.21, RMSEA = .058, PCLOSE = .069, GFI = .926, CFI = .946 are considered acceptable in the measurement literature (Byrne, 2001).

Considering the antecedents of attitudes, the only significant path found was for "frequent changes in fashion" (p < .05, \( \beta = .89 \)), supporting H1. Other four variables were not significant, failing to support H2, H3 and H4 as shown in table 2. When assessing the influence of attitude on behavioral intentions, the path was significant (p < 0.000, \( \beta = .72 \)) supporting H5. The full estimated model is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superior quality</td>
<td>.269</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td>1.509</td>
<td>.131</td>
<td>par_11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>.859</td>
<td>.414</td>
<td>2.075</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>par_12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trialability</td>
<td>-.023</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>-1.518</td>
<td>.875</td>
<td>par_16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household use</td>
<td>-.120</td>
<td>.453</td>
<td>-1.677</td>
<td>.782</td>
<td>par_20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>.799</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>11.312</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>par_8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DISCUSSION**

We set out to address the gap in the literature in regards to motivations, attitudes, and behavioral intentions of UAE consumers toward purchasing counterfeit products. An unique finding of this study is that frequent changes in fashion was found to be the strongest determinant of consumers' preference for counterfeit brands, a factor ignored in prior research. The shorter the life cycle of a fashion brand and the higher the consumer desire to keep up to speed with a fashion brand, the more likely they are to buy counterfeits. These consumers perhaps perceive counterfeits as a cheaper way to stay up-to-date and to keep from falling out of fashion. There is some support for this finding in the literature from Tom et al's (1998) study who found counterfeit versions of products with few fashion components were selected less frequently, however their study did not look at the effect of ‘change in fashions’ of a product on its vulnerability to counterfeiting. Several motives strongly expressed by projective technique respondents were not supported by our large-sample regression model. For example, “counterfeit sellers are very friendly,” “they come to your door,” and “they are available even before the originals” were factors frequently mentioned by respondents which were not supported in the quantitative phase of the study. In essence, it is frequent changes in fashion that steers consumers in the Middle East to buy counterfeit products.

The results have implications for developing anti-counterfeiting policies, educating consumers against counterfeits, and revising marketing strategies of the original brands to ensure long-term success in the UAE market. The main finding of frequent change in fashion as a major contributor to purchasing counterfeit products, suggests that manufacturers who plan shorter lifecycles for their products through frequent change is fashion or planned obsolescence inadvertently make their product vulnerable to counterfeiting, especially if their product can be easily copied. The recommendation of this study to stay away from such strategies is not entirely impractical as leading fashion designers such as Pierre Cardin note that: “Today’s fashion designers change styles much too fast, partly due to twice-yearly collections, making it harder to create couture that lasts for years” (Lies, 2010).
The exploratory regression stage does suggest quality of counterfeit might be a consideration with the UAE consumers. Therefore, managers should consider the quality of material, design and manufacturing process that distinguishes their brand from counterfeits. They should ensure that their brands differ significantly from fakes by carrying unique quality and authenticity markers on their products. This will also create a fear of social embarrassment from being spotted as a consumer of counterfeit – which was found to be a significant deterrent in Gentry et al.‘s (2006) study of Asian consumers. We found that UAE counterfeits are trading on the notion of fashion and conspicuous consumption. Therefore, managers should understand the significance of the intricacies between factors such as brand image, self-image and cultural clues that affect the purchase of counterfeit products. They should focus on promoting the physical and psychological benefits of their own products to create a strong positive brand image. By shifting consumers’ focus on non-price attributes of their brand they can communicate the superiority and exclusivity of their brand.

An area of interest for future research could be consumer attitudes towards deceptive and non-deceptive counterfeit trading using online channels. The determinant found in this study, frequent changes in fashion, is in the context of UAE consumers; its generalizability is limited, but future researchers could test frequent fashion changes as determinant using a different cultural context.

The existence of counterfeits is detrimental to the affected brands though there is a debate whether this indeed is the case. The UAE has joined hands with the WTO and is developing initiatives to execute stricter legislation against the suppliers of counterfeit products; it is unlikely that government measures alone will help curb the issue of illicit trade in the UAE. It is important to understand that the supply-side will only provide if there is demand in the market. Perhaps an alternative strategy can be adopted in which brand owners take efforts to understand the attitudes at the demand-side and employ agents of change by collaborating with consumers in their efforts to deal with a ‘faking it’ mind-set.

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Brands and Strategies of Self-Presentation on Facebook

Oussama Ammar, Skema Business School, Univ. Lille Nord de France

ABSTRACT

Research about self-presentations on Facebook has just begun to attract researchers’ attention. The aim of our study is to understand the types of interactions between brands and strategies of self-presentation on Facebook. Our findings reveal four different strategies for self-presentation in interaction with brand.

1. INTRODUCTION

Every marketer knows that the hottest barometers of popular culture are social networking sites (Patterson 2012). The Social Network Sites (SNS) have become new resources and platforms for marketing due to an increase in user popularity around the world (Wang, Ting and Wu 2012). In this context and with 845 million monthly active users at the end of December 2011, an average of 483 million daily users, and approximately 80% of active users outside the U.S. and Canada (Facebook 2012), Facebook, as an example of SNS, has become an integral part of life (Theising 2011). It enables users to create visible profiles and represents a platform for identity construction where different facets of the self, may be explored and expressed (Labrecque, Markos and Milne 2011). In fact, Facebook is a kind of “a mirror masquerading as a window” (Patterson 2012). It is originally supposed to be about building relationships but considerable portion of user’s attention is more concentrated on self-presentation.

Nevertheless, despite the importance of Facebook for marketers, its understanding in academia remains limited and has made little progress (Johnstone, Todd, and Chua 2009; Zhao, Grasmuck, and Martin 2008; Wang et al. 2012). Considerable research has been devoted to the impact of the Internet self-presentation and identity production during the past decade (Turkle 1995; Schau and Gilly 2003; Kretz 2010). However, research about self-presentations on Facebook has just begun to attract researchers’ attention (Zhao et al. 2008; Labrecque et al. 2011; Nadkarni and Hofmann 2012).

In this context, the aim of our study is to understand the types of interactions between brands and strategies of self-presentation on Facebook. Indeed, we explore the relationships between self-presentation strategies and the usage of brand on Facebook.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Popularized by Ervin Goffman (1959), self-presentation is a way for an individual to convey information to others (Goffman 1959). It is the mechanism that allows a person to create and control impressions of himself towards an audience (Kretz 2010).

In digital context, people use social networking profiles, blogs, and personal Web pages for self-presentation. The digital environment provides a platform for identity construction and self-expression where multiple selves or different facets of the self could be presented (Labrecque et al. 2011). Patterson (2012) argues that people on virtual life are paranoid about how they will be perceived and spend hours trying to manage their digital image and to be virtually cool.

Actually, in digital environment, like in real life, consumers use different strategies for digital self-presentation by carefully selecting digital items that are congruent with the ideal “digital self”.

In this context, the work of Schau and Gilly (2003) presents a great contribution for understanding the different strategies of self-presentation on virtual spaces. Therefore, Schau and Gilly (2003) identify three distinct types of motivations for creating a blog: (1) a triggering event (a significant change in personal or professional status); (2) a desire for personal growth (an educational endeavor or personal and professional self-promotion); (3) advocacy (constructing a home page for a favorite artist, a favorite brand or a social cause…). Additionally to the different motivations for creating blogs, Schau and Gilly (2003) outline four strategies involved in digital self-presentation used by blogs owners:

1. Constructing a digital self: It refers to a conspicuous self-presentation with elements chosen for their semiotic potential.

2. Projecting a digital likeness: is the explicit referencing of a real life or ideal physical body in the construction of a digital self.

3. Digital association as a new form of possession: In order to convey meaning, people make efforts to reference relationships with objects, places and brands. They use digital association to present themselves to an expected audience with the objective to construct and manage impressions. Schau and Gilly (2003) consider that through the process of digital association, consumers expand the concept of ownership.

4. Reorganizing linear narrative structures: In personal pages and blogs, hyperlinks allow narratives with different modes of elaboration and no predefined hierarchical structure.

According to Schau and Gilly (2003), the major contribution of their work is to demonstrate that consumers can use symbols to invoke brand associations and relationships in ways that previous work has not done.

Building on the finding of Schau and Gilly (2003) and adopting a semiotic approach, Kretz (2010) identifies four options for self-presentation used by fashion bloggers: (1) authentic (accurate, reliable, realistic); (2) deceptive (imitative, counterfeit, dishonest), (3) non-deceptive (exaggerative, caricatured) and (4) non-authentic (factious, idealized, but not dishonest).

Facebook, like other social networks sites, allow users to create personal profiles. Additionally to general information (name, gender, date of birth, e-mail address, job information, descriptive photograph…), a Facebook profile offers different features that facilitate interaction like walls, status, messages, friends list or groups… (Nadkarni and Hofmann, 2012).

Patterson (2012), Nadkarni and Hofmann (2012) and Zhao et al. (2008) have studied self-presentation in the specific context of Facebook. According to their research, Facebook profiles give to users the opportunity to display their idealized selves. Patterson (2012) finds considerable evidence that Facebook does encourage a heightened individualism and that many Facebook profiles are calculated as an advertising image.

Based on the content analysis of Facebook profiles, Zhao et al. (2008) find that self-presentation and identity construction on Facebook (as a nominative social network site) differ from those in the anonymous social network sites. Zhao et al. (2008) indicate that people use to use different strategies for identity construction on Facebook, constituting “a continuum of modes of self-presentation” from implicit to explicit identity claims: (1) the visual self or “Watch me and know me by my friends” (self-projection via the inclusion of large numbers of peer photographs); (2) the “cultural self” or the self-presentation via consumption (e.g. brands), preferences, and tastes (Facebook users engage a “cultural self-description” by listing a set of preferences that they think define them); (3) “About Me” or the narrative self-description (It provides the most explicit verbal de-
3. METHODS

We employ a netnographic approach (Kozinets 2002) on the basis of 250 Facebook walls selected through snowballing techniques. This former approach aims at the analysis of different contents such as videography, photos, groups and wall-discussion, comments... As a multi-method, netnography often works even better when triangulated with other sources of insight (Kozinets 2010). Therefore, we decided to combine it with an interpretivist methodology by conducting in-depth interviews with fifty Facebook users ranging in age from 18 and 40 years comprising males and females. Interviews vary in length ranging from 30 minutes to 1 hour and a half and were semi-structured. Coupling detailed profiles analysis with a series of in-depth-interviews allows a better understanding of Facebooker’s self-presentation strategies.

4. FINDINGS

Building on interviews content analysis and on the netnographic approach described above, we figure out four types of Facebook profiles: the authentic, the artificial, the deceptive and the extime that use different self-presentation strategies on which is based their interaction with brand.

4.1 The Authentic

They are people characterized by self-disclosure, accuracy and transparency. The results show that authentic aim at revealing their real identity by using veracious and factual information on their Facebook profile: “My Facebook profile is an image of what I’m. It reflects my person and all information I put on Facebook is true” declares an interviewed facebooker. At the same time, the authentic decide to limit the personal information on their profile and refuse to reveal it in public: “I don’t want to unveil, on Facebook, information that concerns my private life, like information concerning my family or myself…” adds another facebooker.

The authentic avoid the presence and the usage of brand on their profile. Actually, they consider the presence of brand as an obstacle to their intimacy. According to this, a facebooker argues: “It bothers me that brands get information about me via Facebook. It is disrespectful regarding my privacy…”

4.2 The Artificial

They represent ideal and glamorized self through their profile and generally use brand as artifact. “If you look at my personal information on Facebook, my activities and my hobbies, I sometimes aim at praising my person” informs a facebooker. Therefore, we find that artificial expose, sometimes, ostentatious brands in order to highlight their profile on facebook: “I love Adidas because it reflects a cool image, …that’s why it is present on my profile” says a facebooker.

The results are in line with previous research on consumer behaviour showing that a strong connection with brand contributes to the expression of an ‘ideal’ or whished self where the brand is used as a glorifying artifact (Heilbrunn 2003).

4.3 The Deceptive

They falsify their image and present brands with high social visibility. Deceptive transform their identity often by falsification: “Facebook doesn’t reflect who I’m in reality because you can expose some information like photos and videos and hide others... for example, I choose to publish brands that I use or not but which attract me and that are present in my life, for example the last version of a mobile phone, some fashionable clothes, Paco Raban Perfume... they may be reflect my image and may be not! … This can result in deceiving people and friends on facebook.” explains a facebooker. Another interviewed facebooker adds: “I choose and select brands that are fascinating but not necessarily reflecting me...”. These assertions confirm Schouten and McAlexander (1995) research on the role of brand in the transformation of personal identity.

4.4 The Extime

They disclose their inner world and represent faithful identity: “I want to reflect what I’m…I want to show my tastes, the music I like, the book I read, the movies I watch, the videos, the photos... all prominent features of my personality” declares enthusiastically a facebooker. “It is what I’m through what I like” adds a young interviewed. Expressed differently, “I’m what I like and I follow what I like” explains a facebooker to justify the presence of specific brands on his profile.

The desire of extimacy of this profile implies an overexposure of chosen brands: “I want to expose the brands that represent me the best, like Zadig & Volaire for clothes” underlines another facebooker. The results meet those of Fournier (1998) on the connection between brand and self-presentation. In order to enrich our analysis, we outline in the following table (n=1) the main facebookers’ self-presentation strategies and their interaction with brands sustained with different and relevant verbatim.

Table 1: The main types of Self-presentation on Facebook and their interaction with brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Self-presentations</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Interactions with Brands</th>
<th>Verbatim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authentic</td>
<td>People aiming at authenticity use high digital likeness (Jensen Schau and Gilly, 2003)</td>
<td>Exposing brands on a profile is considered as the expression of a superficial behavior.</td>
<td>“Through real information, I give the opportunity to people to recognize me if they look for me on the site…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artificial</td>
<td>The image of the ideal self is usually exaggerated and glamorized.</td>
<td>They post personal information and expose some ostentatious brands valuing their Facebook profile.</td>
<td>“If I present a brand, it is just because it is funny and prestigious. It embellishes my profile.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceptive</td>
<td>Self-presentation in this case follows the rules of caricature because of level of falsification.</td>
<td>They usually falsify their image by exposing brands with high social visibility.</td>
<td>“If you look at the personal information I share on Facebook, it is not necessary me...may be it’s true may be it’s false…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extime</td>
<td>Facebook profile represents a faithful and public presentation of their identity</td>
<td>Careful selection of brands that reflect perfectly their real identity</td>
<td>“I provide all the details about me to the public to a point that my profile reflects exactly who I’m.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Contribution

In line with the existing research (Schau and Gilly 2003; Kretz 2010; Labrecque et al. 2011; Zhao et al. 2008), our results insist on the importance of brands in digital self-presentation strategies.

In fact, objects (e.g. brands) provide a medium of non-linguistic communication between people (McCraeken 1988). Generally, online consumers use brands as vehicles to describe to others who they are and who they are not. They use brand as digital stimuli to construct and manage impressions (Schau and Gilly 2003). In this context, brands, as part of the popular imagination, acts as metaphors for the self-presentation that Facebook’s users want to present to peers.

Beyond the convergence between our findings and existing research, our study highlights the importance of the concept of extimacy in understanding self-presentation on Facebook. This concept is composed of two words “intimacy” and “externality”. It refers to a deliberate disclosure of a part of person’s intimacy (physical and psychic) (Tisseron 2001). Differently, the extimacy reflects the desire to communicate its inner world. In line with this, some facebookers are inclined to expose themselves and to show intimate aspects of their life (Nabeth 2009; Peluchette and Karl 2010). They are trying to increase their “visibility and their social presence” by developing more and richer exchanges with their friends (Williams, 2008). Indeed, the more the facebooker’s profile contains signs, the more its representation is distinctive (Georges 2009). Among these signs, those related to consumption and brands have an important place. As a future research avenue, it is interesting to explore how the extime profiles may be used as brand ambassadors building on their faithful and honest description of reality.

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INTRODUCTION

Persuasion has always been a matter of concern to organisations which rely on such helping behaviour as the donation of time for the exercise of their activities. A question with which the literature has not dealt is how to persuade volunteers to continue with their activities on the long run as many charitable organisations struggle to find ways to motivate them to do so (Boezeman and Ellemers 2007; Dwiggins-Beeler, Spizberg, and Roesch 2011).

Fishbein-Ajzen’s approach, which embraces the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Ajzen and Fishbein 1977; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975) and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen 1985; 1991; 2002; 2005), contemplates individual behaviour in which a process of psychological change is involved (McKee et al. 2000) and is “considered one of the most thoroughly tested and robust of the social psychological models” (Walker et al. 2004, p. 671). The TRA and the TPB have been empirically tested in a number of research contexts involving attitude formation, attitude change and attitude strength. This study explores a specific TRA/TPB path which is usually considered important to any process of customer persuasion: the attitudes-to-intention-to-behaviour path. Such a path is empirically addressed in this study in the long-term volunteering milieu.

While some previous TRA/TPB studies on volunteering (Greenslade and White 2005; Okun and Sloane 2002; Warbuton and Terry 2000) support the idea that attitude has an impact on intention, its role in the TRA and TPB is still not completely clear, mainly as regards long-term volunteering (Harrison 2005). People may change their minds about volunteering after experiencing some voluntary service, which means that with the passage of time, volunteers’ initial enthusiasm may wane. The first objective of this study is to investigate how attitudes towards volunteering are linked to the initial intention to volunteer and to the observed volunteering behaviour on a long-term project. Furthermore, the extent literature on consumer behaviour has pointed to a relationship hitherto overlooked between attitudes towards behaviour and specific variables which could themselves be considered predictors of attitudes (Davies, Foxall, and Pal lister 2002). Therefore, the second objective of this study is to assess the role of two potential cognitive antecedents of attitudes towards long-term volunteering: affect and self-identity.

THE ATTITUDES-TO-INTENTION-TO-BEHAVIOUR PATH IN VOLUNTEERING

Four articles which investigated volunteering found in the TRA/TPB literature are presented in Table 1. From Table 1 it is possi-
ble to infer that such investigations have specified at the very least the TACT components of ‘action’ and ‘time’ in their description of volunteering behaviour and that none of them has dealt with specific long-term volunteering projects. Harrison (1995) and Okun and Sloane (2002) employed objective measures of behaviour, including observation in the field and checking of records. Warburton and Terry (2000) and Greenslade and White (2005) used self-report measures of behaviour.

Evidence across these investigations reveals that intention is influenced by attitudes. For example, the correlation coefficient (r) between attitudes and intention is 0.33 for Warburton and Terry (2000), 0.48 for Okun and Sloane (2002) and 0.67 for Greenslade and White (2005). The coefficient (r) between attitudes and behaviour is 0.23 for Warburton and Terry (2000), 0.12 for Okun and Sloane (2002) and 0.45 for Greenslade and White (2005). In Harrison’s study (1995), however, the path attitudes-to-intention-to-behaviour is only partially supported, because attitudes failed to explain intention to volunteer in the sample of experienced volunteers. Intention accounts for about 56-58% of the variance in volunteering behaviour in these studies.

THE AFFECT-TO-ATTITUDES PATH

There is a vast body of theoretical work concerning the influence of emotions on human behaviour. The broad idea of emotion is captured within the concept of affect. According to Parrot (2001, p. 4), the term “refers to any psychological state that is felt and in some way is evaluative or valenced (positive or negative)” and should be employed when all emotional feelings are considered, for example, moods, emotions, emotional episodes, pleasures, pains, likes, and dislikes. Fishbein-Ajzen’s approach has been criticized for neglecting affective processes while putting too much emphasis on utilitarian beliefs (Zanna and Rempel 1988). This caveat has been acknowledged when TRA and TPB studies consider the two-pronged approach of attitude in the analysis, which combines affective and instrumental attitudes. Affective attitudes capture the emotional aspect of the construct while instrumental attitudes correspond to its cognitive dimension; they are respectively the ‘hot’ and the ‘cold’ attitudes (Rhodes and Cournay 2003; Rosenberg 1956).

Nevertheless, Manstead and Parker (1995) affirm that measures of attitude are not of much value in capturing the emotional aspects of behaviour, thus suggesting that measures of affective evaluations of behaviour (that is, affect) should be adopted and used together with measures of attitude. In fact, what is behind their argument is the supposition that attitudes and affect are distinct constructs. According to Manstead and Parker (1995), affective evaluations of behaviour are brought out by such questions as: What do you like or enjoy about performing the particular behaviour? What do you dislike or hate about performing it? On the other hand, Ajzen (2006) suggests that attitudes towards behaviour can be brought out by the following questions: What do you believe are the advantages of your performing the behaviour? What do you believe are the disadvantages of your performing the behaviour? French et al. (2005) found empirical support to suggest that beliefs elicited by affective evaluations of behaviour (e.g., like/enjoy or dislike/hate) are more closely associated with the measure of affective attitude, whereas attitudinal beliefs (e.g., advantages/disadvantages) are more strongly associated with the measure of instrumental attitude. In line with the claim that the construct of affect should be represented by two different dimensions, this study uses a conceptualisation which considers both the positive and the negative (or defensive) aspects of affect and thus expresses likes and dislikes related to the performance of the behaviour concerned, beyond measures of attitudes.

THE SELF-IDENTITY-TO-ATTITUDES PATH

Self-identity is a multifaceted concept with a number of components (Bailey 2003). The self is conceived within identity theory as a collection of identities that reflects the roles which an individual plays in the social structure (Terry, Hogg, and White 1999). In general, the self is viewed “as a bridge between the social events that occurred outside of the individual (including both interpersonal interactions and society more broadly) and the individual’s own thoughts, behaviours, and emotions” (Leary 2007, p. 318). A definition that has proved helpful posits that self-identity “reflects the extent to which an actor sees him or herself as fulfilling the criteria for any societal role” (Conner and Armitage 1998, p. 1444). The relationship between self-identity and attitudes has been overlooked in TRA and TPB models as few studies have been devoted to the exploration of such a relationship. For example, Shaw and Shiu (2002) found that self-identity has a substantial independent effect on attitudes. Sparks and Shepherd (1992, p. 396) posit that self-identity might be reflected in a positive attitude towards behaviour and declare that “the relationship between people’s identities and their attitudes is undoubtedly complex, and needs to be explored critically and thoroughly”.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

In recent years, a growing interest has arisen not only in the relationship between attitudes and behaviour, but also in the conditions for this relationship (Armitage and Christian 2003) and how attitudes are formed. Based on what has been discussed so far, the following hypotheses are posed:

Hypothesis 1: Behavioural intention will act as a mediator for the attitude-behaviour relationship as regards long-term volunteering.

Hypothesis 2: Attitudes will significantly lead to intention to volunteer on long-term projects.

Hypothesis 3: Affect (positive and defensive) will significantly lead to attitudes towards long-term volunteering.

Table 1: Description of Volunteering Behaviour in Previous TRA/TPB Investigations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Description of behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harrison (1995)</td>
<td>Work at the shelter the next time they were scheduled to do so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warburton and Terry (2000)</td>
<td>Engage in volunteering behaviour during the next month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okun and Sloane (2002)</td>
<td>Volunteer through the Student Life Community Service Programme during the next two months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenslade and White (2005)</td>
<td>Engage in three or more hours of volunteer work per week during the next month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 4: Self-identity will significantly lead to attitudes towards long-term volunteering.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES
This research was designed to collect data on actual behaviour. Data on cognitive variables (that is, attitudes, intention, affect and self-identity) were first collected by means of a questionnaire which was sent to 530 volunteers of a British charity which coordinates projects for young people. Four to six months later, when the projects ended, the coordinators of the volunteering projects provided information on how these young volunteers had behaved, whether they followed through their duties on volunteering by attending the projects for the full period or not. A total of 237 questionnaires were analysed and data on the behaviour of 161 volunteers were obtained. The behaviour under study was defined as ‘volunteering through Charity X in the project that I have committed myself for the full project period’. The definition of behaviour set out the exact compatibility between behaviour and attitudes in terms of TACT (target, action, context, and time), precisely. An average of recency and frequency was taken as a measure of volunteering behaviour, in which ‘1’ indicated the lowest level of participation in the projects and ‘5’ indicated the highest level (M = 4.42, SD = 0.70, α = 0.71).

MEASURES OF COGNITIVE VARIABLES
Attitude towards long-term volunteering was assessed by the following bipolar adjective items rated on a 7-point scale: “meaningless-meaningful”, “unpleasant-pleasant”, “bad-good”, “foolish-wise”, and “unenjoyable-enjoyable” (M = 6.21, SD = 0.61, α = 0.84). These items were preceded by a statement which asked the respondent’s opinion on what it would be like to volunteer for the full project period with the charity. With regard to the measure of behavioural intention, respondents indicated their level of agreement with the following items on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree): “I will make an effort to volunteer with Charity X for the full project period”, “I definitely want to volunteer with Charity X for the full project period”, and “My plan is to volunteer as I have committed myself for the full project period” (M = 6.56, SD = 0.55, α = 0.74). Affect items were rated on 7-point scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) and were preceded by the statement “My volunteering with Charity X makes me feel...”. Positive affect included such items as: “proud of myself”, “pleased”, “rewarded” and “useful to society” (M = 5.94, SD = 0.64, α = 0.75). Defensive affect included reversed scored items: “tied down”, “over-committed”, “under pressure”, and “stressed” (M = 5.44, SD = 1.12, α = 0.78). Finally, self-identity was measured by three items which reflected the level of agreement of the respondent to the following sentences on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree): “I think of myself as someone who is concerned about volunteering”, “Volunteering is an important part of who I am”, and “I am a typical example of a person who volunteers” (M = 5.10, SD = 0.87, α = 0.69).

PARTICIPANTS’ PROFILE
The participants identified themselves as: white (90.3%), Asian (4.6%), black (0.8%), mixed (1.7%) and other (2.5%). Of those responding 88.2% were female. Their age distribution was approximately normal (in years): 18 (6.3%), 19 (19.8%), 20 (30.8%), 21 (26.2%), 22 (11%) and 23 or above (5.9%). About one-third of the respondents reported having done more than one year of volunteer work. Most of them were originally from the UK (93.7%); 70% indicated that they had been involved in only one project since they started volunteering to work with the charity, 23.2% indicated two projects, and 6.8%, three or more. The sample gives similar proportions to those found in the overall population of the British charity under study.

EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS
All the 19 items referring to the cognitive variables were factor-analysed using principal component analysis and Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalisation, revealing good factorability indicators (the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.79 and Barlett’s test of sphericity was significant at p = 0.000). Factor analysis yielded five components accounting for 64% of the variance. The items loaded on the same constructs as they were originally conceived. The eigenvalues were 5.2 for attitudes, 2.3 for defensive affect, 2.0 for positive affect, 1.4 for intention, and 1.3 for self-identity. Factor loadings ranged from 0.64 to 0.82 for attitudes, from 0.63 to 0.91 for defensive affect, from 0.60 to 0.80 for positive affect, from 0.80 to 0.82 for intention, and from 0.73 to 0.76 for self-identity. It is worth noting that attitudes and affect loaded in different constructs, corroborating the argument that they should be treated as different constructs (e.g., Manstead and Parker 1995).

PEARSON’S CORRELATION AND REGRESSION ANALYSES
Attitudes did not present a significant correlation with behaviour (r = -0.09, ns), thereby not lending support to H1. Intention exhibited a weak, but significant positive correlation with behaviour (r = 0.16, p < 0.05). Attitudes did not correlate well with intention (r = -0.08, ns), thus H2 is rejected. Attitudes correlated significantly with positive affect (r = 0.51, p < 0.01), defensive affect (r = 0.27, p < 0.01), and self-identity (r = 0.38, p < 0.01).

A multiple regression analysis was used to predict attitudes towards long-term volunteering. Attitudes towards volunteering were regressed at one and the same time on the predictors (i.e., positive affect, defensive affect, and self-identity). The model was significant for the prediction of attitudes towards long-term volunteering and explained 33% of the variance: F (3, 233) = 39, p = 0.000. Positive affect was the strongest predictor (β = 0.40, p = 0.000), followed by self-identity (β = 0.22, p = 0.000), and then defensive affect (β = 0.19, p = 0.001). H3 and H4 are, therefore, supported.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS
The function of attitudes in this research has proved to be more complex than was originally hypothesised. Contrary to the initial expectation, attitude has been found to be a poor predictor of intention to volunteer for long-term projects; that is, the intention to continue with the volunteer activity until the end of the project is not associated with the strength of an individual’s favourable views on continued volunteering. This poor prediction reinforces the complexity of the behavioural aspect under analysis (i.e., ‘long-term volunteering’) and is a sign of unpredictable interactions between attitudes, intention and behaviour.

Some TPB investigations (e.g., Brenes, Strube, and Storandt 1998; Courneya, Blanchard, and Laing 2001; Moan, Rise, and Andersen 2005; Morojele and Stephenson 1994; Quine, Rutter, and Arnold 1998; Trafimow and Trafimow 1998) have also found that attitude does not necessarily lead to intention. Quine et al. (1998) suggest that this finding might be attributable to the over-whelming performance of other variables which capture the effect of attitudes on intention. But this cannot be the case with this research as even the correlation between attitudes and intention was not found to be significant. As Moan et al. (2005) argue, the contribution of attitudes in the prediction of intention may vary across behaviours and situa-
tions. The study of Trafimow and Finlay (1996) across 30 different types of behaviour illustrates this statement: when those individuals who were under normative contr. increased. On the other hand, Courneya et al. (2001) posit that the lack of association between attitudes and intention in their study might have been caused by the limited variability of attitudes’ reducing the magnitude of the relationship between these two variables. Courneya et al. (2001) explain that this is not to say that attitude is not an important target for interventions, this result only indicates that attitude is not likely to be important within the context of their research because participants already hold a very strong positive attitude towards the behaviour. This also seems to be the case in this present research. In this study, the sample of volunteers involved reported a high positive level of attitudes towards long-term volunteering even when they were not disposed to follow through their intention to volunteer for a long time. In his TRA study on volunteering, Harrison (1995, p. 380) found mixed support for the prediction of intention from attitudes, his findings suggested that “as volunteers gained experience, the amount of satisfaction they anticipated from doing volunteer work had less impact on their motivation to take part in it”.

The Role of Affect and Self-Identity on Attitudes

Some further comments about this research are worth noting. This study has found that there is an empirical distinction between positive affect and defensive affect; that is, volunteers seem to have a distinctive view on how volunteering produces favourable emotional reactions (i.e., feeling proud, pleased, rewarded, and useful to society) and how it also involves defensive emotional reactions (i.e., a desire not to feel tied down, over-committed, under pressure, or stressed). These two dimensions of affect appear to be largely attuned to the volunteering motivational functions of enhancement and protection. The enhancement motivational function relates to those people who volunteer to feel good about themselves, while the protective function relates to people who volunteer to address personal emotions and conflicts (Clary, Snyder, and Ridge 1992; Clary et al. 1998; Snyder, Clary, and Stukas 2000). In this sense, Snyder et al. (2000, p. 371) argue that:

In accord with recent theorizing suggesting that positive and negative affect fall along separate dimensions (e.g., Watson, Clark, Mchintyre, & Hamaker, 1992; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), the enhancement function represents a distinct but complementary partner to the protective function, focusing instead on increasing the ego’s positive standing.

It is possible that positive affect and defensive affect are allied to each other on the same premise as these two volunteering motivational functions (i.e., enhancement and protection) are interrelated. Positive affect deals with the enjoyable side of volunteering, while defensive affect seems to deal with the possible unpleasant side. Both types of affect are important determinants of attitudes towards long-term volunteering.

Self-identity has been found to predict attitudes towards long-term volunteering, which implies that the stronger the self-perception of being a volunteer, the more favourable the evaluation of long-term volunteering will be. People who identify themselves with the volunteer role tend to have a more favourable appraisal of the act of volunteering as such, including that for long-term activities. As the literature on volunteering has commonly held (e.g., Benson et al. 1980; Wilson 2000; Penner 2002; 2004), volunteering in the context of completing a specific long-term project implies deliberation and planning since it is not usually a behaviour which takes place impulsively. There might be a lot of thinking involved in both the decision to become a volunteer and also in the decision to continue working as such. This deliberation flows from the need to weigh up the potential ‘costs’ and ‘benefits’ of volunteering. In terms of costs, as a long-term activity, continued volunteering demands a considerable amount of effort and self-sacrifice (Omoto and Snyder 1995). For example, volunteering might involve emotional distress as it often involves dealing with challenging situations (Bennet and Barkensjo 2005). It also involves high opportunity costs because time donors forego the opportunity to use their time to do paid work or to pursue recreational and leisure activities (Fisher and Ackerman 1998; Bussell and Forbes 2002; Mowen and Sujan 2005). On the other hand, the benefits a volunteer gains from the volunteering experience involve a unique combination of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (e.g., Guy and Patton 1989; Batson 1991; Manner and Gailliot 2007), varying from having ‘peace of mind’ to career development. People who feel themselves to be true volunteers have been through all this process of weighing pros and cons and have eventually decided that volunteering is the best thing for them.

SUMMARY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Persuasion is a theme of great importance for charitable organisations which depend on the willingness of others to ensure their survival, prosperity and the continuance of their activities. One of the prevailing challenges for charities is to keep volunteers working actively on the long-term. This research has shown that investing in attitude strengthening is not the key to promote sustained volunteering or even the intention to maintain their long-term volunteering. The process of persuasion to encourage long-term volunteering goes beyond fostering favourable views on volunteering. Having positive attitudes towards volunteering may be a necessary condition but is insufficient to keep volunteers working on a prolonged project. Conversely, a helpful way to construe favourable attitudes to long-term volunteering is to augment the affect and self-identity of volunteers. The more the volunteers feel emotionally involved with a project, the charity or the act of volunteering itself, the more favourable will be their views on volunteering. Similarly, the more complete the volunteers’ recognition of themselves as such, the more favourable will be their appraisal of volunteering. In brief, persuasion strategies should go beyond the attitude-to-intention-to-behaviour path because, at least in the context of this research, initiatives based on such a model will not produce a sufficiently significant impact to promote sustained volunteering.

Future research should continue to examine within the contexts which the lack of association between attitudes, intention and behaviour occurs. This study has hypothesised that self-identity leads to attitudes. However, based on the argument that “a bidirectional causal link is likely to exist between a person’s self-identity and his attitudinal evaluations” (Sparks and Shepherd 1992, p. 390), further research should consider attitude as a predictor of self-identity. The direction of causation between the variables studied here was determined by a specific literature review (e.g., Shau and Shiu 2002). It is worth considering in future studies whether the opposite of what has been proposed here might be the case. Therefore, attitudes towards behaviour should also be questioned as regards their influence on affect and self-identity.

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Source Gender of Health Information: Does it Matter?
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ABSTRACT
Using a factorial designed experiment, this study extended source gender (male, female) of information research by evaluating behavioural measures over time. Physical activity levels were the targeted behaviour. Analysis revealed that a male source was more influential for physical activity increases compared to a female source during the treatment phase.

INTRODUCTION
The gender of the sender (male or female) passing on information, otherwise known as source gender (SG), can influence the receiver’s engagement with the message. Thus far, SG has been found to influence psycho-social measures such as attitude, intention and antecedents of trust within celebrity/endorser (Freiden, 1984; Kamin, 1990; Whipple & McManamon, 2002) and health communication research (Cox, Smith, Brown, & Fitzpatrick, 2007; Roter, Hall, & Aoki, 2002; Shah & Ogden, 2006). However, limited research has examined the influence of SG on the adherence to health information, with greater emphasis placed on message framing (Brawley & Latimer, 2007; Rothman & Salovey, 1997) and tailoring of health information (Noar, Benac, & Harris, 2007). Moreover, the influence of SG on behaviour over time has not yet been explored. Such an investigation would appear relevant especially since social marketing campaigns often target health-related behaviours over time (e.g., weeks, months). The purpose of this study was to explore, within the context of physical activity, the influence of SG within a text message physical activity intervention aimed at increasing physical activity over time. Findings of this research would, as a result, be informative to future campaigns developed and implemented by social marketers who are driven to maintain or improve a consumer’s personal welfare (Andreasen, 1994).

Knowledge pertaining to the influence of SG has been gathered from advertising research which focused on SG celebrity endorsement and uses psycho-social measures (Goode, 2007; Sawatari, 2006; Silvera & Austad, 2004). For example, Freiden (1984) investigated the influence of celebrity endorser gender on consumer reactions to the print advertising of numerous products. Male endorsers were rated as more ‘knowledgeable’ and the advertisement more ‘informative’ than a female endorser. Endorser gender was also found to be significantly related to purchase intent which brought Freiden (1984) to the conclusion, “when in doubt, use a male endorser” (Freiden 1984, p.40). Whipple and McManamon (2002) then added that SG is only of relevance when the focus (i.e., product) was gendered since they found both males and females were effective at presenting a gender neutral product. More recent research has however, investigated the influence of SG on favourability toward an orange juice advertisement and found a female source was associated with much more ‘knowledgeable’ and the advertisement more ‘informative’ than a male endorser. Despite this, the opinion of the message would need to be balanced to determine the outcome of the message by the consumer. The same theory may also be useful to understand the influence of SG for health information dissemination and could, in turn, improve the effectiveness of social marketing campaigns.

Source Gender and health-related behaviours
Previous research related to the exchange of health information focusing on SG has often focused on the interpersonal communication of physician-patient relationships (Cox, et al., 2007; Haug, 1996; Roter, et al., 2002; Shah & Ogden, 2006). Exploratory SG research beyond the interpersonal physician-patient relationship does exist. This research examined the perceived qualities of male and female personal trainers (George, 2008). Analysis revealed that female trainers were more likely to be perceived as offering a nurturing service and support that was caring. Meanwhile, male trainers were considered to be “professional, legitimated and accepted by the general population” (George, 2008, p. 125). These findings demonstrated differences are present in perceived qualities between the genders of personal trainers by consumers using their service. Therefore, how consumers address health-related information may vary based on the gender of the sender within a physical activity intervention experiment.

Source gender research beyond interpersonal communication to benefit health-related behaviour has also been completed and benefited fall prevention amongst a senior sample (Dearborn, et al., 2006) and public service announcements (PSAs) about sex (Dinoff & Kowalski, 1999; Perse, Nathanson, & McLeod, 1996). Perse et al. (1996) did not find a main effect of SG on the psycho-social measures to influence safe sex/ AIDS awareness. Meanwhile, Dinoff and Kowalski (1999) found participants high in protection motivation were influenced by a female communicator and took more condoms post PSA exposure. Similarly, Dearborn et al. (2006) found participants identified more fall preventers when a female narrator was used compared to a male narrator. Based on these findings from both health communication and marketing (Klaus & Bailey, 2008), a female source may have more influence on psycho-social measures for particular behaviours.

As of yet, no research has explored whether SG of physical activity information in a physical activity intervention would positively influence on an individual’s physical activity levels. Social marketing campaigns surrounding physical activity are common (e.g., Wong, et al., 2004) and are often based upon the World Health Organisation (WHO; WHO, 2010) or national physical activity recommendations. For adults, these national campaigns encourage consumers to complete 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity five days a week (e.g., Bauman, et al., 2003), and/or 20 minutes of vigorous intensity physical activity three days a week (Bauman, Bellew, Owen, & Vita, 2001). To understand the influence SG has on physical activity intervention would be beneficial since increas-

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ing physical activity levels to meet recommended levels is related to health benefits (Haskell, et al., 2007). These health benefits which are related to meeting physical activity recommendations can include weight loss to healthy levels (Catenacci & Wyatt, 2007), improving bone density maintenance (Kemper, et al., 2000) and being inversely related to depression (Dunn, Trivedi, Kampert, Clark, & Chambliss, 2005). Therefore, further investigation of SG may enhance the effectiveness of a campaign aimed at increasing physical activity levels.

A review of previous research that examined SG reveals that forced single experimental exposure (Dinoff & Kowalski, 1999; Perse, et al., 1996) as opposed to multiple exposures to SG over a length of time (e.g. weeks) is the norm. The question then remains as to whether multiple exposures of SG have any influence on behaviour over time since social marketing campaigns typically disseminate health-related messages over time. For physical activity campaigns in particular, understanding the influence of multiple exposures over a period of time could offer an opportunity to understand whether behavioural trial has taken place. Trial of physical activity in the short term would be useful since it is a measurement of short term campaign effectiveness (Bauman, Smith, Maibach, & Reger-Nash, 2006). At present, knowledge attained from research investigating, for example, message framing (Rothman & Salovey, 1997) and varied messages (Schumann, Petty, & Clemons, 1990) have been applied within real world campaigns (e.g., Wong, Greenwell, Gates, & Berkowitz, 2008). Due to the frequent use of SG within health-related campaigns, it would also be helpful to explore whether SG to understand whether it warrants future consideration in physical activity campaigns.

In addition to extending SG research by incorporating behavioural measures, controlling for the SG’s physical and audible attractiveness may be beneficial. Research has found a consumer may be persuaded by attractiveness (Chaiken & Stangor, 1987; Dommeyer, 2008; Kahle & Homer, 1985; Nguyen & Masthoff, 2007), but the influence of SG may differ based on the context it is applied to, i.e. gendered or neutral products (Kamins, 1990; Whipple & McKammon, 2002). Therefore, efforts to remove the influence of these extraneous variables (i.e., audible and visible attractiveness) present within previous research (Dearborn, et al., 2006; Dinoff & Kowalski, 1999; Perse, et al., 1996) may aide in clarifying whether SG has any influence in health-related campaigns.

One distribution channel that does have the variable of physical attractiveness removed from it is text message. Text messages were therefore, the chosen distribution channel to disseminate physical activity-related messages within the current study. Text messages are an inexpensive means of disseminating health information and it also has the extraneous variable of attractiveness removed. Numerous text message interventions have been completed with documented success (e.g., Franklin, Waller, Pagliari, & Greene, 2006; Joo & Kim, 2007; Prestwich, Perugini, & Hurling, 2010; Rodgers, et al., 2005). Thus, exposing participants to daily text messages that are from an assigned gender would permit the examination of whether SG was of any influence in the positive modification of physical activity levels.

The present study investigated the influence of SG of health communication on physical activity and extends what is already known of SG for sex related PSAs and fall prevention. Source Gender research was also extended through the examination of SG in a different context and in particular, the influence this variable could have over time. Bauman et al. (2006) have previously stated the use of behavioural measures to capture behavioural trial as a useful method to evaluate the effectiveness of campaigns. To enable the examination of SG over time, a blind field experiment manipulating the source’s name only (one name for the entirety of the experiment) within the daily physical activity informative messages sent to participants was undertaken.

To guide the exploration of any influence SG has within a physical activity field experiment, the following research question is posited:

**Research question:**

Does SG of physical activity messages have a main effect on physical activity levels over time?

**METHODOLOGY**

**Study Overview**

A four week longitudinal blind field experiment was undertaken between February and April 2009 to determine the influence of SG on participants’ physical activity levels. Week one was the control phase for physical activity to use as a comparison to the treatment weeks (weeks two to four) in which participants were sent daily informative physical activity text messages from one researcher (same researcher for the entire study). Participants completed web-based surveys each Tuesday of the study (inclusive of control phase) to report their physical activity for the previous seven days. Efforts were made to ensure that contamination amongst participants did not occur. This exploratory field experiment gained ethical approval via the review process in place within the University of Otago, Marketing department.

**Participants**

Advertisements within university student magazines, posters and a booth within an area of high foot traffic within a New Zealand university were used for recruitment. An incentive of a prize draw of $50 supermarket vouchers was offered. Participants were to be university students, 18 or older and have no pre-existing medical condition that would have prevented them from being active. Once found eligible, participants read an information sheet to enable informed consent. The information sheet explained that the study was about text messaging and physical activity. Participants were then informed that messages would be sent to them from a named researcher who would also email to confirm their place in the study. Due to the study being a blind field experiment, efforts were made so that no contamination occurred by participants discovering that all messages sent by different ‘researchers’ were identical regardless of the sender. Participants began the study in different weeks to offset the influence of weather.

Overall, an attrition rate of 12% was observed amongst participants that began the study (n = 175) and those that finished (n = 154). Those that only completed the first week of the study (control phase) and did not complete the remaining surveys were excluded from analysis (n = 12). Participants that completed at least week one (control phase) and week two (first week of treatment phase) of the study had their observations retained for analysis (n = 163).

**Procedure**

**Pre-test for messages used during intervention**

Informative physical activity messages were sought for the field experiment. Information was found from research on outcomes expectancies of physical activity amongst those 18 to 24 years old (Forbes, Robertson, & Lawson, 2010), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Unites States Government Department), the WHO, Sport and Recreation NZ, and research focusing on physical activity (Haskell, et al., 2007). This varied information was translated into informative framed text language by two university stu-
Examples of text messages:
1. Overall fitness cn b imprvd by conductin 150mins of physical activity a wk
2. Moderate-intensity aerobic activity accelr8s heart r8 & cn go 2ward ‘30mins a day’

Selection of names used during intervention
To ensure that participants’ perceptions of one name did not influence the variable representing the SG of the sender, two names of each gender were used. The two male and two female names chosen for the study were not gender ambiguous (e.g., Stacey; Mehrabian, 2001) to avoid confusing the gender of the sender for the participant.

Longitudinal experiment
Participants were emailed by a laboratory assistant that they were going to receive all text messages from their assigned researcher. The researcher was named Kate, Ben, Susan or John for the duration of the study. The study consisted of three stages. Stage one required participants to complete an online survey for their demographic information (gender and age), exercise motivation and stage of change toward physical activity. Within stages two and three, participants completed web-based physical activity surveys for the previous seven days. Stage two of the study was the one week control phase and participants did not receive any informative text messages about physical activity. The third stage of the study was the three week treatment phase and all participants received informative daily text messages (at a fixed time) from their named researcher. Participants also named their assigned researcher each week of the treatment phase within the surveys to control for participants not recalling who was sending them the messages. Finally, during the treatment phase, participants were to record weekly within the surveys whether they read all messages sent to them daily that week whilst being informed that this would not influence their chances within the prize draw.

MEASURES

International Physical Activity Questionnaire
The short format International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) is a cardio-respiratory fitness measure which requires participants to self-report the intensity (vigorous, moderate and walking), duration (minutes) and frequency (minimum of 10 minutes per day) of physical activity (Merom, Phongsavan, Chey, & Bauman, 2006). The test retest reliability of the short format IPAQ is 0.76 (Craig, et al., 2003). For the current study, the IPAQ was modified from acquiring weekly self-reported physical activity intensity and duration to instead acquire daily physical activity intensity and duration. No questions were asked concerning total days active in an attempt to overcome any difficulty respondents may have had in calculating days active (Craig, et al., 2003; Hallal, et al., 2010).

Stage of Change toward physical activity
The stage of change algorithm represents temporal, behavioural and intentional processes toward PA. The five-item algorithm developed by Marcus, Selby, Niura and Rossi (1992) to assess the SOC toward PA has been found valid (Lee, Nigg, DiClemente, & Courneya, 2001) and reliable with a test-retest reliability of 0.78 (Marcus, et al., 1992). In an attempt not to bias the report of SOC given the differences in WHO PA criteria, no definition of regular PA was offered. For analysis, pre-contemplation and contemplation were collapsed into one cell to avoid cell sizes being less than five (Cochran, 1954) across classifications.

Exercise Motivation Scale
Based on the need to understand whether any differences are present between participants in the different SG groups for motivation, the eight subscale Exercise Motivation Scale (EMS; Li, 1999) was used. The EMS measures extrinsic, introjected, identified and integrated regulation as well as intrinsic motivation, which is subdivided into three types (to accomplish things, to experience sensations and to learn) because it is believed intrinsic motivation is multi-dimensional (Vallerand & Losier, 1999). Cronbach alphas for the eight subscales ranged between 0.71 and 0.85 (Li, 1999), which meets the internal consistency acceptable threshold (Cortina, 1993).

VARIABLES CREATED

Source Gender
Participants receiving messages from either Kate or Susan were classified as receiving messages from a female source (0). Participants receiving messages from either Ben or John were classified as receiving messages from a male source (1).

Total ‘2010 WHO days’
A participant would complete a ‘2010 WHO day’ by meeting a threshold of 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity and/or 20 minutes of vigorous intensity physical activity each day (i.e., duration recommended on days active by the WHO) within each of the IPAQ based surveys. Total ‘2010 WHO days’ were then tallied each week of the study and used to represent participants’ physical activity levels.

Increased ‘2010 WHO days’
A variable was generated to indicate whether a participant increased (‘1’) their total ‘2010 WHO days’ or not (‘0’) in comparison to the control phase total ‘2010 WHO days’.

Meeting a minimum of 150 total physical activity minutes per week
Daily self-reported physical activity inputs per intensity (moderate or vigorous) less than 10 minutes were excluded from analysis (International Physical Activity Questionnaire, 2005). Next, vigorous intensity inputs were multiplied by two and moderate intensity physical activity minutes were unaltered to align with previous research (Armstrong, Bauman, & Davies, 2000; Craig, et al., 2003). Total physical activity minutes were generated by adding total vigorous intensity inputs with total moderate intensity inputs each week. Those meeting or exceeding 150 total physical activity minutes were classified as having met this criteria.
Meeting the 2010 WHO physical activity recommendations

The WHO physical activity recommendations prior to 2011 require either 20 minutes of vigorous intensity physical activity three or more days a week or 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity five or more days a week. Observations meeting these recommendations were recognized as having done so. Other combinations of ‘2010 [intensity] WHO days’, for example, two days of (a minimum of) 20 minute vigorous intensity physical activity and two days of (a minimum of) 30 minute moderate intensity physical activity (Haskell, et al., 2007), were also classified as meeting the 2010 WHO physical activity recommendations.

RESULTS

For the examination of the research question, the sample used included 163 participants. The sample used had completed, at a minimum, week one (control phase) and week two (week one of the treatment phase) of the study. Of the sample, 76.7% were female and closer inspection showed that 11.7% of the sample (n = 19) were sedentary (completed zero ‘2010 WHO days’). Table 1 outlines the characteristics of the sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N = 163</th>
<th>Female source (n = 78)</th>
<th>Male source (n = 85)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender (% female)</td>
<td>75.6% (n = 59)</td>
<td>77.6% (n = 66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>NZ European</td>
<td>62.8% (n = 49)</td>
<td>64.7% (n = 55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>11.5% (n = 9)</td>
<td>8.2% (n = 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British/ European</td>
<td>5.1% (n = 4)</td>
<td>5.9% (n = 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>20.5% (n = 18)</td>
<td>20.7% (n = 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage of change toward physical activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precontemplation/ Contemplation</td>
<td>29.5% (n = 23)</td>
<td>36.5% (n = 31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>10.3% (n = 8)</td>
<td>15.3% (n = 13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>51.3% (n = 40)</td>
<td>35.3% (n = 30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>9.0% (n = 7)</td>
<td>12.9% (n = 11)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical activity levels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Met no physical activity recommendations</td>
<td>34.6% (n = 27)</td>
<td>20.0% (n = 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met a minimum of 150 total physical activity minutes</td>
<td>30.8% (n = 24)</td>
<td>27.1% (n = 23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met WHO 2010 physical activity recommendations</td>
<td>34.6% (n = 27)</td>
<td>52.9% (n = 45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amotivation</td>
<td>1.85 (± .94)</td>
<td>1.74 (± 1.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External regulation</td>
<td>2.39 (± .98)</td>
<td>2.37 (± 1.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introjected Regulation</td>
<td>3.44 (±1.10)</td>
<td>3.52 (±1.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified Regulation</td>
<td>4.81 (±.80)</td>
<td>4.93 (±0.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated regulation</td>
<td>3.96 (±1.06)</td>
<td>4.08 (±1.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic motivation to learn</td>
<td>3.56 (±1.03)</td>
<td>3.50 (±1.36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic motivation to accomplish things</td>
<td>4.14 (±1.05)</td>
<td>4.06 (±1.18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic motivation to experience sensations</td>
<td>4.46 (±1.13)</td>
<td>4.55 (±1.17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Manipulation check

No significant differences were present between participants in SG groups for gender of the participant (χ²(1) = 0.92, p = .762), ethnicity (χ²(3) = .525, p(fisher exact) = .924), stage of change toward physical activity (χ²(3) = 4.401, p = .221) or exercise motivation (F(8, 152) = .497, p = .857). Significant differences were found between the SG groups for control phase physical activity level classification (χ²(2) = 6.505, p = .036). Participants randomly assigned to the male source treatment were more likely to meet the 2010 WHO physical activity recommendations.
Research Question

An examination of whether participants randomly assigned to receive messages from a male or a female researcher were more likely to increase their physical activity levels was explored. Using the female researcher as the baseline for the analysis, it was revealed that a significant main effect for increasing total ‘2010 WHO days’ was present for SG. This main effect was present while controlling for the participant’s gender, control phase physical activity levels, exercise motivation and stage of change toward physical activity. Significant increases were present amongst those receiving messages from a male researcher (β = 0.693, p < .01) in comparison to participants receiving messages from a female source. Examination of the odds ratios revealed that during the treatment phase, those receiving messages from a male source were 2.0 times more likely to have increased their ‘2010 WHO days’ compared to those receiving messages from a female source.

Table 2: Parameter estimates of Source Gender during treatment phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Wald Chi-Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>-1.970</td>
<td>0.971</td>
<td>4.820</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>0.140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Source</td>
<td>0.693</td>
<td>0.200</td>
<td>11.753</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>1.999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Source</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Scale)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION

This exploratory study was the first to examine the influence of SG in a physical activity intervention on physical activity levels. More specifically, this was the first study to examine the influence SG had on a health-related behaviour over a period of time to reflect real world campaign efforts. This exploratory study was made possible through the use of a blind field experiment in which all participants were sent the same text messages with SG manipulated. With regards to the SG manipulation over time, a main effect was present between SG groups for physical activity levels across the treatment stage. Further analysis revealed that this main effect was based on significant increases in physical activity levels by participants that received messages from a male source. Therefore, these findings answered the research question which aimed to understand whether a main effect would be present between SGs for physical activity levels across the treatment stage. Accordingly, it may be speculated that SG influenced how the participants responded to the messages.

Finding significant increases in physical activity levels amongst those receiving messages from a male source compared to those receiving messages from a female source does not align with previous research. Both Dinoff and Kowalski (1999) and Dearborn et al. (2006) found a female source was more influential for their specific health-related behaviours (i.e., safe sex and fall prevention). Research by Whipple and McManamon (2002), George (2008) and Freiden (1984) could reveal a possible explanation as to why the current findings differed from those within previous health communication research. Whipple and McManamon (2002) suggested that if a product was gender specific, that specific gender should be used to generate better attitudes toward the product. The health behaviour both Dinoff and Kowalski (1999) and Dearborn et al. (2006) investigated could be presumed as being more ‘care’ orientated given that they found a female as more influential. For example, the fall prevention research by Dearborn et al. (2006) may be directed toward women since they are more prone to osteoporosis and consequently, a female may be viewed as more appropriate. Research completed by George (2008) may reveal why disseminating physical activity information may have been better suited to a male source based on the finding that male personal trainers were perceived as professional and legitimate. Similarly, Freiden (1984) found male endorsers were perceived as more informative compared to a female endorser when assessing numerous products. This research may supply possible explanations as to why differences between SG groups were present in physical activity levels and why the current findings did not align with previous health SG research. Further research is necessary to understand whether these explanations are indeed applicable.

Balance theory by Heider (1958) may also reveal further insight as to why participants assigned to a male source had significantly higher physical activity levels in the short term compared to a female source. Potentially, a pre-existing perception may have been stimulated by the male sources’ name (i.e. John or Ben). The male source may then have been perceived more positively than the message. This imbalanced positive perception of the male source would become balanced by increasing the positive perception of the ‘other party’ (Heider, 1958) or in this case, the text messages containing physical activity information. The positive balance toward the message may then, in turn, have increased the likelihood of processing the message and vice versa (Amos, et al., 2008). Further research is needed to understand whether the behavioural measure reflected this potential cognitive imbalance toward a SG, and especially beyond one exposure.

This study was the first to undertake a field experiment using behavioural measures (representing trial) to examine whether SG influenced behaviour over time. During the study, SG of daily text messages and its influence was examined using weekly self-reported physical activity levels. No cognitive processing variables were used to examine processing of the messages sent to participants which is a limitation, but similar to Bauman et al. (2003), self-reported physical activity levels were used as an intervention effectiveness measures. The use of behavioural measures within this study highlighted the potential influence of SG within social marketing of health-related campaigns. Future research could couple this measure with a theoretical rationale such as protection motivation theory used by Dinoff and Kowalski (1999) to further examine the influence of SG within the context of physical activity. Alternatively, research by Amos et al. (2008) and Freiden (1984) investigated attributes that could have explained the perceptions of the spokesperson. Future research may also benefit from understanding the relation these attributes have to behaviour. In addition, future research should employ a larger sample that would permit the comparison between the male and female participants for a particular SG to determine whether same gender preferences exist. This research could further justify the need to understand and appropriately strategise a SG within a campaign to improve future campaign effectiveness.

This study was not without limitations. Instead of using a control group, this exploratory research used a control phase to examine differences between SG but the method of analysis used overcame this limitation. In addition, the use of a name instead of the audible and physical cues to delineate between genders within previous research (Dearborn, et al., 2006; Dinoff & Kowalski, 1999; Perse, et al., 1996) could have still been prone to pre-existing associations that may have influenced participants addressing the messages (Mehrabian, 2001). The names chosen for this study were intentionally not gender-ambiguous (e.g. Robin) and were expected to cue gendered perceptions (Mehrabian, 2001). Efforts were also put in place to mi-
nimise the potential influence of any pre-existing name associations (i.e., people with the same names) by having two names within each gender group. Future research could pre-test perceived masculinity and femininity of gender specific names to be used in the experiment. Also, within the current study, no follow up was used since the aim was to examine short term physical activity levels changes between SGs groups. Without the follow up, it remains unknown whether the increases amongst participants receiving messages from a male source were to continue. To benefit future knowledge regarding SG, the inclusion of a follow up could reveal whether SG was influential on physical activity in the long term. Finally, this study examined the influence of SG on behaviour change compared to baseline physical activity levels. One week was used as the control phase or baseline for comparison and the consistency of physical activity levels is no clear. Future research could examine individuals for a period of a month to determine whether they are consistently active or not to minimise the chance of classifying a one off change in PA.

CONCLUSION

This exploratory study found that SG of health information does matter. Those receiving messages from a male source within the text messaged physical activity intervention benefited from this manipulation and positively changed their physical activity levels. Specifically, those in the sample that were exposed to a male source of physical activity information significantly increased their physical activity levels in comparison to those receiving messages from a female source. Findings have therefore, stressed that SG should be considered when strategizing social marketing campaigns to change health-related behaviours.

Text messages were the chosen intervention information channel within this study. Source gender of the text messaged physical activity information was demonstrated as having a significant influence over the course of the intervention. The implications of this study are that the text message physical activity intervention can influence behaviour change amongst a university student sample. Additionally, the text message intervention used amongst this sample is ready for use amongst University of Otago students. Once this intervention is launched, it is advised that a male source should be used. While this study’s findings may not be extended to different health-related behaviours and demographic groups, findings suggest that the SG should be considered with great care.

This study suggested the presence of existing gender perceptions toward health information beyond interpersonal communication and emphasises the need for further research. What has been learned of SG thus far has served advertising of commercial products, but it is time that social marketing campaigns surrounding health-related behaviours also address the potential influence this variable could have. This study extended previous research by the inclusion of behavioural measures and examining SG over time which is necessary given the reality of social marketing campaigns. Based upon the study’s findings, social marketers should consider SG more thoroughly, especially with regards to the gender perception of the behaviour. Source gender of health information matters.

REFERENCES


Family represents the most immediate layer of an extended self, after the individual; it is also the site of the greatest amount of interpersonal sharing (Belk 2009). Nevertheless, little research in marketing seeks to understand sharing practices within families (Epp and Price 2008). Moreover, studies on sharing practices to date focus primarily on singular nations, sampling individual consumers from specific national cultures—including the United States (Belk and Llamas 2011), New Zealand (Ozanne and Ozanne 2011), France (Gentina, Decoopman, and Ruvio 2012), and England (Tinson and Nuttall 2007)—rather than making cross-national comparisons. This single-nation focus has left issues regarding the impact of national culture on sharing practices largely unaddressed. This study therefore compares sharing practices within the family across two national cultures: Japan and France. Japan is a collectivistic, interdependent country; France is an individualistic, self-oriented society (Hofstede 2001). In accordance with these differences, we examine how two forms of socialization—parental susceptibility to children’s influence and parental perceived control—help clarify different forms of exchanges in both nations. Because adolescent daughters are likely the most immediate version of their mothers’ extended selves (Sakashita and Kimura 2011), we focus on the specific dyadic unit of mothers and their adolescent daughters. In particular, we address the influence of adolescent daughters on their mothers’ sharing behavior, by adopting the mothers’ point of view. Such sharing behavior is particularly relevant to adolescent daughters and their mothers in a clothing context, as we study here, because a girl’s entry into adolescence is a significant event for her mother. This transition likely accentuates mothers’ perceptions of their own physical and social changes. As ideal images of femininity and youthfulness, adolescent daughters may help their mothers modify their perceived appearance and clothing consumption (Gentina, Decoopman, and Ruvio 2012).

Our interpretive study relies on visual stimuli and in-depth interviews with 32 mother–adolescent daughter dyads (16 from an urban area in Japan, 16 from an urban region in France). The sample profile showed equivalence in mothers’ jobs and adolescent daughters’ ages across cultures. Back translation of the interview guide ensured idiomatic equivalence between the French and Japanese versions. Visual stimuli (three pictures of mother–daughter dyads with varying degrees of similarity) reinforced the approximately 90-minute, in-depth interview discussions. The data collection mostly took place in the homes of informants, to gain an appreciation of the respondents’ personal living spaces. The transcript of each interview was analyzed to find thematic categories, following an emic and bracketing approach (Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989).

The data reveal distinct cultural differences in the motives that drive mothers to share clothes with their daughters. First, the different forms of mothers’ social influence on their daughters vary across cultures and reflect differences in the relative importance of conforming to social norms. French mothers, who give priority to their personal goals, are more motivated by their own clothing preferences and seek informational influences from daughters. This informational influence is based on the process of internalization, such that mothers do not simply accept recommendations but modify them to suit their needs (Kelman 1961). In this sense, adolescent daughters offer fashion expertise to their mothers, which has varying relevance to the situation. French mothers share clothes with their daughters as means to socialize and initiate themselves into the world of fashion. In contrast, Japanese mothers, who give priority to collective goals, feel pressured to conform with societal expectations of pleasing their family members with an attractive appearance (Luther 2009). They are thus sensitive to the opinions of their daughters, and they seek their daughters’ normative influences. Furthermore, Japanese mothers work to maintain their mothering role by developing caring relationships with their children. The adjustment between their desires for social identification and performing motherhood roles may explain why Japanese mothers do not engage in clothes sharing practices. These differences correspond to the individualism–collectivism distinction. France is an individualistic nation, with an independent conceptions of the self and particular emphases on self-reliance. Japan emphasizes respect for norms and duties imposed by the collective and a preoccupation with the opinions of others (Hall and Hall 1990; Triandis 1995).

Second, comparisons of individualistic cultures and their low power distance against strongly collectivist cultures, with their high power distance, show that societies, as well as parents, differ in the degree to which they control their adolescents’ behaviors (Rose 1999). French mothers pride themselves on their equalitarian relationships and put a premium on individuation. The experience of clothes sharing offers a link, connecting mothers with their daughters, and thus a vehicle for mothers and daughters to share a part of their lives. Japanese mothers, in contrast, emphasize authority, rules, and obedience and still consider their daughters little girls. Because these mothers deliberately work to maintain their authoritative position, they refuse to share clothes; they prefer giving or lending clothes but do not borrow. These results imply a gradational continuum of clothing exchange, including sharing, loans, and gifts, each with different rules (e.g., time periods, prior permission, spaces), that depends on national cultures.

Our discussion also provides insights into the question of possessiveness in collectivist and individualistic cultures. Prior research argues that sharing practices are more intense in collectivist cultures (Japan), which value social links and consideration of others, than in individualistic countries, which emphasize individual assertiveness (France) (Ger and Belk, 1990). Our findings propose a different view, in which Japanese mothers are deeply connected to their personal possessions and avoid sharing clothes to maintain control over their daughters. In contrast, French mothers engage in clothes sharing as a means of coping with existential, distant links. Their purpose is not merely to have but rather to share. With this finding, we contribute...
to an emerging stream of research that highlights the importance of national culture for defining sharing practices in families.

REFERENCES


The Relationship Between Overconfidence and Underconfidence and Consumer Value
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Radu Dimitriu, Cranfield School of Management, UK

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumers’ subjective assessment of their knowledge (i.e., knowledge confidence) often does not match their actual knowledge (Alba and Hutchinson 2000). This phenomenon is called knowledge miscalibration. Although previous research investigated the effect of knowledge miscalibration on purchasing decisions (e.g., Alba and Hutchinson 2000; Burson 2007; Kidwell et al. 2008), its role in the usage stage of consumption is little understood. Consumer value as “an interactive, relativistic preference experience” (Holbrook 1996, 138) reflects consumers’ evaluation of usage. Our aim is to investigate how knowledge miscalibration relates to the dimensions of consumer value.

We focused on the four self-oriented dimensions of consumer value in Holbrook’s (1994) framework including efficiency, excellence, play and aesthetics. Efficiency occurs when an experience is actively used as a means to a self-orientated end. This is usually measured by comparing the output and input of experience such as economic worth of a product/service or time it takes to consumer that product. Excellence is the capacity of an experience to function well as a means-to-an-end, which might not necessarily be used in the consumption. This type of value is referred to as quality in many practical and academic references. Play leads to having fun in a self-orientated experience. Feelings of enjoyment and entertainment usually reflect the perception of play in a product or service consumption. Aesthetics refers to the reactive, self-orientated appreciation of an experience. Responses to beauty and art are categorised as aesthetics responses (Holbrook, 1996).

As a contribution, we propose that the relationship between knowledge miscalibration and consumer value is different for overconfidence and underconfidence, as each of these two dimensions of knowledge miscalibration stimulate different behavioural mechanisms.

Efficiency value is concerned with the ratio of outputs to inputs (Holbrook 1996). Outputs are evaluated based on consumption task performance and inputs are consumer resources such as knowledge and money. Underconfident consumers have a lower perception of knowledge than their actual knowledge. Therefore, they underestimate the input to the consumption task and, consequently, have a higher perception of efficiency (H1). No hypothesis is forwarded for overconfident consumers, for whom the overestimation of their own knowledge as task input is likely to be counterbalanced by a higher performance due to the motivational effect of overconfidence (Alba and Hutchinson 2000).

The overestimation of consumer knowledge results in an abbreviated information search process about the product or service (Alba and Hutchinson 1987). Therefore, overconfident consumers have less detailed product or service information and, consequently, lower level of standard reference for evaluating a product or service excellence. We conclude that overconfidence is positively related to the perceived excellence (H2).

Overconfident consumers perform consumption tasks with a lower amount of knowledge than they think they have. Therefore, they need to be more attentive and engaged in the consumption tasks to recover this lack of knowledge. This engagement and attention focus increases the flow mental state (Hoffman and Novak 2009). Moreover, Mathwick and Rigdon (2004) show that, in a flow state of mind, people have a higher perception of play. On the aggregate these findings suggest that, overconfidence is positively related to perceived play (H3).

Underconfident consumers have knowledge about a product or service, but they are unaware of it (Alba and Hutchinson 2000). Moreover, cognitive algorithms that people are not aware of shape their aesthetic responses (Lewicki 1986). We conclude that underconfidence is positively related to perceived aesthetics (H4).

In order to document the impact of knowledge miscalibration on usage through consumer value, we also hypothesise relationships between consumer value, and satisfaction and post-usage intention. The relationship between consumer value (both utilitarian and hedonic) and satisfaction has been documented in the previous research (e.g., Carpenter 2008; Jones et al. 2006). We hypothesise that all dimensions of consumer value are positively related to satisfaction (H5, H6, H7 and H8). Moreover, satisfaction leads to post-usage intention (H9).

Based on the hypothesised relationships, we developed two hypothetical models for underconfident and overconfident consumers (Figures 1).

We conducted a survey in the context of Amazon online shopping. 184 postgraduate students took part in the survey, with 167 completing it. The survey took around ten minutes and included measures of consumer value, satisfaction, post-usage intention, consumers’ actual knowledge of shopping on Amazon and their knowledge confidence.

We measured the dimensions of consumer value with a scale developed by Mathwick et al. (2001) for online shopping experience. Satisfaction was measured by two items adapted from Oliver (1997) and post-usage intention by two items developed by Yi and Gong (2008). In order to measure consumer knowledge of Amazon, we developed and validated an index consisting of 15 true/false items. Respondents also rated the confidence in their answers on 0%-100% percentage scales, and we calculated knowledge confidence score by summing all these confidence ratings. Finally, we calculated knowledge miscalibration by subtracting the consumer knowledge score from the knowledge confidence score (as per Alba and Hutchinson 2000). Consumers with knowledge miscalibration scores greater than zero are overconfident and those with knowledge miscalibration scores lower than zero are underconfident. This method for calculating knowledge miscalibration, the subjective probability paradigm, is most commonly used in psychology and consumer behaviour literature, and provides an opportunity to study underconfidence and overconfidence (Alba and Hutchinson 2000).

We tested the hypotheses through structural equation modelling. For overconfident consumers, the model fits the data well (CMIN = 238.7, DF = 172, p = .00; CFI = .943; RMSEA = .067). Aesthetics and excellence are not significantly related to satisfaction, so we fail to corroborate H6 and H8. All other hypotheses are supported (p < .05) (Table 1). Surprisingly, perceived play has a significant negative relationship with satisfaction.

For underconfident consumers, the model also fits the data well (CMIN = 236.3, DF = 174, p = .00; CFI = .941; RMSEA = .067). Similar to the model for overconfident consumers, except for H6 and H8, all other hypotheses are supported (p < .05) (Table 2).

Our findings suggest that knowledge miscalibration has a relationship with different dimensions of consumer value (H1, H2, H3 and H4). Moreover, we document that knowledge miscalibration im-
pacts consumer value dimensions differently depending on consumers being either overconfident or underconfident. Whereas previous research documents the importance of knowledge (mis)calibration in purchasing decisions, our study sheds light on how knowledge miscalibration has a role in the actual usage.

Interestingly, perceived play had a negative relationship with satisfaction, which is in contrast with the hypothesized relationship. Lien, Kao, and Hsai (2008) suggest that, for utilitarian services like Amazon, consumers are more concerned with outcomes than processes. This fact suggests that perceived play reflecting engagement in consumption might have a negative impact on the general evaluation of outcomes, leading to a lower satisfaction.

REFERENCES


Ironic Effects of Warnings
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

High profile ads promoting alluring benefits, such as pain relief or renewed sexual potency, often prominently and clearly warn of grave potential side effects (e.g., a stroke or cancer). Such warnings are presumably mandated by legislators or intended to preempt regulatory interventions. Disclosing potential risks associated with a product is expected to facilitate safer consumer choices, hurting attitudes toward the product. However, there are indications that warnings may not necessarily be effective.

Warnings can have positive associations, as including negative information in a message can enhance perceived truthfulness. We propose that warning effects may be better understood by taking into account time delays that often separate behavior from exposure to the communication about it. We draw on construal level theory (CLT), whereby events and objects can be represented at different levels of construal. In the context of warnings, negative side-effects, which are secondary to the promised benefits, thus constitute lower-level construal of the warning; however, source trustworthiness, a general characteristic relating to the promised benefits, constitutes a higher-level construal of the warning. Temporal distance should therefore make side-effects less prominent and promised benefits and source trustworthiness more prominent.

Building on this reasoning we predict that from a proximal time perspective, presence of a warning should produce a standard warning effect, reducing interest in the behavior. In contrast, a message could benefit from presence of a warning from a distal time perspective, both retrospectively (e.g., seeing the message earlier) and prospectively (e.g., receiving the product later). We term this phenomenon ironic effect of warnings and test it in four studies.

In study 1, participants saw an ad for cigarettes with or without a severe warning. All were offered an opportunity to make an immediate purchase decision. Half were told that they will receive the product in the near future and the rest were told they will get the products in the distant future. As expected, in the presence (absence) of warning participants in the distant future condition bought more (less) packages than those under the near future condition.

Study 2 extended our findings to immediate and delayed judgements and to a different context. Participants saw an ad for artificial sweetener with or without a severe warning and were offered to buy the product either immediately or 2 weeks after seeing the ad. As expected, in the presence (absence) of a warning, participants in the delayed decision bought more (less) packages than those under the immediate condition.

In study 3, participants saw an ad for a hair loss medication product with or without a severe warning, and were asked for immediate or for delayed judgment. As predicted, we found that in the presence (absence) of a warning, participants evaluated the product more (less) highly in delayed versus in immediate judgments. Moreover, in the presence of the warning, the ad was perceived as more trustworthy over time. However, without a warning, perceived ad trustworthiness was no different over time. Moderated mediation analyses revealed that, as predicted, ad-trustworthiness mediated the temporal effect under presence-of-warning but not under absence-of-warning.

Study 4 demonstrated the dual meaning of the warning. Its findings show that presence of a warning in an ad for ED medication leads to greater concerns under lower construal levels, but increases perceived trustworthiness of the company and the product perceived attractiveness under higher construal levels.

In addition, because using information encountered days earlier relies on long-term memory in addition to mental representation, readers may wonder what role memory played in our results. Memory research reinforces the CLT prediction—delayed recall entails more schematic information and meta-cognitive knowledge—associated with higher-level construal. Further supporting this point, in follow-up studies we explored recall of the ads used in studies 2 and 4 and found converging evidence that both prospectively and retrospectively participants recalled the information at higher level in the remote condition than in the proximate one.

In conclusion, we consistently show that describing risks associated with products promising alluring benefits, can enhance subsequent appeal of these products. Such consequences of warnings can have important and disturbing public policy implications. For example, adding warnings of smoking risks to cigarette ads may promote rather than curtail smoking. Interestingly, this effect may go undetected, since warnings improve product assessment only sometime after the ad was first viewed (when consumption decisions are likely) yet hurt product appeal soon after the ad was viewed (when regulators are likely to examine ad impact).
Charitable Giving to Controllable Misfortunes: The Role of Deliberation and Victim Identifiability
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Sankar Sen, Baruch College, City University of New York
Stephen Gould, Baruch College, City University of New York

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Causal controllability is the degree to which an observer of another person’s misfortune perceives that misfortune to be the fault or responsibility of the person in need of help. When a person encounters another in need of help, that person spontaneously judges the causal controllability (Weiner 1985). When the need is caused by an uncontrollable circumstance (e.g., genetic illness), sympathy is elicited, and the perceiver is likely to help the victim; in contrast, when the need is caused by a controllable circumstance (e.g., drunkenness), anger and blame are evoked, and the perceiver is likely to withhold help giving (Weiner 1980). Based on this theory, a nonprofit organization’s request is more effective if it communicates uncontrollability of the need; that is, the victim’s plight is not caused by irresponsibility on the part of the victim. However, social causes that nonprofit organizations attempt to aid are not always uncontrollable. For example, causes having a mental-behavioral origin such as drug abuse and obesity are generally considered to be controllable, and accordingly it is difficult to solicit donations for those causes because they tend to elicit potential helpers’ anger and blame toward the victims (Weiner, Perry, and Magnusson 1988). How can we decrease blame toward the victim of the controllable misfortune and increase people’s willingness to help the victim? Drawing on the identifiable victim effect (Small and Loewenstein 2003) and the feeling-versus deliberation-based mode of processing (Hsee and Rottenstreich 2004), we propose that a charitable request that excludes the victim’s personal information and evokes a potential donor’s deliberation will increase donations when a cause is construed as controllable.

The identifiable victim effect refers to people’s greater helpfulness towards a personalized, single victim (i.e., the victim’s information such as a photo and name is available for perceivers), compared to an abstract, unidentified victim (Kogut and Ritov 2005; Small and Loewenstein 2003). Research has shown that a perceiver’s affective reaction, whether it is sympathy or anger, is stronger toward an identified victim than toward an unidentified victim (Small and Loewenstein 2005). Thus, in order to lessen a perceiver’s negative reaction toward the victim of a controllable misfortune, exclusion of the victim’s personal information will result in not only a less negative reaction, but also in an increased deliberation of the controllable misfortune. If a potential donor considers a misfortune within the context of a broader scope (Hsee and Rottenstreich 2004), that donor is likely to perceive the misfortune as stemming from a societal failure rather than from an individual failure (Piñt et al. 2010), and feel more sympathy toward the victim, leading to more help giving.

Hypothesis 1: People are more likely to donate to help an unidentified victim of a controllable misfortune than an identified victim of the same misfortune when people’s deliberation is high. Victim identifiability will not affect people’s donation decisions when their deliberation is low.

Hypothesis 2: Sympathy will mediate the effect of victim identifiability and deliberation on donations to a controllable misfortune.

Three experiments examined and supported our hypotheses. The objective of study 1 was to test hypothesis 1. Participants were 165 consumers in the U.S. who took an online survey (average age=38). The study employed a 2 (victim identifiability: high vs. low) x 2 (deliberation: high vs. low) between-subjects design. The dependent variable was an amount in dollars that participants indicated to donate. Participants read a donation request from a nonprofit organization that provides medical care and support for the victims of severe car accidents. The request manipulated the levels of causal controllability, victim identifiability, and deliberation. Specifically, we manipulated causal controllability by informing participants that the victim was driving under the influence of alcohol in the high controllability condition and that the victim was hit by another car driven by a drunk driver in the low controllability condition. In line with previous study (Kogut and Ritov 2005), we manipulated victim identifiability by providing the victim’s name, age, and photo in the donation request in the high victim identifiability condition and by excluding such information in the low victim identifiability condition. We manipulated deliberation by providing statistics of car accidents in the U.S. in the high deliberation condition and by excluding such information in the low deliberation condition (Small et al., 2007). After reading the request, participants indicated if they would be willing to donate, and if so how much. The 2-way ANOVA result revealed that the interaction effect on donation was significant both in the low controllability condition ($F(1, 80)=3.83, p < .05$) and in the high controllability condition ($F(1, 75)=4.58, p < .05$). Replicating the finding of Small et al. (2007), an identified victim increased donations to an uncontrollable misfortune when donors’ degree of deliberation is low (vs. high). Consistent with hypothesis 1, an unidentified victim increased donations to a controllable misfortune when donors’ degree of deliberation high (vs. low). Study 2 found the mediating role of sympathy in the effect of identifiability and deliberation on donations for a controllable misfortune and supported hypothesis 2. Study 3 used a different method of manipulating the degree of deliberation (Hsee and Rottenstreich 2004) and replicated the effects found in studies 1 and 2.

This research makes several theoretical and practical contributions. First, this is the first study that examines the identifiable victim effect from the perspective of the different levels of causal controllability of a misfortune. By doing so, we show that the conventional belief in the identifiable victim effect is only true when people perceive the misfortune to be uncontrollable. Second, this research identifies a condition in which deliberation increases philanthropic impulses. Third, this paper contributes on a practical level to nonprofit organizations that support controllable misfortunes by suggesting communication methods that reduce the negative evaluations from the perception of high controllability without losing the opportunity to communicate preventability of the misfortune.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Our phenomenological exploration of the self contributes to understanding the relational, social aspects of the self, and the mundane "consumption-relevant phenomena about which we have little understanding in terms of "why", "when", and "how" in spite of being generally aware of their existence" (Park, 2009, p.570). The present research builds on previous findings that women’s social construction of the self can be explored via their use of cosmetics (e.g. Bloch & Richins, 2006; Darden & Worden, 1994; Franzoi, 2001; Liu, Keeling, & Hogg, 2012; Solomon, 1983; Thompson & Haytko, 1997). Thereby cosmetics are utilized as an informative context to deepen our understanding of the symbolic, intimate relationship between its application and changes in women’s sense of self over time; and the liberating and restraining facets women encounter in their daily lives in a given culture. Following some pioneering feminists’ footsteps to revisit fashion and beauty (e.g. Peiss, 2010; Scott, 2006), this research seeks at the same time to challenge the ongoing prevailing social stigma of how beauty and artifice contribute to the sexual objectification of women promoted by visual media (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997); through exploring the personal meanings embedded in the taken-for-granted daily cosmetics consumption phenomena nurtured and constructed in response to the "co-occurring working models of the self and other in relationship contexts" (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012, p.180). Cosmetics consumption in this study refers to short-lasting objects or substances used to manipulate physical appearance, and is equivalent to the use of makeup. The short-lasting nature of cosmetics further enables us to explore the fleeting nature of some human consumption experiences (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

Unstructured phenomenological interviews were conducted with thirty-one women, aged between 19 and 62, to allow expression of individuals’ feelings, perceptions and experiences of cosmetics consumption. Each interview ranged in length between one and two hours and began by asking, “when you think about a cosmetics brand, what comes to your mind?” The opening question was used to initiate a dialogue on an understandable domain, however, the opening question exerted little influence on the overall course of the dialogue (Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1990). All other questions emerged spontaneously from the informants’ narratives, therefore, ensuring restricted influence from the interviewer and allowing informants to make sense of their experiences at their own pace. To ensure both a level of comfort and confidentiality, all informants were told prior to the interview that anonymity would be guaranteed, no judgment would be passed on any of the descriptions given and they could terminate the interview if at any point they did not feel comfortable. To capture their immediate, direct experiences as lived they were merely informed upon their recruitment that the purpose of the study was to examine their experiences on the topic of cosmetics consumption. A hermeneutically grounded interpretative framework was adopted to explore the deeply embedded personal meanings arising from the habitual relationships informants develop with daily applications of makeup (Bleicher, 1980; Thompson, 1997). The hermeneutic circle was thus used as a method in our study to move back and forth between the parts and the whole (evolving understanding of the phenomena as a whole) and between the particular and the shared aspects of the consumer descriptions (Bontekoe, 1996; Heidegger, 1960). This dialectical, circular interpretative relationship enables a more thorough analysis of each individual case and a broader understanding of consumer ‘intentionality’ (Holt, 1997; Schlemielmacher, 1998; Thompson et al., 1990).

Our findings suggest that the self changes over time in the course of interpersonal life to satisfy existentially fulfilling experiences; and depending on different changes being sought, cosmetics are used, and varied strategically to (re)construct social reality, manipulate, reflect or protect manifold aspects of the self. These changes in the self not only impact on, but also reflect types of cosmetics consumption strategies adopted in our daily living in an attempt to create positive meanings for our being-in-the-world (Spinelli, 1989), responding to a wide range of socio-cultural and relational contexts across a variety of social spaces. Four shared experiential themes are noted to provide an elucidated sense of how the meanings embedded in cosmetics consumption emerged from individual everyday lived experiences, particularly in terms of the self in an ongoing interpersonal relationship: 1) Self-endorsement versus Self-protection; 2) Self-transformation versus Self-manipulation; 3) Self-disclosure versus Self-liberation; and 4) Self-aspiration versus Self-aversion. Each experiential theme represents what is going on in the external socialising world, and how that is translated into or reflected upon the ‘happenings’ in the self across relational contexts or vice versa. For example, 1) As I endorse myself externally by applying more make-up, I protect myself from being deemed as unworthy of connection and feeling hurt internally; 2) As I transform my looks externally by wearing more professional makeup, I manipulate myself internally into thinking I am able to stand up for myself in a business meeting; 3) As I disclose myself without any makeup externally, I feel truly loved and liberated internally; and 4) As I aspire to be a desired self externally, I avoid being an undesired, negative self internally. Resulting insights offer intriguing understandings of how consumption can potentially manipulate, protect, reflect or impact on both issues relating to changes in the self and dynamics in an ongoing self-other relationship. Moreover, they highlight the therapeutic and emancipating capacity of adornment for the portrayal of a multifaceted self, and provide potential themes for cosmetics advertising and brand segmentation targeting women in varying phases of ongoing interpersonal relationships, satisfying the need of cosmetics companies to develop narratives and brand stories around their products. On the whole, daily cosmetics consumption is the outward symptom or indicator of what is going on both externally (e.g. degrees of social bonds, conflicts, stable relationships) and internally (e.g. covering up insecurities, seeking for control or longing for a closer relationship). The mundane, everyday activities embedded in the majority of our everyday lives, e.g. putting on makeup when we go out, are performed to strategically manage the relational self as revealed via our empirical context of women’s consumption of cosmetics.

REFERENCES


Who Done It? A Study Of Responsible Consumers’ Evaluations Of A Malfuunctioning System
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
One of the features of the fourth wave of consumerism is the use of consumer power as a means to get changes in the marketplace (Gabriel and Lang, 1995). Authors have given this movement many names (Barnett et al, 2005) but today, “responsible consumption” (RC hereafter) is preferred as an umbrella term.

We define RC as “any practice of consumption in which explicitly registering commitment or obligation towards distant or absent others is an important dimension of the meaning of the activity to the actors involved” (Barnet et al, 2005: 29). This broad definition of RC does not limit the issues about which consumers may care or the actions they can perform.

Previous research presents RC as a reaction against the “system” or the “paradigm” but only mentions the symptoms (environmental degradation, social injustice, inequities) without analysing the roots of the problem (Kilbourne et al, 1997). From the aforementioned research we conclude that RC emerges as a reaction against something that is “fundamentally wrong” (Cherrier, 2007: 330) in contemporary societies; a malfunctioning of the “system”, in the structures, in their agents, or in the underpinning values.

Moreover, researchers have not examined whether responsible consumers have a shared belief of the reasons for this malfunctioning. If consumers do not share a common evaluation of the system, they may not undertake the same actions to promote change.

The inductive methodology Grounded Theory was used to examine this issue. We interviewed 30 self-defined responsible consumers that were representative of the Spanish responsible consumer segment (CECU, 2010).

Our main finding is that responsible consumers report doing different actions and pursuing different goals according to their beliefs about the reasons for the malfunctioning system. Moreover, these beliefs, goals, and actions are interrelated and reflect deeper views of the power that should be exercised on consumers’ side to change the system. The contribution of this paper is threefold.

First, a taxonomy of RC actions is proposed, based on two criteria: focus of action (mainstream vs. alternative) and type of action (buying vs. refrain from buying). The combination of these two axes yields four RC strategies: voice, exit, smart shopping and simplifying. The distinction between mainstream and alternative market is essentially a distinction between “reform” and “revolution”, concepts taken from the classifications of new social movements (Starr, 2000). We make use of this literature because RC has been considered a new social movement (Cherrier, 2005).

Second, we identify two superordinate goals for engaging in RC: political and moral. In the former case, consumers aim at changing economic, political, and social practices or structures (Barnett et al, 2005; Kozinets and Handelman, 2004; Micheletti et al, 2004). In the latter, the main consumer goal is to construct oneself as a virtuous person; we call this segment ‘moral selves’ (Allahari, 2000, in Dolan, 2005).

Third, we propose a taxonomy of consumers according to their beliefs about the reasons for the malfunctioning system. Inspired by culture theory we differentiate between fatalists, hierarchicals, egalitarians, and individualists (Seyfang, 2004). None of the interviewed consumers can be considered fatalist. In contrast, all the interviewees fit into the group called ‘egalitarians’, since they all state that the real problem is a materialistic culture, oriented towards extrinsic goals; therefore, all interviewees report the need for a cultural system change.

Therefore, we differentiate between “egalitarians-hierarchicals” and “egalitarians-individualists”. Hierarchicals believe that the ultimate cause lies in government and companies. If the State gains more power and multinationals lose it, the system will be transformed. Therefore, they use exit and voice strategies (boycotting brands; buying from white lists, cyber activism), and smart shopping actions (fair trade or organic buying) to help bring about the new system they want.

Individualists believe that the ultimate reason lies in humans’ need to accumulate, to possess. They criminalize business or governments little or nothing. Their actions are oriented towards drastic reductions of consumption, rejection of the symbols associated with the materialist society and other “alternative” consumers’ actions.

This distinction between egalitarians also draws on different conceptualization of power (we follow Barach and Barats, 1970; Lukes, 1974 and 1993; Ham and Hill, 1984, for this explanation). “Hierarchicals” believe that to amend the system, they should exercise power as defined in its first dimension (putting pressure on brands, through boycotts) and second dimension (by voicing their concerns via activism to introduce new issues on corporate agendas). In contrast, “individualists” exercise power as defined in the third dimension (“symbolic power”). By living austerely, they contribute to delegitimize the main actors of the current system: corporations and neoliberal institutions.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Circulating objects are material items that are continuously physically transferred around places and among members of a group. Several examples of circulating objects can be identified in contemporary societies, including library books, the iconic Olympic torch, travelling garden gnomes, rental cars, among others. Practices of circulation are routinized behaviors, based on shared understandings, responsible for object circulation (Hui 2012; Warde 2005).

Understanding practices of circulation is important for researchers, marketers, and policy makers to explain how the movement of objects generates symbolic value. In contrast to the functionally and economically defined use- and exchange-value, symbolic value is the subjective value derived from social and hedonic experiences (Bardhi, Eckhard, and Arnould 2012; Schau, Muñiz Jr, and Arnould 2009). Objects with symbolic value provide consumers with means to express their individual identity and to signal status within a group (McCranken 1988) (McCranken, 1988 #135). We know that symbolic value can be created through individual experiences (Richins 1994) and communal ones (Schau et al. 2009). The role of object circulation in creating symbolic value remains to be investigated.

Despite extensive literature on symbolic value (Bourdieu 1984; Douglas and Isherwood 1979; Holbrook 2005; Richins 1994; Sahlin 1976) and object circulation (Appadurai 1988; Bardhi et al. 2012; Epp and Price 2010), these two research streams have evolved in parallel, and little is known about how practices of circulation contribute to the symbolic value of circulating objects. Early studies in economic anthropology suggest that circulation and value are related in ways that significantly shape the social reality of groups (e.g., Malinowski 1929). Therefore, it is our goal to understand how practices of object circulation may shape the symbolic value of objects. To achieve that goal, we resort to an object-centered sociality perspective (Knorr-Cetina 1997; Suchman 2005). Proponents of this perspective claim that, given the ubiquity of disembedding mechanisms and space disembedding in contemporary society (Giddens 1990), objects have become increasingly relevant in mediating human relationships, to the point where some relationships depend on objects (Knorr-Cetina 2008). This perspective is useful because it focuses on explaining how objects have become sources of “the self, of relational intimacy, of shared subjectivity and of social integration,” (Knorr-Cetina 1997, 9) and such functions are related to those attributed to symbolic value (Baudrillard 1998).

Our methodology is informed by approaches developed within the sociology of globalization (Appadurai 1988; Lee and LiPuma 2002) and the “new mobilities paradigm” (Sheller and Urry 2006) which argue that to study the movement and circulation of objects, researchers should adopt techniques that are appropriate to capture the complexities of these movements and the practices involved in them. According to Larsen, Axhausen, and Urry (2006), researchers can use observation, interviews and other ethnographic methods to trace and capture the complex mobilities of objects. Following their advice, we collect and analyze a variety of qualitative data (online and offline participant observations, field notes, interviews, photographs, videos, and artifacts) on the mobilities of two selected circulating objects, which circulate through relationships that are not characterized by commercial exchange. The mobility paths of these two objects provide us with ideal contexts (Arnould, Price, and Moisio 2006) for studying the relationship between object circulation and value creation without overly emphasizing the role of exchange in understanding value (e.g., Graeber 2001). By comparing and contrasting the practices that support object movement in two different domains, and then comparing our findings with existing theories and explanations, we are able to develop an integrative view of the phenomenon. We interpret our qualitative data drawing on the object-centered sociality perspective (Knorr-Cetina 1997) described above.

We identify three categories of practices that promote object circulation. First, enabling practices (preparing, setting, storing) are routinized behaviors that support the circulation of the object among members of a group. Second, moving practices (passing on, playing, protecting) are routinized behaviors that directly enable the circulation of the object among members of a group. Third, connecting practices (sharing, reinforcing, recruiting) are routinized behaviors that facilitate sociality among group members involved in object circulation. The activities comprised in these practices are defined and illustrated with excerpts from our dataset in Table 1.

We found that object circulation practices are key to explaining how an object moves within a group of people. We demonstrate how, through repeated enactment, these practices contribute to symbolic value creation at the individual and collective level. Practices of circulation increase the symbolic value of the object to individuals by providing them with opportunities to express their member identities and increase their status within the group. Practices of circulation increase the symbolic value of the object at the group level through a process of totemization, whereby the circulating object becomes a symbol of the group.

Our contributions to the consumer research literature are three-fold. First, our research advances understanding of value creation (Holbrook 1999; Peñaloza and Venkatesh 2006; Vargo, Maglio, and Akaka 2008) by exploring the role of object circulation in shaping symbolic value. Second, by adopting an innovative approach that combines various methods to follow and trace the movement of objects, we offer an alternative for qualitative data collection in complex global consumption contexts. For example, following the object can offer a useful way to understand the value-adding features of consumer practices associated with the online diffusion of viral videos. Third, we demonstrate that the object-centered sociality offers a viable way to study diverse consumer relationships around an object. This approach can be useful to complement analyses of various marketing issues such as value creation in collectives (Schau et al. 2009), or the role of objects within networks (e.g. Epp and Price 2010). The practices of object circulation we identify here can be applied to studies of object valorization in different object-centered groups, for example the value of a shared computer in a household or the value of Skype among a group of friends.

REFERENCES


In our first two studies, we compared consumers’ reactions to restrictive versus control ads. In both studies, we used pretests to identify a sincere (Hallmark) and an exciting (Abercrombie & Fitch, AF) brand, and showed that (consistent with existing literature; Aaker, Fournier, and Brasel 1997) these brand personalities foster committed (for sincere) and uncommitted (for exciting) brand relationships. In study 1a, participants saw either a restrictive AF ad and a control Hallmark ad, or vice versa, embedded in a magazine. Control and restrictive ads were identical, save for the addition of a “Buy now!” message in the restrictive ads. We found a brand-relationship by ad interaction, such that participants liked the restrictive ad from a committed brand partner (Hallmark) less than the control ad from the same brand partner, and less than both kinds of ads from an uncommitted brand partner (AF). In study 1b, we added a measure of individual reactance (Hong and Faedda 1996). As predicted, our results replicated for high, but not low reactance individuals, suggesting that these findings are reactance driven.

In study 2, we examined threat perception as a mediator of consumers’ responses to restrictive ads; we also allowed participants to select brands, rather than using pre-tested brands. Participants identified a personal hygiene brand with which they had either a committed or uncommitted relationship, and then saw a restrictive “Buy now!” ad from that brand. We measured threat perception in a two-step process: first, we assessed consumers’ perceptions of the negative consequences (e.g. guilt) of not complying with their brand partners’ requests. We then measured consumers’ likelihood of complying with their brand partners’ requests. As expected, participants who identified committed brand partners perceived greater negative consequences of non-compliance, which predicted increased likelihood of compliance. Both mediators negatively predicted ad liking. Finally, negative consequences and compliance mediated the effects of relationship type on ad liking using a two-step serial mediation model, demonstrating the hypothesized role of threat perception.

In our final two studies, we investigated two variables that should reduce the negative impact of restrictive messages from committed brand partners. In study 3, we removed the relationship threat by allowing some participants to affirm their committed or uncommitted brand relationship prior to viewing a “buy now,” or a control ad. When consumers in committed (but not uncommitted) relationships affirmed their relationships, they no longer responded negatively to restrictive messages. In study 4, we used a restrictive message that was part of the relationship contract by contrasting ads with “buy now” and “buy from us” restrictions. Since consumers in committed relationships are already complying with loyalty restrictions (“buy from us”), they do not react negatively to such ads.

In sum, consumers respond negatively to restrictive messages from committed but not uncommitted brand partners due to differences in threat perception. The current work introduces relationship variables to reactance theory and clarifies when and why different restrictions from different relationship partners elicit negative responses to restrictive advertising.
REFERENCES


Digital Self and Parasocial Interaction on YouTube
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Nowadays, ordinary individuals are keen to consume social media like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, which are popular performance spaces to disclose one’s digital self (Lyons, 2012). Current studies further argue that people in digital environments may come to know more people parasocially than directly through interpersonal contact (Jin, 2010). With a spectacular growth, social media seem to usher in a quiet revolution in people’s media consumption. Consumption has been viewed as a self-construction, self-presentation, and social relationship to consumers and is also gaining attention in the consumer behavior field. Previous studies have shown that consumers create a sense of who they are through symbolism that is attached to the consumption choices and activities (Elliott & Percy, 2007). With the advent of new technology, YouTube is seen as a fantasy-driven space that gives consumers the freedom to express their views, create whatever or whoever they want, and establish parasocial interaction. In October 18, 2007, YouTube launched a Taiwanese site; since then, the number of consumers has been increasing along with accompanying changes in its consumers’ behaviors (Krehbiel, 2007). We argue that there may be a new tendency for amateur individuals who live in Taiwanese culture to digitally self-construct, self-present, and parasocially interact with others corresponding to certain forms that are likely to emerge from YouTube videos. Thus, this paper aims to understand how amateur individuals who live in Taiwanese culture explore digital self and parasocial interaction via YouTube videos.

Reviewing and drawing upon the literature on digital self and parasocial interaction theory, previous studies state that the art of self-presentation is both a manipulation of symbols and an embodied representation and experience to impart identity. Goffman (1959) suggests that the presentation of self is contextual; based on a specific setting. By contrast, YouTube allows consumers to digitally construct and present the self beyond a regional setting to the virtual world (Lange, 2007). Where liberation is purported to exist, YouTube gives consumers the freedom to express their views and create whatever or whoever they want (Castells, 2000). Various strategies may be adopted to digitally self-present. Moreover, current studies have also supported that when people in digital environments actively seek and present social personal information about each other, they construct impressions of each other and their relationships develop through parasocial interaction (Jin, 2010). We further argue that the ability to share videos with others offers a social component to YouTube that may contribute to parasocial interaction.

This research utilizes Netography to gather data (Hine, 2000, 2007). Three types of data are examined in this inquiry: amateur individual’s YouTube videos; face-to-face, semi-structure long in-depth interviews with YouTube amateur performers; and electronic exchanges with participants. Researchers’ judgment resulted in a set of 3,752 Taiwanese amateur performers’ videos from October 2007 to December 2010. Participants selection began with amateur individuals’ YouTube videos. In total, 11 female participants and 34 male participants with ages between 16 and 35 years old were involved in this study. Interviews were done between 2010 and early 2012, which lasted between one hour to three hours, and online resources were used. The methodology employed in this study was guided by the systematic approach to qualitative research by Strauss and Corbin (1998) in grounded theory. The interviews were coded, and themes were distilled. The hermeneutic endeavor represents an analytical technique emphasizing part-to-whole relationships. The text is analyzed and interpreted from the perspective of our literature review of dialectical digital self and parasocial interaction theory. By interacting with and observing participants across online and offline situations, we interpreted their digital self-presentation and parasocial interaction on YouTube videos more fully.

Our data highlight that YouTube is a consumer narrative where multiple digital selves are made comprehensible. Constructing digital selves on YouTube videos, consumption comes to play a central role. We also find that the construction of digital gender identity is an essential component of the self-completion project on YouTube. Previous studies claim that consumers in digital environments seen as fantasy-driven spaces (e.g., YouTube) where everything goes. However, our findings release that YouTube is in someway liberating, enabling men and women to freely construct or reconstruct multiple digital selves by lived and mediated experiences which involved symbolic meanings either from their cultural values or jumping out from traditional gender values to freely express emotions and parasocially interact with desired impressions (Elliott & Percy, 2007). Furthermore, our participants thoughtfully considered what performances of their multiple digital selves to disclose. Consistent with Moon (2000), the findings show that YouTube is inherently conducive to strategic self-presentation at a distance. The data support that the participants via YouTube videos are like traditional TV characters who can arouse viewers to parasocially make more friends and socialize with them (Kanazawa, 2002). Strong feelings of viewers repeatedly and parasocially interact with the participants would gain increased attributional confidence about their digital personality (Giles, 2002). The paper further categorizes the main four digital self-presentation strategies on YouTube videos, including: basking, mystification, self-promotion, and gender-switching. Prior studies claim that cyber theory about behavior on the website has tended to overly on specific fantasy on digital environments that separate online experiences from offline (real) lives (Turkle, 1996). For long-term observations and interviews, our data challenge that notions developed on YouTube do hold for adopting mystification strategy or combining mystification with gender-switching strategies. The results release that digital self-presentation success on YouTube videos is associated with important physical associations. These patterns suggest that both idealization and selective digital self-presentation are occurring when mystification strategy or strategies in combination is successfully adopted. When successfully adopted, self-images depend on the success of one’s digital self-presentation. When appearances or important parts of physical associations were shown, however, digital self-presentation was positively correlated with cultural gender values or stereotypes (Castells, 2000). These parasocial interactions are lived, challenging, and difficult on YouTube; operating through all digital social practices. The results suggest that YouTube is not a matter but a set of cultural values in terms of symbolic meanings in everyday life, which are vital for consumers to construct and present multiple digital selves and develop parasocial relationships with others everywhere.

REFERENCES:

The Influence of Looking Down Versus Up as a Learned Distance Cue on Level of Construal
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Assume that one store displays the brands of your choice set on a high shelf and another store displays the same brands on a low shelf. Would this difference in shelf height affect which brand you ultimately choose from one store to the next? Or, would your purchases from an on-line retail store be influenced by the height at which your computer monitor is placed? We argue that this is indeed the case. People generally must look down to attend to nearby objects but raise their gaze to view distant objects. This association between looking down (up) and proximity (distance) is exhibited in numerous things. For instance, when standing in an open field, you need to look down to see a dandelion growing near your feet, whereas describing a tree in the distance requires raising your gaze. Consequently, due to their frequent co-occurrence, looking up (down) and distance (proximity) may be strongly associated. In addition, according to construal level theory (CLT), nearby stimuli tend to be represented by lower-level, concrete concepts, whereas distant stimuli appear represented by higher-level, abstract concepts (Förster 2009; Trope and Liberman 2010).

According to embodied cognition theory (Barsalou, 1999) bodily movements like looking down and looking up may evoke those processing styles that normally accompany them; as such we propose that looking up leads to abstract-level thinking, whereas looking down leads to concrete-level thinking.

This proposition is based on the idea that vertical eye or head movements are used as valuable distance cues, in that looking down may cue that an object is near, whereas looking up may cue that an object is distant. Studies 1A and 1B demonstrate that looking down and looking up indeed have different distance associations. Specifically, using an interference paradigm study 1A shows that presenting panorama pictures in a higher position and presenting close-up pictures in a lower position leads people to categorize these pictures faster according to their distance than when panorama pictures are placed in a lower position or when close-up pictures are placed in a higher position. As such, we provide evidence for the idea that looking down (up) is consistently associated with proximity (distance). Study 1B shows that looking down (up) is not merely associated with proximity (distance), but that these bodily movements are also used as informative input in distance judgments. Specifically, study 1B shows that objects are imagined as being more distal (proximate) when looking up (down) while listening to and imagining a scene description.

To address our main proposition, study 2 registers the influence of looking up versus down on level of construal. Looking down indeed leads to more concrete-level processing compared to looking up. Moreover, as a multitude of movements (cf. eye, head, or back movements) may enable people to attend to lower versus higher placed information, this study distinguishes between these different movements and shows that they all affect level of construal in a similar manner, which in turn has an influence on product categorization. Specifically, looking down leads to lower levels of construal and narrower brand categorizations, in the sense that brands get categorized into a larger number of smaller categories.

Moreover, study 3 shows that the effect of looking down (up) on level of construal is moderated by the extent to which people associate looking down (up) with proximity (distance). Those with stronger distance associations exhibit a larger influence of looking down (up) on level of construal compared to those with weaker distance associations. Whereas the findings of study 3 already suggest that the effect of looking down versus up on level of construal can be traced back to differential distance associations, study 4 provides more direct evidence for this proposition by showing that the effect is mediated by spatial distance estimations. Specifically, participants estimated the distance to a cross taped on the wall in front of them. In the two conditions, the cross was equally distant, though in one condition it was taped in a low position (cf. 80 cm above floor-level, whereas in the other condition it was taped in a high position (250 cm above floor-level).

The final studies 5A and 5B demonstrate that the identification of a link between looking down (up) and proximity (distance) is relevant as we show that level of construal is not only linked to product categorization (cf. study 2), but also to preference-decision consistency. We show that looking down leads to more preference-consistent decision making compared to looking up and this effect is mediated by level of construal.

Taken together, our studies provide substantial evidence that consumer behavior differs markedly, depending on whether looking up or downward. The reported studies consistently indicate that looking down concretizes processing, whereas looking up abstracts it, due to two deeply ingrained associations: between looking down (up) and proximity (distance), and between proximity (distance) and a concrete (abstracts) processing style.

Concrete processing then affects consumers’ categorization process: They assign brands to more differentiated, less inclusive product categories. We also show that more concrete conceptualization has consequences for brand choices and preference stability. Preference stability and preference-decision correspondence increases for people looking down rather than up. Therefore, the choice of products placed on a lower shelf will differ from the choice of the same products that appear on a higher shelf.

Whereas prior research addressing vertical position effects has focused mainly on the differential levels of attention paid to objects in different vertical positions (Goodrich 2010) or the inferences consumers draw from the relative vertical placement of products (Chandon et al. 2009; Raghubir and Valenzuela 2006), our results shed a different light. By focusing on the placement of all products, either in low or high vertical positions, we reveal that lower positions can be advantageous, in that brand choices are more in line with brand preferences. This finding has considerable practical importance, especially for small retailers that offer a limited number of brands within each product category, usually concentrated at one shelf.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A great deal of research has investigated ways to increase profit margin (e.g., Young and Nestle 2002), but relatively little attention has been given to factors that affect velocity (purchase cycles). Thus, the primary goal of this research - attempting to identify which features of a consumption experience determine when consumers will desire to repeat that experience, and why. Of the two primary psychological factors that determine food intake, wanting (habituation) and liking (satiety) (Berridge 1996; Berridge and Robinson 2003), we hypothesize that satiation rather than habituation experienced at the end of a consumption episode determines when consumers desire to and do repeat that experience.

Experiment 1. The objective was to examine whether manipulating end satiety would affect observed delay until participants consume that food again. Satiety level was manipulated by varying portion size. Participants assigned to the small (large) portion size condition ate 1 (4) truffle(s). They rated liking after eating each truffle. Participants were then compensated with a coupon that entitled them to a free bag of truffles. A coupon code matched participants’ condition to observed delay. Participants who ate a small portion retrieved their free bag sooner than did participants who ate a large portion, t(41) = -3.66, p = .001. A mediation analysis revealed a mediating role of final liking.

Experiment 2. We examined whether the influence of end satiety on delayed consumption would influence how long people would want to delay future consumption. Participants in the small (large) portion size condition were given a plate with 5 (15) Nut Thins. After eating each Nut Thin, participants indicated how much they liked that flavor (satiation measure) and the extent to which they wanted to continue eating that flavor (habituation measure). Participants provided their e-mail so that a follow-up could be sent to them the next day. The next day, participants were told that completing the follow-up automatically entered them in a drawing to receive free boxes of Nut Thins. Participants were asked to indicate when they would like these boxes delivered if they won the lottery. Participants in the small portion size condition desired to receive their Nut Thins sooner than did participants in the large portion size condition, t(28) = 2.24, p = .03. A mediation analysis revealed a mediating role of decrease in liking but no mediating role of final liking.

Experiment 3. The objective was to gain insight into the underlying mechanism. Distracting participants while they are consuming disrupts the encoding of that meal into memory (Higgs and Woodward 2009). Thus, differences in remembered satiation that accompany various portion sizes can be prevented by using a cognitive load task. The method for experiment 3 was identical to experiment 2 except that participants were also placed under high or no cognitive load. Those assigned to the high cognitive load condition were asked to perform an arithmetic task while eating whereas those in the no load condition were not. There was a significant interaction between portion size and cognitive load, F(1,75) = 7.23, p < .01. Participants under no load in the small portion size condition reported that they wanted their free boxes delivered sooner than did participants under no load in the large portion size condition, F(1, 34) = 8.10, p < .01. No significant difference was observed for participants under high load, F(1, 41) = .843, p = .49. Decrease in liking was responsible for the results.

Experiment 4. This directly tested that the effect of larger portion sizes on desired delay is driven by consumers’ predisposition to recall the end rather than the initial moment of satiety during the initial consumption episode. The method was identical to that of experiment 2 with the exception of two guided recall conditions. In the end (beginning) recall condition, participants that completed the follow-up were directed to recall the last (first) cracker that they ate. There was a significant interaction between portion size and recall, F(2, 128) = 3.25, p = .04. In the control condition, participants in the small portion size condition reported a shorter desired delay than did those in the large portion size condition, t(128) = 2.65, p < .01. This finding was also observed for participants in the end recall condition, t(128) = 3.29, p < .01, but not for participants in the beginning recall condition, t(128) = .01, p = .99. Decrease in liking is responsible for differences in the control and end recall conditions, but not in the beginning recall conditions.

Experiment 5. This manipulated portions in a different way to test whether the relationship between end satiety and delayed consumption extended to a different operationalization of the independent variable. Participants took one sip of grape juice from a cup and rated their liking. Next, participants drank the entire cup and rated their liking. Then, they ate two saltine crackers and performed an arithmetic task. Participants in the no reset condition were asked to provide their e-mail for the follow-up survey. Participants in the reset condition were given one final sip of grape juice and rated the juice again before providing their e-mail. Participants in the end liking reset condition showed a significantly greater end liking than did participants in the no reset condition, t(59) = 2.10, p = .04. Participants in the end liking reset condition desired a shorter delay in their delivery of free juice than did participants in the no reset condition, t(55) = 2.14, p = .04. End liking determined desired delay between consumption episodes.

Together, these results suggest that satiety level at the end of a consumption episode influences the frequency with which a good is consumed. This effect is driven by a memory bias such that consumers spontaneously recall the end, and most satiated, point of their most recent consumption experience. The present research identifies an important factor that significantly influences the delay until consumers repeat consumption of goods in the domain of food, and suggests strategies than managers can implement to accelerate the repeated consumption of such goods.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Because nostalgia encourages self-referencing (Muehling and Sprott, 2004), nostalgia has been widely used to ‘cut through the clutter’ and serves as a highly effective and persuasive advertising tactic. Two major types of nostalgia have been identified in literature: personal and historical nostalgia (Hovlak and Havlena, 1991; Marchegiani and Phau, 2010; Muehling and Pascal, 2011; Stern, 1992). Personal nostalgia pertains to one’s own store of remembered events from a “personally experienced past” (e.g., attach nostalgia to experiences recalled from one’s own youth). Historical nostalgia reaches back historically so that it “engulfs the whole past” (Baker and Kennedy, 1994; Lowenthal, 1985), and combines ancient materials into invented traditions that serve the needs of the present (Hobsbawn, 1983). This research demonstrates that the choice between personal or historical nostalgia is influenced by two variables related to self-identity: product type (whether the product is used in public or in private) and consumer self-construal (whether a person sees him/herself as interdependent or independent).

A 3 (ad type: personal nostalgia vs. historical nostalgia vs. non-nostalgia) X 2 (product type: privately vs. publicly consumed) X 2 (self-construal: independent vs. interdependent self) between-subjects experiment was designed. The non-nostalgic ad condition served as a baseline to compare the effects of two nostalgic types. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the conditions above. Before the ad exposure, we manipulated participants’ self-construal through a priming task. Tea was selected as the test product category. Participants in the public-use condition read the following instruction: “please imagine that you are going to buy tea to share with relatives/friends coming to home. You enjoy making tea in the living room for together moments. Those guests will have opportunities to judge you.” Alternatively, participants in the private-use condition read: “please imagine that you are going buy tea to enjoy alone. You enjoy making tea at the bedroom for tranquil moments. No one will have opportunities to judge you.” We used verbal-visual pun in our experimental ads. Participants were presented with one ad selected from a pool of three. The visual images and ad copy were manipulated to create personal nostalgia, historical nostalgia, and non-nostalgia conditions. The ads were comparable in visual elements, illustration, length of ad copy, and placement of brand logo. Three hundred and five adults participated in the experiment. After successful manipulation checks, a series of analysis of variance were conducted to examine proposed hypotheses. The results indicate that focusing on the comparison between two types of nostalgia without considering other factors may be overly simplistic. Three observations are noteworthy. First, the effects of nostalgic type were contingent on an individual’s self-construal. This construct delineates the boundary conditions for the nostalgia on persuasion. Some nostalgic types work better on participants with interdependent self-construal. However, these differences did not emerge for participants with independent self-construal. This is consistent with Markus and Kitayama (1991) that interdependents are more likely to fluidly mutate across situations, whereas independents show more stable responses.

Second, an interaction between product type and nostalgic type on people with interdependent self-construal was observed. The results suggest that consumers with interdependent self-construal show a more positive attitude and higher purchase intentions in response to a historical nostalgia than a personal nostalgia when a product for public consumption is highlighted. Because individuals with high perceived interpersonal competence are more apt to harness nostalgia as a source of social connectedness by establishing proximity to close others (Wildschut et al., 2010), such orientations may lead people with interdependent self-construal to differ regarding what type of nostalgia to be used to promote a publicly-consumed versus a privately-consumer product. Reference group is an important source of user imagery and brand associations (Escalas and Bettman, 2005). A publicly-consumed product can serve a social purpose by reflecting social ties such as one’s family, community, and cultural groups. Researchers have long recognized the importance of goods in forming and symbolizing social relationships (e.g., Kamptner, 1991). One promising framework that researchers use to investigate the genesis of public meaning is social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). The public meanings of a product result from socialization and participation in shared activities (Richins, 1994). As symbols of heritage, historical nostalgia can add to and/or reinforce the way the consumer thinks about self from interpersonal perspectives.

Third, a personal nostalgia had an advantage when promoting privately-consumed products. Private meanings of a product are shaped by the private knowledge and experiences of the possessor with respect to the particular he or she owns (Richins, 1994). Autobiographical memory simulation is likened to personal memory (Brewer and Pani, 1983). Historical nostalgia does not share this response as this reaction by definition does not deal with autobiographical responses. The use of personal nostalgia is thus more effective than that of historical when promoting privately consumed products. The current investigation provides guidance for practitioners on how to frame the value of the product by choosing the right type of nostalgic type to be used to promote a publicly-consumed versus a privately-consumer product. Reference group is an important source of user imagery and brand associations (Escalas and Bettman, 2005). A publicly-consumed product can serve a social purpose by reflecting social ties such as one’s family, community, and cultural groups. Researchers have long recognized the importance of goods in forming and symbolizing social relationships (e.g., Kamptner, 1991). One promising framework that researchers use to investigate the genesis of public meaning is social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). The public meanings of a product result from socialization and participation in shared activities (Richins, 1994). As symbols of heritage, historical nostalgia can add to and/or reinforce the way the consumer thinks about self from interpersonal perspectives.

This research suggests that not all nostalgias are created equal, at least in terms of nostalgic type. When seeking the advantages that personal and historical nostalgia provide in obtaining and sustaining attention, advertisers should consider product type and individual differences in self-construal. Such knowledge is useful to advertisers who are interested in maximizing the impact of their advertising dollars.
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Moral Emotions and Self-regulation: An Investigation in the Case of Ethical Consumption
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Research on ethical consumption has neglected the importance that emotions can play in motivating responsible consumer choices (Devinney, Auger, and Ekhardt 2010; Gregory-Smith, Smith, and Winkhofer forthcoming). More broadly, existing investigations that have looked at how emotions influence self-regulation assume a direct link between emotions and behaviours (Agrawal and Duhachek 2010; Mishra and Mishra 2011; Mohr, Lichtenstein, and Janiszewski 2012). This approach does not acknowledge the role of emotions as feedback mechanisms that support moral development (Baumeister et al. 2007). In three studies we explore how feelings of guilt and pride affect efficacy beliefs and influence consumers’ intentions to behave ethically in the future. We investigate the impact of guilt and pride in the case of ethical consumption but our research has broader implications for other self-regulation contexts where emotions can motivate responsible decisions.

All three studies are online experiments conducted on Amazon Mechanical Turk (Horton et al. 2011; Mason and Suri 2012). In the first study 181 participants were randomly allocated to experimental conditions that manipulated either guilt or pride. The manipulation was developed on the basis of previous research (Louro, Pieters and Zeelenberg 2005; Soscia, 2007) and based on a scenario. Participants imagined purchasing an ethical (or unethical) brand of tea. Measures of guilt and pride are based on previous literature (Roseman 1991). Scales of efficacy beliefs measured both self-efficacy and collective efficacy (Bandura 2000). Self-efficacy items were adapted from previous work on ethical consumption (Berger and Corbin 1992; Ellen, Wiener, and Cobb-Walgren 1991). Collective efficacy measures were based on previous exploratory work conducted by the authors. We hypothesised that: 1) guilt and pride have a positive impact on consumers’ intentions to purchase sustainable alternatives in the future; 2) guilt and pride have a positive impact on consumers’ efficacy beliefs about sustainability; 3) the effect on efficacy beliefs partially mediates the impact of emotions on future behavioural intentions.

In order to test the research hypotheses, a structural model is estimated, using the partial least squares (PLS) algorithm (Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2011). The software SmartPLS 2.0 was used for the analysis (Ringle, Wende, and Will, 2005). A bootstrapping procedure with 5000 re-samples was used to test the significance of the model (Ringle et al. 2005; Hair et al. 2011).

Figure 1 below presents the measurement model and the path model estimated. Although the results broadly confirmed our hypotheses, we noticed anomalies in relation to the self-efficacy construct. We speculated that these problems are associated with the wording of two items used to measure this construct. Although these are based on previous research on efficacy in sustainable consumption (Berger and Corbin 1992), they seem to measure consumers’ feelings of helplessness rather than self-efficacy. In the second study we therefore use a different measure of self-efficacy.

The second study adopted a very similar design. Emotions were manipulated using scenarios that described a purchase of an ethical (or unethical) product, although the category is different (coffee rather than tea). We developed new items to capture self-efficacy beliefs and increased our sample size analysing a total of 415 cases. We estimated the new model using the same procedures mentioned above. Results confirm our research hypotheses and shows that, when measured accurately, self-efficacy is an important antecedent of future purchase intentions.

In the third study we tested our model in the context of an actual purchasing decisions. Rather than just reading a scenario, consumers were asked to make a choice and then provided information about the purchase they had made. 175 participants were recruited on AMT and allocated to the experimental manipulations. At the start of the study respondents chose between buying the same pair of shoes in one of two shops. In one of the shop the shoes were 20% cheaper. Consequently, all participants opted for the better priced alternative. After the choice participants read one news clipping manipulating feelings of either guilt or pride. This manipulation of emotions is consistent with a view of emotion as an avenue for learning and development of moral beliefs (Baumeister et al. 2007). After the emotional manipulation participants completed the same scales mentioned for study one and two.

The model estimated largely confirms our theoretical expectations, showing that both guilt and pride influence efficacy beliefs and affect intentions to buy ethical products in the future. The moderate size of the effects is reasonable since future consumption choices will be influenced by a number of other factors not accounted for in this model. In this third model the impact of feelings of pride on collective efficacy is not significant and overall guilt has a larger total effect on purchase intentions than pride.

Moral emotions are important in ethical consumption for their ability to influence both future behaviour and consumers’ efficacy beliefs. Experiencing guilt or pride increases consumers’ sense of their ability to affect environmental and social challenges through specific consumption choices. Moreover, depending on the specific features of the consumption situation, guilt or pride might be more or less conducive to responsible future choices. In study three, where consumers sense of pride was linked to a past decision that maximized self-interest, guilt is more strongly linked to responsible purchase intentions than pride. The research also demonstrates that, looking at emotions as feedback mechanisms, it is not necessarily true that negative experiences will always be more powerful than positive ones (Baumeister et al. 2001). Finally, the research questions the assumption that emotions are important exclusively because they drive behaviour. This view has dominated self-regulation research and has meant that scholars have neglected the importance of emotions for the information that they convey to the individual. We show that the role of guilt and pride in self-regulation is not limited only to changing behaviour but it can determine variation in stable beliefs hold by the individual.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
In today’s globalised world, transnational mobility has become almost a necessity, as young adult consumers increasingly facilitate short-term interactions with foreign cultures to establish their individualized life paths (Bauman 1998; Hannam, Sheller, and Urry 2006; Wiers-Jenssen 2008). For younger consumers, short-term travels abroad are nowadays regarded as rite-of-passage into adulthood and student or work life (van Gennep 1960) in addition to establishing high-profile curriculum vitas (King and Ruiz-Gelices 2003). The youth and student travel segment, consisting mostly of Generation Y (or ‘Millennial Generation’) consumers, currently represents 20% of global tourism, underscoring the increased economical significance of these consumers’ global intercultural exchanges (WYSE 2012). As a consequence of their initial temporary dislocation, young adult consumers are confronted with the loss of their familiar home brandscape (or totality of brands available) whilst negotiating through an oftentimes relatively unfamiliar brandscape (Biel 1991; 1993; Sherry 1998). The aim of this study was to investigate the ways in which consumer-brand relationships (Fournier 1998) help young consumers cope with cultural change and negotiate a relatively unfamiliar brandscape in the local host.

The increasing prevalence of transnational mobility has led consumer behavior researchers to investigate the consumer acculturation of permanent immigrants moving to the United States (Mehta and Belk 1991; Oswald 1999; Peñaloza 1994; Wallendorf and Reilly 1983) and, more recently, from and to non-North American countries (Askegaard, Arnould, and Kjeldgaard 2005; Lindridge, Hogg, and Shah 2004; Luedicke and Giesler 2009). Whereas this stream of literature has primarily focused on immigrants’ movement and adaptation to the host culture, in both the assimilation and post-assimilation phases, Bengtsson, Bardhi, and Venkatraman (2010) explored global brand consistency and meanings using mass tourists whilst Rahman and Cherrier (2010) provided a one-off snapshot of international tertiary students’ feelings for brands in a host culture. Additionally, Thompson and Tambahy (1999) and Bardhi, Eckhardt, and Arnould (2012) investigated affluent expatriates’ cosmopolitanism and elite global nomads’ liquid relationships to possessions respectively. The latter two papers illuminate that experienced and mostly affluent mobile professionals are accustomed to a life of constantly being ‘on the move’ (Sheller and Urry 2006), resulting in a heightened cultural, social and economic capital (Bourdieu 1986) allowing for the navigation of the particular local host brandscape.

However, young consumers are socialized to effectively function as consumers only in the home culture (Ward 1974), building a personal brandscape “with marketplace products, images, and messages that they invest with local meaning” (Sherry 1998). This, in turn, allows them to define their identity, make sense of the world around themselves and navigate through everyday life with the assurance that key brands will provide the essential tools to help resolve arising life themes (Belk 1988; 1991; 1993; Fournier 1998; 2009). During a sojourn, young consumers may experience a state of liminality (van Gennep 1960), separated from their favourite brands and not yet accustomed to the local brandscape. Therefore, we ask: Do, and how do, young sojourners cope with cultural change in a relatively unfamiliar brandscape?

We conducted multiple in-depth interviews and participant observation in form of shopping with consumers (Ottes, McGrath, and Lowrey 1995) with 23 female German au pairs prior to, during and after living and working within a New Zealand host family. The informants belong to Generation Y, ranging from 18-26 years, were recent high school or apprenticeship graduates, and came from middle-class families of which many had never travelled outside of Germany before. The suitability of the sample for this study was based on a) female consumers’ possession of stronger relationships to fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) brands (Fournier 1998), and b) Germany’s representation of being the number one source country for au pairs and their role as integral part of a host family (IAPA 2011). Data collection and analysis was iterative (Spiggle 1994).

Our findings demonstrate that understudied Generation Y sojourners are in a unique transition period as they undertake an independently organized rite of passage, separated from their home network (family, peers, institutions) and shared consumption symbols and rituals defining their group membership (Belk 1988; van Gennep 1960). Initially lacking the necessary social and cultural capital to participate in the host, acculturation issues such as homesickness and culture shock arise. Especially in this liminal phase, similar to special possessions (e.g. photos, jewelry) investigated in prior research (Mehta and Belk 1991; Thompson and Tambahy 1999), home brands are sacralised. Unlike global nomads (Bardhi et al. 2012), young sojourners possess close home brand attachments in form of strong commitment and even dependency (Fournier 1998), indicated by the active search for familiar brands in New Zealand’s diverse brandscape which culminates in the request of care packages sent from home, even though a return home is foreseeable. Contrary to mass tourists’ experiences (Bengtsson et al. 2010), tensions arise between established home brand relationships and the constant exposure to the brandscape of the host family to which the au pairs inevitably need to adapt. Using the host family as consumer socialization agent, these young sojourners eventually become experimental with host brands, resulting in ‘holiday romances’ that last for the duration of their stay and which, post-return, act as reminders of the experiences gained abroad. Both home and host brands are used as country-specific artifacts during and post-return respectively, bridging the gap between the two cultures and letting the respective Other hyper-experience the home or host in form of tasting, smelling, and trying typical branded products.

This study contributes to consumer acculturation research in three ways: 1) Exploring Generation Y, first-time sojourners, situated between mass tourists and expatriates / global nomads regarding the permanence of their stay and predictability of their return, sheds light on an understudied but economically important acculturating group; 2) Young sojourners experience particular acculturation issues due to their inexperience with independent travels, undergoing a liminal phase where they cope with homesickness, culture shock and the lack of social and cultural capital; 3) In mobility, some home brands are sacralised similar to special possessions, bridging the gap between home and host, whilst some host brands are seen as ‘holiday romances’.  

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to understand how perceptions of death and its cultural meanings shape perceptions of organ donation. This paper adopts an existential perspective to explain how potential donors make sense of organ donation campaigns, which thematize ‘death’ as an existential possibility. According to Thukral and Cummins (1987), the marketing of organ donation is reliant on the willingness of potential donors to confront the inevitability of death while still being in their prime of life. Consequently, this heightens their reflexivity as they reconcile fundamental existential questions concerning the continuity of their self-narratives and life projects (Giddens 1991). As Goodmonson and Glaudin (1971) observe, the decision to become an organ donor “forces him to contemplate his own non-existence” (pp. 176 in Hessing and Elffers 1986: 116).

This paper aims to contribute to the relatively under-research area of death/mortality in consumer research. Turley (1997) suggests that the absence of academic inquiry in mortality reflects modernist discourse, which construed death as a *terminus ad quem* – i.e. a distant event that must be sequestered from cultural and marketing discourse. Modern death signifies a ‘pure exit’ from life (Bauman 1992), the omega point for consumption, and is therefore rendered irrelevant as a subject of marketing inquiry (Turley 1997). Such a modernist conception of death has failed to embrace mortality as an existential phenomenon that continuously shapes the ‘lived’ experience of its bearer. To date, consumer researchers have largely conceptualised death as an end-of-life event, where death rituals are enacted (Bonsu and Belk 2003; Tiwaskul and Hackley 2012), belongings of the deceased are dispossessed (Pavia 1993; Ozane 1992) and commemorated (O’Donohoe and Turley 1999; Gentry et al. 1995; Young and Wallendorf 1989). While these contributions are important, they have yet to appreciate death as interwoven “into the fabric of life as opposed to being relegated to its termination” (Turley 1997:352). Turley further suggests that contributions can be made by exploring contexts where death is ‘non-imminent’, as interesting insights can be gained by understanding the “prehumous life of seemingly untroubled consumers” (pp. 69). The context of cadaveric organ donation is therefore an attractive area of study as it explores how death infiltrates the mundane context of everyday life, which heightens their reflexivity pertaining to their self-identity (Giddens 1991).

Drawing on the work of Heidegger (1927/1962), Giddens (1991) and Bauman (1992), this paper seeks to understand how individuals reconcile with the rupture in their self-narratives as they make sense of the existential condition of embodying mortality in late modernity. According to Mellor (1993), death is a late modern tragedy as it offers one a ‘false’ sense of security that the ‘intermundane space’ of everyday life that death must be kept at in the context of day-to-day life” (pp. 48). For Giddens, it is within the ‘intermundane space’ of everyday life that death must be kept at bay. Heidegger (1927/1962) expresses concerns over such cultural “bracketing” of death as it offers one a ‘false’ sense of security that renders the self *inauthentic*.

Heidegger (1927/1962: 297) explains that the cultural concealment of death takes the form of *idle talk* – i.e. banal chatter where modern society paints an ambiguous and trivialised picture of death. Heidegger explains how culture ‘anaesthetised’ death anxiety by representing it as a remote event that affords individuals an illusionary sense of invincibility. Consequently, the subject of death are thrown out of the symbolic circulation of social discourse (Baudrillard 1993), leading to the ‘collective inability to discuss death meaningfully’ (Bauman 1992: 135). Pottas (1983) argues that the marketing of organ donation is particularly challenging as death is regarded as a taboo subject in Western society (Aries 1984).

Elsewhere, Bauman (1992) traces how biomedicine gains increasing prominence as a cultural means of colonising the future by deconstructing mortality into manageable problems. For instance, Illich (1976:175) explains how individuals are offered the cultural script of dying a ‘natural death’ – i.e. a death which ‘comes under medical care and finds us in good health and old age’. Thus, living becomes a process of accumulation (Baudrillard 1993) where the preservation of biological capital (eg. through health) is accumulated as life capital (Baudrillard 1993) that enabled the ‘longevity of life’.

In her research, Johnson (1990) observes that potential donors often defer making a decision concerning organ donation as death is often experienced as a distant phenomenon in their lifeworld.

Through multi-staged phenomenological interviews, this paper presents two prominent narratives constructed by 24 potential donors (aged 21-45). Firstly, participants’ narratives revolve around the (1) thematization of death as a rupture in their life project. For some participants, organ donation punctuates their sense of ontological security, and as such, they consider this a *morbid, depressing, upsetting, disturbing* and *weird* topic of conversation. For others, the thematization of death brings home to them the need to focus on the immediacy of the present moment by ‘living life to the max’. For younger participants, organ donation becomes a deferred decision that they will consider in a distant future. Meanwhile, participants in the 30s-40s come to embrace the inevitability of death where organ donation emerges as a reflexive point to consider death-related decisions and authentic living. Secondly, participants’ narratives are replete with the ideology of (2) dying a ‘natural death’. Most participants embrace the *natural progression of life* where death occurs at an old age. This narrative is especially prominent among younger participants, in which organ donation contradicts their sense of *invincibility* and exposes the futility of their life projects. Through these narratives, the paper contributes to the conceptualisation of death in late modernity. In turn, I draw implications on how the ‘gift-of-life’ campaign may resonate with potential donors by promoting organ donation as a meaningful project within the larger scheme of their biography.

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"Share and Scare": Solving the Communication Dilemma of Early Adopters with a High Need for Uniqueness

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Early adopters are frequently discussed in the literature as individuals who play an essential role in new product success (Rogers 1995). Early adopters are the first to adopt an innovation, and are therefore the first to recommend it to later adopters. The literature (and practice) consequently treats early adopters as “social salespeople” of new products (Goldsmith and Flynn 1992; Mahajan, Muller, and Srivastava 1990; Midgley and Dowling 1993; Rogers 1995). This, however, may not always be the case. In this research we explore the unwillingness of early adopters to spread the word about innovations they adopt. Specifically, we propose that early adopters often face a communication dilemma. While they are inherently motivated to share information about the innovation to others, and reinforce their social status as early adopters, they are aware that this status is diluted as the number of adopters increases. To remain among a selected few who use or possess the innovation, they may intentionally scare others from adopting it too. We therefore name the solution of this dilemma as “share and scare”.

The current research also reveals the underlying mechanism that drives this dilemma among the early adopters. This mechanism is a product of consumers’ need for uniqueness; namely, a positive need to be different relative to other people (Tepper and Hoyle 1996; Tian, Bearden and Hunter 2001). One of the basic foundations of need for uniqueness is to position the individual as distinct from the group. Early adopters with a high need for uniqueness will therefore need to express their uniqueness in the presence of a group. However, by “showing off” their new adoption, early adopters increase the risk that other consumers will adopt the innovation, thereby diminishing their uniqueness. On the other hand, early adopters with low need for uniqueness, or those who have high need for uniqueness but low early adoption tendencies, may experience this dilemma to a lesser extent, if at all.

The first study demonstrated the existence of the dilemma among early adopters with high need for uniqueness. Specifically, we found a significant 2-way interaction. Early adopters with a high need for uniqueness reported greater dilemma levels than other consumers.

The second study identified a possible boundary condition for the dilemma. We demonstrated that the dilemma would be experienced only when the innovation faces an immediate public launch, and is not experienced for innovations for which launch is expected to be in the future. When the innovation is not anticipated to be available on the market in the near future, early adopters with a high need for uniqueness are less likely to be concerned that others will imitate them, and are therefore less likely to experience the dilemma. An experimental design revealed a significant three-way interaction between early adoption levels, need for uniqueness levels and innovation availability, on the intensity of the dilemma. In an immediate launch condition, early adopters with a high need for uniqueness experienced the dilemma to a greater extent compared with all other consumers, replicating the results of Study 1. However, in the future launch condition, there was not a significant difference within the levels the dilemma across conditions.

The third study explored an additional boundary condition for the dilemma, based on the nature of the target audience. We suggested that the nature and characteristics of other individuals who show interest in the same product may determine the fear of imitation, which triggers the dilemma. An experimental design revealed a significant two-way interaction between early adoption levels with primed high need for uniqueness and the type of target audience, on the intensity of the dilemma. When the type of target audience was described as peers that belong to a similar social group, early adopters with a primed high need for uniqueness reported higher dilemma levels, than when the type of target audience was described as laggards, who are not likely to adopt innovations or when the type of target audience was described as a superordinate group that early adopters admire and they want to be a part of.

The fourth study shed more light on the “share and scare” solution of the dilemma by showing that early adopters with a high need for uniqueness are more likely to scare others. Specifically, we found that early adopters spread more word of mouth (“share”), but early adopters with a high need for uniqueness are also more likely to spread dissuasive word of mouth regarding the complexity of the innovation and its high price (“scare”). In addition, the findings demonstrated the mediating role of the dilemma on “scare” levels.

Finally, the fifth study explored the actual recommendations consumers spread to their peers in their social networks using Facebook. We found that early adopters with a high need for uniqueness uploaded more “scare” items to their Facebook compared with other consumers.

The communication dilemma and the “share and scare” solution indicate that, unlike what is “expected” from them, early adopters may not always be willing to spread the word about innovations they adopt, and may intentionally delay or even derail the diffusion process.

Managers should be aware of the existence of the communication dilemma when launching innovative products and consequently execute campaigns that overcome this reluctance. Future research may explore different strategies managers can take to overcome the “share and scare” behavior.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Product design is a critical determinant of consumer response (Bloch 1995). Consumers may prefer a product alternative over others, because it appeals to them aesthetically. However, the influence of product design on consumer response goes beyond its aesthetic value (Cresen and Schoormans 2005). Consumers can also use specific product designs to communicate their identity (Mugge, Gover, and Schoormans 2009; Sirgy 1982). Moreover, the product design can prompt inferences about the product’s functional attributes (Bloch 1995; Creusen and Schoormans 2005; Page and Herr 2002). This research focuses on the relationship between a product’s design and its performance quality (i.e., how well one expects the product to perform its functions). In purchase situations, consumers are often unable to try the product. To obtain evaluations on the product’s performance quality at purchase, people thus turn to alternative indicators, such as the brand, price, or the product design (Dawar and Parker 1994; Kirmani and Wright 1989).

Thus far, only a few empirical studies have investigated how product design affects consumers’ perceptions of experience. These studies have demonstrated that the attractiveness (Page and Herr 2002; Veryzer and Hutchison 1998) and the level of novelty of the product design (Mugge and Schoormans 2012) positively affect the perceived performance quality of products. In other words, consumers expect that a more attractive and novel-looking digital camera will have higher picture quality. Although these studies have provided valuable insights in the relationships between product design and perceptions of performance quality, they have two important limitations. First, these studies have focused on one specific characteristic (e.g., novelty) of product design. However, a comprehensive understanding on the various aspects of product design that affect consumers’ quality perceptions is missing. Second, in prior studies participants were only presented with a picture or drawing of the product. In many purchase situations, consumers can also physically touch the product. Past research has demonstrated that such haptic information is important for the overall evaluation of products (Peck and Childers 2003; Peck and Wiggins 2006). It is likely that haptic information is also a significant factor for consumers’ perceptions of performance quality, and thus more insights in this relationship need to be gained.

This research contributes to the literature by investigating how consumers use both the visual and haptic characteristics of a product design for their evaluation of the product’s performance quality. Specifically, I conducted in-depth interviews because this enabled us to provide a comprehensive understanding of the different factors that influence consumers’ perceptions of a product’s performance quality. Fifteen participants from a consumer panel volunteered to participate. A total of thirty products from the categories dust busters and hairdryers were selected as stimuli. These product variants were selected by two experts in industrial design engineering to represent the diversity in product designs within the entire range of products in the market. During the interviews, participants were asked to hold the products in their hands, to rank order the two sets of product variants sequentially on a scale from 1 (low quality) to 5 (high quality), and to thoroughly clarify these rankings. Interviews lasted between 1 and 1.5 hours.

All interviews were audio-taped, fully transcribed, and analyzed using an iterative ‘back and forth reading’-process to uncover patterns between participants. Seven important factors related to the product design emerged from the data. These factors can be classified into visual and haptic characteristics. Specifically, consumers used the following visual characteristics in the product design for their performance quality perceptions: attractiveness, symbolic association, and size. In addition, the following haptic characteristics were derived: weight, ergonomics, material, and haptic quality of product components.

The first visual characteristic that was derived from the data was attractiveness, thereby replicating prior findings concerning the ‘What is beautiful is good’-principle (e.g., Page and Herr 2002). This suggests that a more attractive-looking product was associated with various other positive features, such as greater performance quality. Second, certain product shapes and colors had a symbolic association, which participants used for their quality perceptions. For example, some hairdryers reminded them of those used by professional hairdressers, and were consequently, perceived as higher quality. In contrast, other products were associated with children and toys, resulting in perceptions of inferior quality. Third, size was recognized as an indicator of performance quality. Participants appeared to follow a ‘bigger is better’-heuristic and associated larger products with more powerful engines, and thus, with greater performance quality.

The first haptic characteristic that was uncovered was weight. Similar to size, heavier products were expected to have more powerful engines, resulting in perceptions of greater performance quality. Second, participants used the product’s ergonomic qualities (e.g., extent to which the product was comfortable to hold), as a cue for their quality perceptions. In contrast to the haptic characteristic weight, extremely heavy products were in this respect associated with lower performance quality. To stimulate perceptions of high quality in products, it is thus important to strive for an optimal weight. Third, the material properties served as an indicator of quality. Certain types of plastics were recognized as cheap and inferior, and consequently, these products were expected to be less durable. In other products, participants appreciated the use of extraordinary materials because of their pleasant tactile experiences. They associated the additional effort invested in creating these experiences as an indicator of the overall attention to the product. Consequently, they believed that significant attention was also paid to the product’s performance quality. Finally, the haptic quality of the product components was uncovered as a factor influencing performance quality perceptions. For some products, participants indicated that the buttons felt fragile when using them, due to which they expected them to fail prematurely. Similarly, the extent to which the connection between different parts was properly executed served as an indicator.

This research contributes to the literature on consumer response to product design by providing an overview of the visual and haptic characteristics in the product design that consumers use while evaluating the performance quality of products. Companies can use this knowledge for designing products that are perceived as high quality.

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Living (apart but) Together with the Extended Family in Economically Challenging Times: The Case of Greek Consumers’ Experiences

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This paper examines consumers’ experiences in regards to the changing family forms and living arrangements in economically challenging times. Recent work discusses the role of family in consumer behaviour (Cotte and Wood 2004; Ekstrom 2004; Moisio et al 2004; O’Malley and Prothero 2006; 2007; Kozinets et al 2006; Epp 2008; Gutierrez et al 2008; Epp and Price 2008; 2010) and in coping with poverty and restricted consumption (e.g. Hibbert and Piacentini 2003; Kochuyt 2004; Evans and Chandler 2006; Ruth and Hsuing 2007; Hamilton and Catterall 2008; Hamilton 2009; 2012). Reflecting the importance of social support in coping (Duhaheke 2005), the family is made into a back-up institution to fill the gaps created by the market failures and the insufficient safety nets of the welfare state (Kochuyt 2004). Socioeconomic factors such as increasing number of adult children returning/resuming to parental home, ageing population and limited capacity for aged-care in some countries increase the prevalence of extended family households (Wyn and Woodman 2006; Cobb-Clark 2008; Keene and Batson 2010). Although the recession is influencing the rise in familial-intergenerational living and support (Eurostat 2010), consumer research by concentrating mainly on the nuclear family has neglected to explore the changing family forms and living arrangements and their influence on consumption experiences in economically challenging times representing a gap in our understanding of low-income consumers’ experiences.

This phenomenological study explored Greek consumers’ experiences of lower levels of consumption. Sampling included 35 participants, aged 22-69. Participants were experiencing significant income reductions and often had problems making ends meet. Interviews were transcribed and a phenomenological analysis (Thompson et al 1989; 1990) was conducted.

Our findings reveal that the economic crisis changing the contemporary Greek society, challenges families in their structure and relationships between members. Even though the nuclear family is considered as the unit of consumption, the extended family emerged in our data as a significant unit of analysis in consumer research. Our findings reveal strong (financial, practical and emotional) support within the extended family coping with financial difficulties. In line with previous research (e.g. Ruth and Hsuing 2007) our respondents tried to satisfy family level needs rather than individual levels needs and wants, however, the family level needs prioritised regarded not only the nuclear family but also the extended family. Therefore, our respondents tried to minimise the negative consequences of poverty not only for children (e.g. Hamilton and Catterall 2008), but also for adult children, siblings, elderly parents and (grand-) grandchildren.

Klocker et al (2012) examining extended family households referred to two modes of extended family living that they named ‘living together but apart’ and ‘living together’. Members of extended families characterised by the first mode lived in the same house but, in a practical sense, were living apart, quite independently and separately. Members of extended families characterised by the second mode lived together in a more complete sense, sharing more communal household spaces. Our data reflect an additional mode of relating within the extended family that we name ‘living apart but together’ as even when living apart from members of the extended family, respondents were not living independently nor taking decisions independently; providing support to or receiving support from their extended family. For example, even when members of the extended family were not living in the same house, they were eating together on a daily basis, especially when living in close proximity to provide and receive practical and emotional support, while members of the extended family living in rural areas were sending food products they produce to their relatives living at urban areas to help them cope with the financial difficulties.

This support within the extended family coloured respondents’ consumption experiences. Respondents valued as ‘agents that help coping’, possessions, products and activities that they felt enabled them to regulate the stressful emotional situations of providing or receiving extended family’s support or enabled solutions to handle financial difficulties and better support the extended family or release the extended family from providing support. More specifically, possessions, products and activities were valued as problem-solvers for improving job prospects (e.g. foreign language lessons) and/or for being associated with developing new skills to cope with the financial difficulties (e.g. DIY items); or as emotionally supportive for enabling transformation of negative thoughts/moods and distraction from present difficulties (e.g. music, walks, contact with other people, psychotherapy), sense of freedom and independence (e.g. bicycle). And respondents experienced as ‘pitfalls or agents that hinder coping’ needed, wanted or valued possessions, products or activities that they felt impeded providing support to the extended family or required receiving support from the extended family. More specifically, experiencing financial difficulties and providing or receiving extended family’s support, our respondents often expressed negative feelings such as guilt and/or shame along with their positive feelings for their family’s support, our respondents often expressed negative feelings such as guilt and/or shame along with their positive feelings for their valued possessions, products and activities. And respondents were often forced to abandon favourite activities or to sell loved possessions that were part of their extended self in order to raise resources for themselves and their (extended) family and they expressed their feelings of disappointment and sadness while encouraging themselves to consider the ‘pitfall’ of having loved material objects and the merits of a life of ‘voluntary simplicity’. Moreover, respondents expressed negative feelings for needed and wanted possessions often acquired with credit and creating financial pressures and anxieties within the context of providing or receiving familial support.

In conclusion, our study extends previous work on low-income consumers that had concentrated on the nuclear family by revealing that the extended family was often the lenses through which these consumers experienced restricted consumption. Our findings reveal that a severe recession is influencing such a significant rise in familial-intergenerational support that the family is undergoing a metamorphosis from the nuclear family to a new form of extended family coping with the recession. And the study extends theory by identifying different modes of relating within the extended family (i.e. ‘living apart but together’ and ‘living together’) that colour consumption experiences, changing the meaning of possessions, products and consumption activities into agents that help or hinder coping.

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The Influence of Activating Social Motivations as a Mechanism to Avoid Ego-Defensive Responses Associated with Terror Management to Risk Communication

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Understanding what makes health communications effective is perplexing because the persuasive process appears to be different from other types of persuasive communications. Typically, personally relevant arguments have been found to be persuasive in many contexts (Petty, Cacioppo and Goldman 1981). However, these same types of arguments have the potential to backfire in health contexts (Keller and Lehmann 2008). Literature on motivated reasoning provides insights into why these messages may backfire. One of the most commonly used argument for cessation of unhealthy behaviors is a focus on potential consequences of these behaviors. However, people tend to interpret health messages in ego-defensive ways that prevent them from acknowledging risk (Weinstein and Klein, 1995). Because health communications typically criticize current behaviors, they can be threatening to the self (Sherman, Nelson, and Steele 2000), particularly when the behavior can ultimately result in consequences such as death (Goldenberg and Arndt 2008). Ironically, when faced with convincing and personally relevant arguments that state continuing the behavior could lead to death, the ego intercedes to protect the self from protecting the self (Goldenberg and Arndt 2008) and can even result in an increase in unhealthy behavior (Flynn, Worden and Secher-Walker 2002).

We propose that messages that contain the negative consequences of engaging in risky behaviors can be effective if they can be presented without triggering ego defense. In this research, we demonstrate that death-related messages can be used effectively in health communications to encourage beneficial behavior despite predictions of ego defense as hypothesized by Terror Management Theory (TMT) (Pyszczynski, Greenberg and Solomon 1999). TMT proposes that the human ability to be cognizant of one’s inevitable mortality (mortality salience, or MS) creates the potential for extreme anxiety. The resulting management of the anxiety about one’s mortality generates cognitive processes that cause people to become esteem-seeking.

However, we depart from previous studies on TMT by going beyond biological functions that cease at death (physical MS). We find that highlighting the suffering of close others left behind after a death due to risky behaviors (social MS) can elicit high intention to cease engaging in risky behaviors. In an experimental study, we find that social mortality messages are less threatening than physical mortality messages, even when people derive self-esteem from the risky behavior.

One hundred and fifty-one smokers (52.3% female; mean age=32.4; age range:18-64) participated in the study. The participants were randomly assigned to watch a set of two PSAs that were designed to make either physical or social mortality salient. Then all participants were randomly assigned to watch a set of two PSAs that were designed to make either physical or social mortality salient. Then all participants completed a smoking self-esteem (SSE) scale. The dependent measures were acknowledgement of health risk and behavioral intent to quit smoking.

On the health risk measure, the predicted interaction between mortality salience and SSE was significant ($F_{1,151}=12.47, p<.001$). We also conducted additional analyses to test contrasts with continuous independent variables (Aiken and West 1991). There was no difference in perceived health risk when SSE was “low” ($F_{1,151}<1$, estimated means at $-1SD$: $M_{SSE=low}=5.73$, $M_{SSE=high}=5.70$). However, when SSE was “high,” health risks were perceived to be lower ($F_{1,151}=23.21, p<.001$, estimated means at $+1SD$: $M_{SSE=low}=5.87$, $M_{SSE=high}=2.50$).

On the behavioral intent measure, the hypothesized interaction was significant ($F_{1,151}=6.81, p<.01$). When shown the physical MS message, higher SSE resulted in lower reported intent to quit smoking ($β=-.24, t=2.17, p<.05$). However, when shown the social MS message, SSE was not related to reported intent to quit smoking ($β=.15, t=1.29, p>.20$). As with the perceived health risk dependent variable, additional contrast analyses were run. When SSE was “low,” there were no reported differences in intent to quit smoking between the physical and social mortality salience conditions ($F_{1,151}<1$, estimated means at $-1SD$: $M_{SSE=low}=4.80$, $M_{SSE=high}=4.69$). However, when SSE was “high,” at one standard deviation above the mean, participants reported a higher intention to quit smoking after viewing the social mortality salience message ($F_{1,151}=15.44, p<.001$, estimated means at $+1SD$: $M_{SSE=low}=5.20$, $M_{SSE=high}=3.30$).

We tested our proposed moderated mediation model (Muller, Judd, and Yzerbyt 2005) with bootstrapping procedures (Preacher and Hayes 2004). We predicted that viewing a physical versus a social mortality salience message among those high in smoking self-esteem would lead to reduced acknowledgment of health risk, and consequently a reduced intent to quit smoking. The bootstrap was run with 10,000 samples, and the resulting confidence interval did not span zero, supporting our hypothesis (CI (95%) = .09, .73), and providing support for our proposed mediation model.

In this study, we demonstrate that health communications messages can indeed feature death as a consequence of engaging in a risky behavior without eliciting ego-defensive reactions that are commonplace under physical MS (e.g. Goldenberg et al., 2000). When exposed to a physical MS message, participants high in SSE acted in a manner that is consistent with previous research on TMT. Since these participants derive self-esteem from smoking, they engaged in ego-defensive behaviors that protected the challenged behavior by resisting acknowledgment of the health risks of smoking and indicating greater intent to continue smoking. In contrast, when exposed to a social MS message, participants who were high in SSE did not engage in these typical ego-defensive ways and instead showed a greater propensity to acknowledge the health risks of smoking and greater intent to quit. Thus, we conclude that social mortality salience does not activate esteem-seeking goal structures that protect the ego, and could provide an effective communication strategy for combating risky behaviors.
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The obesity epidemic lacks a clear and actionable solution. While some interventions focus on improving nutritional information and increasing the availability of healthier options, there is a movement towards incentivizing people with monetary rewards for healthy nutrition behaviors. Incentives are an appealing option because they can serve as an equalizer to bring the price of healthier, but often more expensive, food items down to their less expensive and less healthy counterparts. Incentives can also provide an immediate reward for exercising self-control often required to make healthier nutritional choices. Like incentive programs in other domains (e.g., 401(k) retirement matching), simply offering a discount or other monetary reward may not be enough to fully engage consumers. To that end, other mechanisms may be necessary to help drive behavioral change and help people activate self-control. In this research, we help consumers activate self-control by offering a commitment device that eliminates their savings if they fail to improve their percentage of discounted healthy food purchases. Our results show that this strategy is effective in both increasing healthy food purchases and improving utilization of the discount.

We conducted a field experiment with members of a rewards program who receive a 25% discount on healthy foods at large national grocery chain. At the start of the study, only 1/3 of eligible grocery purchases were receiving the discount—suggesting that the incentive is under-utilized. A total of 6,572 households were randomly assigned to either control or treatment groups. The control group households were given their baseline healthy food percentage averaged over a 3-month period (e.g., 20%) and were asked if they would be willing to make a (hypothetical) pre-commitment to increase that percentage by 5% or forfeit their entire discount for a given month if they failed to reach their goal. The treatment group was given exactly the same information, but their choice was an actual binding commitment to increase their healthy purchases by 5% or forfeit their discount, for each of the six months in the study. All households, regardless of whether they made their goal in one month, started over each month with a clean slate and the pledge to increase their healthy spending by 5% relative to their original baseline. Household grocery spending was tracked for the entire study period, regardless of whether members took the survey or agreed to be in the study. Here we present the results of the invitation survey study and the first two months of post-intervention purchasing data.

There was a 60% response rate (N = 2,881) to the initial survey and the results showed that 56% of the control group and 36% of the treatment group were willing to precommit (p < .01), reflecting a large discrepancy between hypothetical and actual choice and resulting in a total of 604 households willing to participate in the study for as long as six months. Logistic regression analyses showed that participants were significantly less likely to precommit if they already had a relatively high percentage of healthy spending (p < .05)—which suggests that commitment devices are not appealing only to those who expect to do well. They were more likely to precommit if they felt the program would help them eat healthier and save money (p < .05).

Survey responders (N = 2,881) were separated into three groups for the intervention analysis: control group, non-committers (who were given the chance to precommit for real but declined) and the precommitters. Relative to the control group and non-committers, the precommitters purchased significantly more healthy food items in months 1 and 2 (p < .0001 for each month). The control group and the non-committers did not significantly differ from one another (in either month). Additionally, there is evidence of a significant interaction whereby the increase in healthy purchases going from the first to second month is greater for the precommitters than for both of the other groups (which again did not significantly differ from one another). Precommitters were also significantly more likely than the other two groups to reach the 5% increase in healthy purchased goal in each of the first two months (p < .01). Overall, the results suggest that the commitment device is initially effective, and becomes even more effective over time.

We next examined the population level effects to assess the overall impact of the intervention. Here, we compared the full control group to full the treatment group (i.e., not just survey responders; N = 6, 572) and found that the healthy purchase average for the treatment group was significantly higher than the control group in month 1 (p < .05) and month 2 (p < .08). This result shows that that while only 1/3 of those in the treatment group made an actual binding commitment, their performance improved enough to pull up the average healthy food purchasing of the entire treatment group population.

We close by noting that interventions that target self-control can be quite effective in improving healthy food behaviors. Moreover, commitment devices such as the one implemented here are clearly effective, can be easy to implement and are often welcomed by a sizeable segment of the targeted population. As such, these findings have significant implications for both marketing and public policy.
Fear of Missing Out: Is Voyeurism the Real Motive Behind Teen Consumption of Social Media?
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Teen consumption of social network sites (SNSs) has exploded over the last decade. UK teens spend an average of 8 hours/week on SNSs (Ofcom, 2011), consulting them frequently (21% >10 times/day: Ofcom, 2011) wherever they are and whatever they are doing. As the most prolific users, teens are innovators and their behaviours are therefore of interest as they are likely to be replicated by subsequent adopters. Whilst teen behaviour is undoubtedly shaped by digital technology; teens are shaping technological developments and social norms in this medium (Boyd, 2007).

Social interaction has transformed in SNSs particularly amongst teenagers, self-disclosure levels have increased as has surveillance of others (Rosenblum, 2007). Moreover these activities are considered customary and acceptable. We sought to explore voyeuristic behaviour in SNSs in order to gain a deeper understanding of these social practices and teens habitual use of them. Normal voyeurism is defined as “a common (not solely sexual) pleasure derived from access to private details” (Metzl, 2004) or “the curious peeking into the private lives of others” (Calvert, 2004). Arguably exhibitionism and voyeurism are two sides of the same coin, without exhibitionism, voyeur would have nothing to observe.

Web 2.0 and social media have enabled users to become content creators in their own right, thereby empowering exhibitionism and voyeurism. Voyeurism has been identified as a key gratification for other popular teen media such as reality TV (RTV) (Barton, 2009; Papacharissi and Mendelson, 2007) which incorporates voyeuristic type appeals (Baruh, 2009). RTV and SNSs offer safe and legitimate opportunities for exhibitionism and normal voyeurism. For young people this digitalised voyeurism parallels identity related behaviours such as social curiosity, social comparison and self-monitoring (Hill, 1992).

Unlike RTV, SNSs participants can both perform and observe, providing a “two-way gaze”, they also mostly interact with people that they know (Boyd, 2007) thus reducing the perceived distance between exhibitionist and voyeur. It seems likely therefore, that teens will re-enact behaviours observed in RTV in SNSs (Watson, 2008). In contrast to previous studies which focused on older participants (Stefanone et al., 2010), our study enlisted younger participants (16-18 years) and sought to gain an understanding of this phenomenon from the teen perspective.

METHOD

We adopted an interpretivist approach (Saunders et al., 2007:106) utilising Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory (1986) and Blumler and Katz’ (1974) Uses and Gratifications to explain individual behaviours and gratifications. Participants were sourced from a UK school and ethical issues were appropriately addressed. 26 in-depth interviews were conducted with teenagers (16-18 years; 11M, 15F) for around 1hr plus a content analysis of their SNS activities for a fortnight. The data was systematically organised into categories and sub-cATEGORIES to develop meaningful interpretations (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

We focused on the following research questions

1. How important is voyeurism in motivating habitual teen consumption of SNSs?
2. What benefits do teens derive from voyeuristic practices in SNSs?
3. Do teens use SNSs as platforms to emulate behaviour observed in RTV?

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Three themes emerged from our data: voyeuristic motivations, gratifications and re-enactment.

Voyeuristic Motivations: Normal voyeurism was the most commonly cited reason for using RTV, teens were enthralled by acquiring knowledge about others’ lives. They developed labels to describe this: “FOMO” (Fear of Missing Out) and “Facebook stalking”. It’s mainly for me to stalk people, not maliciously but if you really get to know a lot of stuff about a lot of people then you never know when it might come in handy and it just adds to your information about people (Boy, 18).

Gratifications: Teens reaped personal, social and fantastical voyeuristic gratifications from SNSs. Personal gratifications included noisiness, entertainment and relationships (c.p. Barton’s 2009). That’s why I’m still on it because it can be really entertaining. People in relationships breaking up and embarrassing pictures… (Girl, 17) I go on and literally look at his whole profile – see everyone he’s been talking to and read everything! (Girl, 18).

Furthermore voyeurism provided social gratifications as content for further social interactions both on and offline (c.p. Patino et al, 2011; Papacharissi and Mendelson, 2007). I’m a bit of a gossiper so… finding out about people and then the next day at school talking about what you’ve seen (Girl, 17).

Whilst much of their voyeurism focused on close friends, many also enjoying “stalking” subjects outside their immediate social circle, for instance older teens or celebrities. There was a fantastical gratification to this either in an aspirational or oppositional way. “The kind of people I love to stalk are people who are not like me!” (Girl, 17).

Re-enactment: SNSs provided the perfect environment for re-enactment of RTV behaviour (Papacharissi and Mendelson, 2007). Teens regularly posted intimate aspects of their life and were equally happy to peek into the private moments of others. Interestingly most teens denied exhibitionism (our content analyses revealed otherwise) but admitted to normal voyeurism. Digital technology enabled users to become semi-professional content creators and utilise this to manage impressions favourably to others; blurring the ordinary with the celebrity (Stefanone et al, 2010). “she’s very interesting to have on Facebook because she’s our age…she’s got a child… and a boyfriend… and literally, her life is all on Facebook. I know – we know everything.” (Boy, 18).

CONCLUSION

RTV and SNSs have contributed to changing social norms around privacy, disclosure and observation of others. They are complementary media with observed behaviour in RTV being re-enacted in SNS. Normal voyeurism has become a source of entertainment for teens and is a key motive for many teens’ habitual SNS consumption. In line with Rose and Wood (2005) we observed a blurring of boundaries between public and private; real and fantastical; tangible and intangible and celebrity and ordinary. SNSs may be part of the post-
modern quest for authenticity; from soap operas to RTV to SNSs, becoming steadily more real. However there was an element of playfulness in teen activities in SNSs, a shared understanding that not all content is real or authentic but is there to be enjoyed for what it is.

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The Influence of Time-Interval Descriptions on Goal-Pursuit Decisions
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
A diet ad proclaims, “Sign up today and lose 25 pounds in 2 weeks!” What would influence a consumer’s decision to pursue this diet? Although many factors might play a role (Aarts, Gollwitzer, and Hassin 2004; Freitas et al. 2002; Zhang, Fishbach, and Dhar 2007), this paper focuses on one unexplored factor in particular: the description of the time interval allowed for goal completion. We suggest that whether the interval is described by extents (“2 weeks from today”) or dates (“between today and July 19”) influences goal-pursuit decisions.

Although how a time interval is described may seem unimportant, it can affect how people plan for the future (LeBoeuf and Shafir 2009) and evaluate future transactions (LeBoeuf 2006; Read et al. 2005). We suggest that time-interval descriptions also affect whether people initiate goal pursuit, with people being more likely to pursue goals with completion intervals described by extents than dates. We suggest that changes in time focus (i.e., focus on the near vs. distant future; Lee, Lee, and Kern 2011) underlie such effects. Whereas extent descriptions refer to “chunks” of time (e.g., weeks, months) and may lead to a focus on the interval as a whole, date descriptions direct attention to specific time points (LeBoeuf 2006; Malkoc, Zauberman, and Bettman 2010; Read et al. 2005), may prompt a focus on the day-by-day passage of time, and may conjure considerations such as what one will do each day. Thus, an interval described as “three months from today” may focus people more on the distant future than does an interval described as “between today and October 5.” This leads us to predict that extent descriptions may direct people’s attention more to the goal’s long-term benefits, which may increase the goal’s perceived importance, and less to the other mundane tasks that will occupy the interval. This may result in greater willingness to pursue desirable goals.

Study 1a tested the effect of interval description on people’s willingness to diet. Participants indicated whether they would be willing to lose 1.5 pounds in two weeks, with time described either by extents or dates. Participants also reported how long the target in-

In study 2, participants indicated whether they would be willing to read three books in one month (described by extent or date) and indicated how many books they would commit to reading within that interval. Study 2 also examined the possible mechanism by collecting ratings of the goal’s importance. When the interval was described by extents, versus dates, participants pursued reading at a higher rate (35% vs. 10%, respectively, \(\chi^2(1)=4.06, p=.04\)), but interval description did not affect perceived interval length. Study 1b replicated these results using a savings goal. Thus, people are more likely to pursue goals with positive long-term consequences when time is described by extents, but they are more likely to pursue goals with positive short-term consequences when time is described by dates. These findings suggest that extents lead to a focus on the more distant future than dates.

Study 4 explored another boundary condition: interval length. When goal completion stretches out over a very long interval, people may naturally focus on the distant future and therefore on long-term consequences. In this case, people may be less sensitive to relatively small focus adjustments caused by description nuances (Goodman and Malkoc 2012), and therefore descriptions may have a lesser impact on people’s general time focus and subsequent decisions. A more change in description is unlikely to influence decisions involving very long completion intervals in the way that it influences decisions involving intervals of more moderate length. Participants read an article about adverse effects of dairy consumption and indicated their likelihood of reducing their dairy consumption within either one month or three years. The effect of interval descriptor depended on the type of goal (\(F(1,131)=4.80, p=.03\)). Participants were more likely to reduce consumption within one month when the interval was described by extents than dates (\(M_{\text{extends}}=3.00\) vs. \(M_{\text{dates}}=3.52, t(67)=1.06, p>.2\)).

In summary, even small nuances in how a goal and the time interval allocated to its pursuit are described can alter the decision to pursue that goal. An interval described by amounts of time may focus people more on the distant future than an interval described by dates. This increases people’s willingness to initiate goal pursuit during that interval, as long as goal pursuit has positive long-term consequences and a relatively short duration.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Virtuous behaviors are behaviors that people believe they ought to do, but might find them difficult, time consuming or effortful (Ein-Gar, Goldenberg & Sagiv 2012). Understanding the effectiveness of requests to commit to virtuous behaviors is important theoretically and practically (e.g. doctor asking patients to commit to taking preventive medical checkups, marketers trying to get a “foot-in-the-door”, charitable organizations asking people to make a pledge, personal trainers, etc.).

The relationship between near versus distant future focus and behavior has been discussed in the literature from several standpoints, all of which suggest that activation of distant future mindset should encourage individuals to be more goal-driven in their behavior. Past research has also suggested that individuals perceive having more spare time in the distant future than in the near future (Zauberman & Lynch 2005). Hence, past research seem to converge to the notion that individuals are more likely to commit to virtuous behaviors in the distant future not only because they are more focused on their goals but also because they believe they will have more spare time to dedicate to these behaviors. Furthermore, logic would suggest that distant future mindset will increase willingness to commit mainly among individuals who are high at self-control and are, by definition, more prone to engage in virtuous behaviors.

This research suggests that contrary to past findings and intuition, consumers may be less likely to commit to a distant- (as opposed to a near-) virtuous behavior, especially those high in self-control.

Temporal-construal-theory has laid the notion that distant future is construed more abstract while the near future is construed more concrete (Trope & Liberman 2003). In line with this notion, when thinking about the distant future, one’s schedule is construed abstractly. However, when thinking about the near future, one’s schedule is construed more concrete.

It is argued that low self-control consumers prefer committing to the distant future, not only because they are more likely to procrastinate (Steel 2007), but also because they expect to have time to complete the commitment when their future schedule is more abstract and vague.

High self-control consumers are responsible and conscientious (Baumeister & Vohs 2004). When making their commitment they want to be sure they will have the necessary time for it. Hence they will be more likely to commit if it is to be implemented in the near future, when their schedule is concrete, and they are better able to identify their spare time.

To conclude, it is proposed that high self-control consumers will be more likely to commit to near rather than distant future virtuous behaviors while low self-control are more likely to express the opposite preference. These preferences are driven by time slack perception. High self-control consumers perceive having more time slack when their schedule is concrete (i.e. in the near-future) and low self-control consumers perceive having more time slack when their schedule is abstract (i.e. in the distant-future).

**Study 1:** Participants (n=150, M_age=34) completed a self-control scale (DSC, Ein-Gar et al. 2008, 2012; Ein-Gar & Steinhart 2011) and a filler task. Next, participants were introduced to a new office program that was about to be released either two months from today (near condition) or a year from today (distant condition). The software was expected to have high performance, yet demanded switching cost. Participants indicated their intention to purchase the software. Low self-control participants reported greater intention in the distant-condition while high self-control participants, reported greater intentions in the near-condition.

**Study 2:** was designed to demonstrate the effect while looking at commitment extent, using a shorter time difference and committing to an action with no specific financial gain or loss (i.e. a product is given for free). Participants (N=76, M_age=28) completed the DSC and after 2 weeks were invited to participate in a food-tasting survey on healthy snacks. the survey was expected to take place either the following week (near-condition) or 6 months later (distant-condition). For each snack tested participants were asked to complete an evaluation form and mail it. Participants were asked to indicate the number of snacks they wish to evaluate. As expected low self-control participants indicated more snacks in the distant-condition, while high self-control participants indicated more snacks in the near-condition.

**Study 3:** aimed to show how commitment intention mediated commitment extent. Student participants (n=60, M_age=24) completed the DSC, a filler task and then read about green products. Next, participants reported their willingness to hand out flyers encouraging consumption of green products and indicated the number of flyers they were willing to hand out, either the next semester (near-condition) or the next summer vacation (distant-condition). This manipulation was pre-tested to show that time during the semester is concrete whereas time during the vacation is abstract. As expected low self-control participants were more willing to hand out flyers and were willing to hand our a greater number of flyers under the near-condition while high self-control participants showed the opposite pattern. Moderated mediation showed that the effect of time execution on number of flyers was positively mediated by willingness to commit for low self-control participants and was negatively mediated for high self-control participants.

**Study 4:** tested the mediating effect of spare time on willingness to commit. In addition, self-control was manipulated instead of measured.

Participants (n=122, M_age=28) were asked to describe an experience in which they had overcome temptations (high self-control condition) or yielded to their temptations (low self-control condition). Next, participants read about a pro-bono project in which volunteers spend time with underprivileged children. The project was expected to take place either next month (near-condition) or in 6 months (distant-condition). Participants were asked to indicate the number of hours they would be willing to volunteer and their spare time expectation. High self-control participants indicated more hours in the near condition while low self-control participants indicated more hours in the distant condition. Moderated mediation analyses showed that the effect of time execution on number of hours was positively mediated by the perceived spare time for low self-control participants and was negatively mediated for high self-control participants.

**REFERENCES**


The Collective Coping Strategies of Vulnerable Consumers

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Although the need to focus on how low income consumers find themselves at a disadvantage in the marketplace has been recognised, contemporary calls for research suggest exploring how those who are vulnerable can improvise, navigate and eventually gain access (Pechmann et al., 2011: 28). This paper explores the experiences of adolescents in low-income families and establishes strategies they employ to overcome their financial disadvantage to gain access to a specific consumption experience: the high-school prom. The high-school prom has become a significant rite of passage for adolescents leaving secondary education (Tinson and Nuttall, 2011). This research identifies how adolescents from low-income families are able to meet the consumption-related expectations of this ritual event and affords an opportunity to move beyond understanding consumption under conditions of constraint.

Whilst the dominant discourse in (consumer) coping literature has emphasised the self, coping can also be conceptualized as social or collective. This study proposes that the role of relevant others in coping cannot be underestimated. The conspicuous use of goods and consumption rituals has long been recognised as a valuable resource for consumers to influence the way that others evaluate them (Veblen, 1899). Studies considering the influence of social comparison highlight discontentment felt by those who cannot equal consumption in their social environments (Ackerman et al., 2000). However the social dimension within consumer coping research has been somewhat limited (see for example: McAlexander et al., 1992).

RESEARCH DESIGN

Using a purposive sampling approach, forty in-depth interviews were conducted with 16 year old adolescent males and females from five secondary schools in the North of England, UK. Schools were selected based on percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. Research was conducted over a one month period whilst respondents were preparing to attend their high-school prom; with the individual interviews providing an opportunity to explore emergent themes in relation to consumer coping strategies. A semi-structured interview guide was developed for the data collection phase. The questions were designed to explore the significance and importance of high-school proms in general, to gauge the expectations of the adolescents and contextualise their experience, to understand the level of spend relative to their own social groups and to probe for ways in which money could be ‘saved’. An interpretive analytic stance was adopted to analyse the transcription data and explored themes in the responses of adolescents using the methods outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Spiggle (1994).

FINDINGS

The individual coping strategies here reflect coping typologies in the extant literature and are ascribed to either (active) problem solving or emotional techniques. There was evidence of confrontive strategies (Folkman et al., 1986) where each consumption situation that related to the high school prom was tackled directly. Awareness of available alternatives was employed to alleviate disadvantage and reduce vulnerability. Emotional venting as well as denial (Duhachek, 2005) was also evident for individuals managing this consumption related ritual. Adolescents unable to compete with those who had more (financial) resource employed rational thinking to reduce goal tension (Yap and Bove, 2011). Emotional coping by the adolescents illustrated a greater degree of perceived vulnerability.

Importantly our findings also uncovered collaborative or community directed efforts by respondents. Respondents cited examples of collective practices when describing the role and significance of the prom for their peer group. Collective practices also included support beyond the peer group of the respondents. Collective coping repertoires also appeared to be integrated with a broader appreciation of the transitional nature of the prom and its status as a rite of passage. This represents a combined coping strategy that involves ‘bringing other audiences’ (Trocchia, 2004) who play an instrumental role in the projection of competency and strength, and in this case, successful socialization.

CONCLUSIONS

There are a variety and multiplicity of individual strategies employed here supporting the work of Duhachek (2005) and Hamilton and Catterall (2008) but this research also reveals a variety of skills respondents possess to exert agency as well as adapt to the financial realities with which they are faced (Hill and Stephens 1997). The role of the wider community in navigating the marketplace in support of those experiencing this event reveals an emergent and significant lead in the development of a collective coping strategy framework.

REFERENCES


The Red Sneakers Effect: Inferring Status from Signals of Nonconformity
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We examine the inferences observers make based on individuals’ nonconforming behaviors. A series of lab and field studies demonstrate the conditions under which nonconforming behaviors, such as entering a luxury boutique wearing gym clothes, or wearing red sneakers in a professional setting, can be beneficial and signal a higher status.

In both professional and non-professional settings, consumers often make a significant effort to learn and adhere to dress codes, etiquettes, and other written and unwritten codes of behavior. Conformity to such rules and social norms is driven by a desire to gain social acceptance and status (see Cialdini and Goldstein 2004) and avoid social sanctions and rejection (Levine 1989; Schachter 1951).

In the present research, we build on this work and propose that nonconforming rather than conforming to behavioral norms can lead to unexpected benefits. In particular, we examine the conditions under which nonconforming behaviors, such as wearing red sneakers in a professional setting or using a distinctive rather than standard presentation format, can signal higher status and competence to others. We argue that while unintentional violations of normative codes and etiquettes can indeed result in negative inferences and attributions, when the deviant behavior appears to be intentional, it can lead to higher rather than lower status inferences.

Since nonconformity often has a social cost (e.g., Levine 1989; Schachter 1951), observers may infer that a nonconforming individual is in a powerful position that allows her to intentionally incur the social costs of nonconformity without fear of losing her place in the social hierarchy. We propose that nonconforming behaviors, as costly and observable signals, can act as a particular form of conspicuous consumption and lead to inferences of status by observers. Such status inferences are consistent with Veblen’s classical theory of conspicuous consumption (1899), which suggests that individuals display status through the conspicuous waste of scarce resources. We argue that just as seemingly wasteful consumption of expensive luxuries can signal wealth and status, signals of nonconformity can lead to analogous inferences and attributions.

A series of lab and field studies explore responses to a variety of nonconforming behaviors in different settings. In an effort to ensure high external validity of our findings, all our studies are preceded by interviews and pilots to explore the expected behavioral norms in specific environments and to confirm that higher status individuals in these contexts tend to deviate from such norms.

Study 1 examines responses to descriptions of potential prospects by shop assistants in luxury boutiques in downtown Milan. As was confirmed in interviews with store managers of luxury boutiques in Italy, the accepted norm for shoppers at these high-end stores is an elegant outfit that fits the store’s atmosphere. In this study, we manipulated between-subjects the descriptions of a client (nonconforming vs. conforming) entering the store and compared reactions of shop assistants to those women not familiar with the norm who were recruited in Milan’s central station. In particular, in study 1a, the prospect entering the store was described as wearing gym clothes and a jacket (nonconforming), or wearing an elegant dress and a fur (conforming). In study 1b, we operationalize nonconformity through usage of well-known brand names. The potential customer entering the store was described as wearing flip-flops and a Swatch watch on her wrist (nonconforming) or elegant sandals with heels and a Rolex (conforming). In both manipulations, we find that boutique assistants attribute higher status to the nonconforming shopper, wearing gym clothes, rather than the conforming one wearing an elegant dress. In contrast, people not acquainted with these boutique shoppers attribute higher status to the conforming individual.

In studies 2, we further examine our hypotheses by testing students’ responses to the nonconforming dress-style of their professors. In a pre-test with students, we confirmed that participants perceive the majority of their professors to dress more formally (i.e., professional/business attire) rather than informally (i.e., wear t-shirts). Furthermore, in a pilot study conducted at the ACR conference in 2011, we provide evidence that, in this environment, high status individuals tend to deviate from the norm. We find a significant negative correlation between formality in clothing style and the number of publications in top journals. Individuals who are well-published were more likely to wear an informal or unusual outfit or clothing item (e.g., wearing jeans, red sneakers, or t-shirts) rather than professional/business attire (i.e., a button-down shirt). In study 2, we demonstrate that graduate students perceive a male professor who wears a t-shirt and is not shaven (i.e., nonconforming individual) as having higher status and competence than a professor who wears a tie and is shaven (i.e., conforming individual). These inferences of status are mediated by participants’ perceived intentionality of the individual’s nonconforming behavior. Participants who judged the professor to have higher status when his behavior was nonconforming rather than conforming also believed that the nonconforming professor was purposely deviating from the accepted norm of appropriate behavior in an attempt to distinguish himself from others.

In study 3, we examine nonconformity in the PowerPoint presentation style of contestants in a well-known entrepreneurship competition at MIT. We show that inferences of status are moderated by need for uniqueness (Snyder and Fromkin 1977), such that participants with high levels of need for uniqueness tend to attribute more status to nonconforming behaviors compared to participants with lower needs for uniqueness.

Finally, in a follow-up study we tested two alternative interpretations for the moderating role of need for uniqueness. This follow-up study also aimed to increase the validity of our findings by examining nonconformity outside the lab. One of the authors taught a session at a distinguished symposium of entrepreneurs in a top business school wearing bright red sneakers. We find that individuals with high levels of need for uniqueness are more sensitive and attribute more status to nonconformity signals since they tend to engage in similar distinctive conducts themselves.

Contrary to the notion that nonconformity has ubiquitous negative effects, the current research demonstrates that nonconforming behaviors in the domain of consumption can lead to positive inferences of status and competence in the eyes of others.

REFERENCES

**The Brand Tourism Effect: How Noncore Users Enhance the Image of Exclusive Brands**

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**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

There is an inherent trade-off in managing exclusive and symbolic brands. Brand managers need to generate growth by extending the customer base to new segments and new markets; yet, this increased popularity and prevalence can paradoxically hurt the brand and threaten its symbolic value. The brand image can be diluted when firms engage in aggressive brand extension strategies (Keller 2009; Kirmani et al. 1999) and when undesired outsiders start using them (Berger and Heath 2008; White and Dahl 2007).

Contrary to the shared view that noncore users are a threat to exclusive brands, we investigate the conditions under which these peripheral users and downward brand extensions can enhance rather than dilute the image of the brand.

We introduce a distinction between two types of noncore users based on how they are perceived by current core-consumers of the brand. We define "brand immigrants" as those who are perceived by core consumers to claim "in-group status" they do not fully deserve (i.e., consider themselves as part of the in-group of the brand community), and define "brand tourists" as those who buy the noncore branded products but do not claim any in-group membership (i.e., do not claim to be part of the brand core in-group). We propose that noncore users who are perceived by the current consumers as claiming in-group status (brand immigrants) will have a negative impact on the brand. However, when these peripheral users are not perceived to claim membership status, but just show their admiration for the brand (brand tourists), they will not dilute the image but rather enhance the symbolic value of the brand.

These predictions build on research examining attitudes toward out-groups (Berger and Heath 2008; White and Dahl 2007) and immigrants (Lee and Fiske 2006). Immigrants are often treated with hostility by national residents due to economic and symbolic threats. Similarly, in the context of exclusive brands, we predict that brand immigrants can threaten the distinctiveness of the brand. In contrast, tourists, who do not demand any privileges or citizenship rights, are often welcomed and encouraged to visit host countries. In a pilot study with 210 American citizens, we confirm that citizens hold more favorable attitudes towards tourists than towards immigrants. Tourists boost the pride of citizens. Likewise, brand tourists, as fans and admirers of the brand, are expected to have a positive effect on the symbolic value of the brand and the pride of current customers.

Four studies explore the responses of current exclusive brand consumers to noncore users and downward brand extensions. To ensure high external validity of our findings, all our studies examine the reactions of real consumers to brands they actually own or use and are based on real branding dilemmas and brand extension scenarios. We explore diverse consumer populations and exclusive brands representing a wide variety of ways to obtain in-group status, such as monetary investment and product knowledge (owners of luxury bags or expensive cars), passing admission tests (students at Harvard University), or even training for an activity (participants of the "Tough Mudder" endurance race).

We demonstrate that the negative responses to brand immigrants and positive responses to brand tourists are mediated by feelings of pride and moderated by in-group status and level of self-brand connection (Escalas and Bettman 2005). Moreover, we examine the boundary conditions of the brand tourism effect and show that it pertains specifically to exclusive brands.

Study 1 examines the responses of Harvard undergraduates to a Harvard summer school program. We manipulate between-subjects whether the summer school students are claiming in-group status by mentioning Harvard on their résumé (brand immigrants) or not mentioning Harvard on their résumé (brand tourists). We find that Harvard students have positive reactions when summer school students are depicted as brand tourists and that feelings of pride mediates the positive reactions.

In Study 2, we recruited owners of Prada and Marc Jacobs’s products and compared their responses to those of non-owners of these brands. We manipulate the description of noncore users between-subjects in three conditions by providing testimonials claiming in-group status (brand immigrants), testimonials not claiming membership (brand tourists), or no testimonials at all (control condition). We find that the prestige of the brand’s image is significantly higher in the brand tourist condition than in the control and brand immigrant conditions for brand owners and that this effect is mediated by feelings of pride. In contrast, we find no significant differences among conditions for non-owners of Prada and Marc Jacobs’s products.

Study 3 examines the responses of participants of the endurance run “Tough Mudder.” We test how participants react to offering non-participants the opportunity to buy a ticket to watch the run and take part in the festivities. We describe these non-participants as brand tourists or immigrants. We find that while brand immigrants are perceived as a threat to the symbolic value of the brand, tourists reinforce and enhance the brand’s desirability and status. This effect is mediated by the impact on pride. In addition, we demonstrate that the differential response to brand-immigrants versus brand-tourist is stronger for consumers who feel more strongly connected to the brand (i.e., moderation by level of self-brand connection; Escalas and Bettman 2005).

Study 4 identifies a boundary condition for the brand tourism effect by comparing the responses of owners of exclusive brands of cars (Mercedes, BMW, and Lexus) vs. less exclusive brands (Ford and Honda). We demonstrate that while owners of exclusive brands react positively to noncore users depicted as brand tourists, owners of less exclusive brands do not respond as positively to brand tourists. Moreover we find that the positive effect of brand tourists for owners of exclusive cars is moderated by level of self-brand connection (Escalas and Bettman 2005).

Finally, we discuss theoretical and managerial implications including additional studies and demonstrations of how some of our findings have been applied in the field.

**REFERENCES**


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Envious reactions have been argued to be common at the marketplace (cf. Belk 2008). Envy is referred to as a frustrating feeling and mix of negative emotions that arises when a person compares him- or herself to other people who are doing better (Salovey and Rodin 1991; Parrott and Smith 1993). Nascent research suggests that envy can come in positive form, i.e. benign envy, and a negative form, i.e. malicious envy (Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters 2009; 2010; 2011ab). Although they both comprise frustration, malicious envy includes hostility towards the enviéd (Van de Ven et al. 2011a), while benign envy comprises admiration of the enviéd (Van de Ven et al., 2011a, p. 985). Van de Ven et al. (2011a) documented that benign envy increases willingness to pay while malicious envy decreases willingness to pay. Consequently, it is important for firms to evoke benign envy and avoid malicious envy. However, empirical evidence suggests that benign and malicious envy are closely related or that one form of envy can easily “transmute” into the other (Van de Ven 2009, 134). Considering that the same term envy can yield such different consequences, yet denote the same type of emotional reaction, it is proposed here that benign envy may serve as an antecedent to malicious envy. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between benign and malicious envy and identify variables predicting when benign envy turns malicious.

We propose that perceived attractiveness of the purchase to others and the tendency to engage in ability-oriented comparisons strengthens the relationship between benign and malicious envy, whereas the tendency to engage in opinion-oriented comparisons mitigates the relationship between benign and malicious envy. This prediction is based upon theories of envy as a response to ego-threats (Salovey 1991). As consumers often use consumption as a tool to enhance social status, belongingness, admiration and strengthened ego (Mead et al. 2011), it is likely that people are sensitive to what purchases other people value. Therefore, it can be expected that perceived attractiveness of a purchase to other people strengthens the relationship between benign and malicious envy.

The envy literature postulates that envy is evoked by negative comparisons to other people (Salovey 1991; Smith and Kim 2007; Van de Ven et al. 2011a). The literature on social comparisons propose that people can engage in different types of social comparisons (Festinger 1954; Gibbons and Buunk 1999). Gibbons and Buunk (1999) report that people can engage in ability and opinion-oriented social comparisons. Ability-oriented comparisons are defined as social comparisons where people compare their abilities and skills with those of other people, i.e. answer the question “How am I doing?” (Gibbons and Buunk 1999, 129). Opinion-oriented comparisons refer to comparisons where a person uses other people as a reference point for evaluating what to think about something, i.e. “What should I think or feel” (Gibbons and Buunk 1999, 129). Thus, the ability dimension refers to enhancement of the self in comparison to others while the opinion dimension refers to an orientation towards wanting to be approved by others. It is proposed here that the tendency to make ability-oriented comparisons increase the likelihood that people will feel malicious envy because these people are concerned with self-enhancement and consequently vulnerable to ego-threats. In contrast, it is proposed here that people who engage in opinion-oriented comparisons are less likely to turn maliciously envious because they are interested in blending in rather than enhance themselves.

125 students (37.6 % females, Mw = 22, SD = 4.09) took part in the study. Following the study-outline of Van de Ven et al. (2011a), participants were shown a color-picture featuring an advertisement for an iPhone with product information and a short story. In the story, the participants were asked to imagine themselves working on a common project together with a fellow student from the same University. The story stated that during the first day of cooperation, the fellow student mentions buying an iPhone and demonstrating the phone and its features to the others. Next, participants answered a series of questions about their envy, impressions of the product and the person in the story on a 7-point likert-scale (Van de Ven et al. 2011a) as well as Gibbons and Buunk’s (1999) Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (INCOM) scale.

Results show a positive moderating effect of perceived attractiveness of the purchase to others (β = .176, t = 1.87, p > .05). We also tested whether attractiveness of the purchase to oneself as a moderator but this relationship was insignificant. Thus, the more attractive the purchase is believed to be for others (vs. to oneself), the more likely it is that maliciously envious reactions will be elicited. In line with our predictions, we found evidence for that the tendency to engage in ability-oriented comparisons positively moderates the relationship between benign and malicious envy (β = .173, t = 1.85, p > .05). The main effect of ability comparison was also significant (β = .311, t = 3.40, p > .01). This means that the tendency to engage in ability-comparison also has a direct influence on malicious envy even in the presence of the other factors. Furthermore, in line with predictions, the tendency to engage in opinion-oriented comparisons negatively moderated the relationship between benign and malicious envy (β = -.190, t = -2.05, p > .01).

These results extend the work by Van de Ven and his colleagues (2011a) by identifying factors that positively and negatively moderate the relationship between benign and malicious envy. In conclusion, findings show that perceived attractiveness of the purchase to others as well as tendency to engage in ability-oriented comparisons positively moderate the relationship between benign and malicious envy, whereas engaging in opinion-oriented comparisons negatively moderates the relationship between benign and malicious envy. Thus, the results support a theory that “good envy” is likely to turn ugly for people who are relatively who are concerned about their social status in comparison to others (cf. Salovey and Rodin 1991; Smith and Kim 2007).

REFERENCES


Consumer Food as Play: Insights from Two Interpretive Studies
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In this article, we draw on two interpretive studies to explore how young people use food as an object of play. To understand play, it is important to make connections with the work of Holt (1995), when he examined what people do when they consume. He proposed a typology of consumption practices, a comprehensive vocabulary portraying how consumers consume. Holt (1995) suggested that the metaphors of consuming included experience, integration and classification. However, he also noted that a fourth category had been neglected, which is, consuming as play. He proposed that people use a consumption object to play, which enables them to interact with other consumers. This study of play practices draw insights from theories of play (Mellou, 1994; Lambert, 1999). In fact, some researchers like Meares, (1992) and Yeale (2001), have been concerned with play as a metaphor for invisible and private processes of an individual. They argue that the highly visible nature of play masks the less visible but significant process of identity and emotional development among children. Following from this our study uncovers the hidden meanings embedded in the practice of consuming food as play.

Previous research has explored play in relation to leisure activities such as river rafting expeditions (Arnould and Price, 1993); baseball games (Holt, 1995); bargain related games (Grayson and Deighton, 1995); as well as playful consumption at a weekend community flea market (Sherry 1990). Play has thus been broadly understood as distinct from the consumption of ordinary goods and services as these consumption events are not within the context of ordinary day-to-day consumption. These are special events that are pre-planned. And yet, play practices that occur naturally take place in everyday life, including at mealtimes.

Given this background, the purpose of this paper is to explore the interactional processes that unfold when young people engage in playful food consumption practices, and understand the associated meanings of this practice. Although we often come across food play in our daily lives, this has failed to capture the imagination of consumer researchers.

This paper draws on two interpretive studies. Study 1 considered the everyday practices surrounding young people’s food consumption, and study 2 looked at how meal time practices and food consumption rituals impacted the identity of young 3rd generation British Sikhs in the UK as a point of comparison for study 1. Within study 1, the informants were young people aged between 13 and 17 who provided insights through visual diaries, depth interviews, and online interviews. This data set was complimented by detailed field notes as well as mealtime observations both at school and at home. Within study 2 informants were young 3rd generation British Sikhs between the ages of 14-20 who also provided insights through visual diaries, in-depth interviews (20), online interviews (10) as well as reflective written diaries as a means to encourage reflexivity. We chose 3rd generation British Sikhs because they belonged to two distinct cultures and it was imperative to determine if ethnic culture and acculturative or reacculturative (Takhar, 2012) factors impacted play at meal times. Insights were also obtained from the parents of the young people in question. Informants were selected using a convenience sampling approach, and data analysis was conducted in an iterative manner following Spiggle’s (1994) suggestions for data analysis. The data for the two studies was analysed at the same intervals and dependent on emergent themes, the semi-structured interview guide for questioning was adapted. Two key themes emerged from our findings, and these are: 1) the interplay between technological devices and the act of play at mealtimes; and 2) play at mealtimes as a symbol of consumer resistance.

A key theme that emerged was the interplay between technological devices (smartphones, ipads, ipods etc.) and the act of play at mealtimes. As in Chitakunye and Maclaran (2012), some young people used technological devices and food as objects of play to invite others into a social relationship. For example, within study 2 it emerged that the new iphone encourages young people to use the facetime application, which enables them to physically see a person through their phone and feel as though their friends and family are eating with them. Some informants would be instant messaging one another about their feelings towards their teachers and parents, a practice that they found to be humorous. Others described using mobile phones to take pictures of the food being consumed. These representations of food consumption would be shared with friends not present at the dinner table, and would arouse different emotions such as frowning and making fun of different food representations.

Another theme to emerge within the process was that of food play as a symbol of consumer resistance. Rather than eating what was put at the table in an orderly manner, in line with the school rules and norms, young people engaged in acts of throwing food at each other in the school canteen, demonstrating their numerous interpretations of how food could be consumed and particularly the various connotations associated with how food could be fun. This was more like a game. Whilst the teachers felt that this was an act of unruly behavior, we found that there were several meanings embedded in this consumption behavior. Within marketing and consumer research, discussions of consumer resistance have focused primarily on collective (organized) actions directed at changes in marketing mix structure and composition (Penaloza and Price, 1993). However, within this study, resistance emerge in the form of everyday play practices at mealtimes. We interpret this behaviour as a symbol of acting out their feelings and resisting the notion of behaving in a certain predefined manner at mealtimes. We also interpret this as resisting the feeling of being confined to a formal environment of food consumption (such as the school canteen), and trying to achieve an ultimate goal of escapism. We also found that play at mealtimes was not just an act of resistance against institutionalized codes of conduct in the school canteen, but it was exemplary of how young people used food and play to express their views about autonomy, identity, equality and renegotiating structural rules embedded in the school. Similarly, play was used to express resistance to autonomy within the home as young people resisted the rules of their parents and played games on their phones or messaged their friends whilst around the dinner table.

REFERENCES


An Attribution Explanation of the Effect of Valence Consistency on Review Helpfulness

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Online reviews have become one of the most popular information sources for consumers (e.g. Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006; Steffes and Burgee 2009). The use of reviews is particularly relevant when being confronted with choice overload. However, consulting online reviews might cause another overload issue: the abundance of available reviews. To help consumers with this information search problem, websites such as Amazon.com present the most helpful online reviews upfront, so consumers can easily identify them during their information search.

Review helpfulness is influenced by numerous factors, including the valence of the review (positive vs. negative). Past research on online reviews has proposed a so-called positivity bias by demonstrating that positive reviews are often perceived as more helpful (Pan and Zhang 2011; Zhang, Craciun, and Shin 2010). However, existing research has ignored the fact that reviews are often consulted together with other reviews. The goal of the current research is to investigate if the helpfulness of a review might be affected by the valence of a focal review and its consistency with the valence of other available reviews.

The effect of review valence consistency can operate in one of two directions. First, a review that is inconsistent with other available reviews might be perceived as more helpful than a review that is consistent with other reviews. For example, when most reviews of a product are positive, a negative review can offer something new and might therefore be perceived as more informative (Skowronski and Carlson 1987). The inconsistency could give this review additional diagnostic power, which is highly related to review helpfulness (Jiang and Benbasat 2007; Mudambi and Schuff 2010).

Alternatively, the current paper argues that a review that is inconsistent with most of the other available reviews will be perceived as less helpful than a review that is consistent with the other reviews. This hypothesis is based on the attribution theory, which offers an understanding of the inferences people make about the validity of the opinions expressed in a review (Folkes 1988). Essentially, people classify the consequences of an action (i.e. the review) into two categories: reviews can be either attributed to reviewer-related motivations (internal attributions) or product-related motivations (external attributions) (Monga and John 2008).

Attributions of causality are often dependent on the extent to which a review is associated with one particular product, the degree to which the product experiences are stable across time and situations, and how likely others agree with the reviewer (Fiske and Taylor 1991; Kelley 1973). Consequently, we argue that in a case of high consistency between a review’s valence and the valence of other consulted reviews, a review is more likely to be viewed as caused by the product experience (external attributions), while inconsistent reviews will be more likely attributed to personal attitudes and feelings of the reviewer (internal attributions). Since external factors are more reflective of a product’s actual quality, the review will be perceived as more informative and, hence, as more helpful. This will be tested in three studies.

Study 1 examines the effect of review valence consistency on the perceived helpfulness of positive and negative reviews, using data from Amazon. Over 1,300 reviews were extracted for books from different sales ranks. For each review we recorded the review valence (1-5 stars, with 5 being very positive) and the average product score as a proxy for the review valence of other presented reviews as our primary independent variables and the percentage of people finding the review helpful as our dependent variable. In support of the attribution theory hypothesis, our results show that valence consistency is positively related to helpfulness. As such, a positive review for a positively evaluated product will be perceived as more helpful than a negative review would be in this context. This effect disappears when there is a fair share of negative reviews.

A second study investigated if the effect from study 1 can be replicated in an experimental setting and tested the attribution theory as the underlying mechanism of the valence consistency effects. In a 2 (review valence) x 3 (review consistency) design, participants assigned four restaurant reviews, consisting of one focal review (positive or negative) and three filler reviews, resulting in a high, medium or low consistency condition. After reading the reviews, we measured participants’ evaluation of the focal review and causal attributions of the review, distinguishing between external and internal attributions (Laczniak, DeCarlo, and Ramaswami 2001). Similar to the findings of study 1, both the positive and negative review was evaluated as more helpful when being consistent with the other available reviews. A mediation analysis revealed that consistent reviews are perceived as more helpful because they are attributed to product-related factors, while inconsistent reviews are attributed to personal motivations.

Study 3 investigated a possible moderator. Since experts are often perceived as more objective (Hu, Liu, and Zhang 2008), expert reviews are less likely to be attributed to internal factors when being inconsistent with other reviews. Therefore we expect that an inconsistent expert review might still be perceived as highly helpful, making the valence consistency effect disappear. In a 2 (review consistency) x 2 (reviewer expertise) participants were given reviews about a tablet, with the focal review written by either an anonymous customer or an expert. The results for the regular review replicated the results of the previous study. Explained by the difference in causal attributions, the consistent review is perceived as more helpful. Confirming our expectations, a moderated mediation model revealed that the helpfulness of expert reviews was not affected by valence consistency. This can be explained by the significantly lower internal attributions for the expert review, compared to the regular review.

Although review valence is a well-documented factor for review helpfulness, this research is the first to investigate the role of valence consistency with other available reviews. Drawing on attribution theory, we show that positive reviews are only perceived as more helpful than negative reviews when other reviews are also positive. Because of the high relevance of online reviews, our findings offer interesting managerial insights.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Marketing researchers have studied music as a component of retail environments, in advertisements, and as a source of information during processing (Kellaris et al. 1992, 1993, 1994; Kotler 1973; MacInnis and Park 1991; Smith and Curnow 1966). Recent work shows that music has far greater importance in consumers’ lives, having emotional effects ranging from feelings of calm to elation (Juslin et al. 2008). The study of auditory influences via music should not be limited to the retail and advertising context. We close this gap and, using a phenomenological study, demonstrate how music can be understood beyond its role as a background or supporting factor in a context.

Experiential Consumption: Emotional, Physical and Psychological Benefits of Music

This study is embedded within the experiential consumption approach (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982). Partaking in a flow of fantasies, feelings and fun is part of consuming music, and this approach provides a clear foundation for the investigation of musical experiences. As an experiential consumption activity, music listening has primarily been shown to provide important hedonic benefits to the consumer. According to the majority of researchers in musicology, music listening in daily life is typically used for enjoyment purposes (Juslin et al. 2008; North et al. 2004; Sloboda et al. 1999; 2001). Further, while music listening is normally not the focal activity in one’s day (North et al. 2004; Sloboda et al. 1999, 2001), it nonetheless is used as an experience manipulator and enhancer (Bruner 1990; Hung 2001; Juslin et al. 2008; Kellaris and Kent 1994; North et al. 2004; Sloboda et al. 1999). In addition to music’s appeal as an enhancer of everyday activities, music is also widely recognized for its emotive qualities (Hung 2001; Juslin et al. 2008; Khalfa et al. 2002; MacInnis and Park 1991; North et al. 2004). There is general agreement on the emotional qualities of music, yet researchers have debated on the direction of this causality and whether music simply represents various emotional qualities (the cognitivist perspective), or whether it actually induces these emotional reactions in the listener (the emotivist perspective) (i.e. Davies 2001; Hunter and Schellenberg 2010; Juslin and Vastjall 2008; Kivy 2001; Levitin and Tirovonas 2009). But physiological and neurological evidence has demonstrated that a strict cognitivist approach lacks the ability to account for the emotional reactions in listeners in times when the musical qualities can not be readily described (Hunter and Schellenberg 2010; Juslin and Vastjall 2008). That is, when music had ambiguous qualities that couldn’t be articulated, emotions were still reportedly experienced and felt. Juslin and Vastjall (2008) further argue that there has been a lack of systematic work to properly investigate how emotions are part of music, and that oftentimes researchers have confounded what participants feel from music with their own perception of what the music conveys.

Beyond emotions, music has been shown to produce measurable physical reactions in its listeners. Typical reports of physical reactions include thrills and chills which manifest as shivers that start in the back of the neck which then spread down the back and to the arms (Konecni, Wanik and Brown 2007; Grewe et al. 2007). More importantly, when combined with emotions, such physical reactions give rise to what has been coined “strong emotions” (Gabrielsson 2001; Goldstein 1980; Grewe et al. 2007). According to Goldstein (1980) and Grewe et al. (2007), music is one of the best elicitors of strong emotions via arousal, and this in turn has demonstrated important benefits for the individual’s physiological and emotional state.

A final advantage of musical experiences can be described as providing psychological benefits to the listener. In addition to the reported emotional and physiological outcomes attributed to music, music listening has been shown to offer psychological benefits such as decreased anxiety, pain and discomfort (McCaffrey and Good 2000; Keith, Russell and Wearer 2009). Such studies indicate that music not only serves as an emotional stabilizer, but can also offer therapeutic benefits that would otherwise be addressed with more traditional medicinal solutions.

The Study and Major Findings

Data, in the form of depth interviews, were collected from individuals who experience the phenomenon. The interview questions were very broad, and the analysis phase focused on clustering meanings into themes. Fourteen adults (ages 18-56) were recruited to participate via an ad that asked them to bring in a song that is among their favorites and with which they would be willing to share and discuss with the researcher. During each interview, participants were asked to play the song for the researcher, explain their reasoning for picking it, and elaborate on what meanings they attached to the song. In addition, participants were asked to engage in thought listings, as well as respond to the PANAS scale (Watson, Clark and Tellegen 1988).

We organize our findings (eight major themes) into three meta-themes. The eight themes are: What I Hear, What I Feel, What I Think, Me and Others, and Private/Social. The three meta-themes are: The Human Experience of Music, Metamorphosis, and The Self-Other Link. Taken together, these themes explain the “what” and the “how” of music consumption of favorite pieces of music.

The Contribution

With the advent of portable music players, online file sharing, ambient background music and advertising jingles, individuals are exposed to various types of sounds throughout their day. Yet as consumer behavior researchers have limited our exploration of this behaviour to its effects on advertisements, to retail and service settings, and to tunes that are not novel or new to the consumer. We argue that we still have much to learn about what such a ubiquitous occurrence means for consumers. We believe auditory consumption needs to be investigated in a manner that moves beyond its prior paradigmatic boundaries, and we begin this by engaging with consumers regarding songs and sounds that are familiar, by moving beyond retail service settings, and by looking at the experience through a theoretical anchor that can better inform such a phenomenon.

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Sell to Subvert: How Market-Critical Consumer-Producer Communities Cope With Market Success

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In recent years, market-critical “consumer-producer communities” (Gabl and Hemetsberger 2012, 3) have generated remarkable interest among Western consumers. In 2011, for example, Mozilla Firefox was awarded brand of the year at the biggest German computer fair (Gabl and Hemetsberger 2012). Between 2000 and 2007, the number of CSA-farms in the US has grown from 761 to 12,549 (Press and Arnould 2011). And in 2008, the impressive number of 47,000 people attended the week long Burning Man performative art festival in the Black Rock desert (Chen and O’Mahony 2008).

For such communities, advancing a market-critical agenda while proactively engaging with conventional market participants carries a substantial dual risk of either falling prey to mainstream ideologies and practices, or getting roped into marginalized extreme positions. This situation evokes the important question of how market-critical consumer-producer communities manage the ostensibly paradoxical project of striking a blow against the capitalist empire by selling things (to paraphrase O’Guinn and Muñiz 2005)?

Consumer researchers have explored this question in various empirical contexts (Chen 2009; Hemetsberger and Reinhardt 2009; Kozinets 2002; Moraes, Szmigin, and Carrigan 2010; Press and Arnould 2011; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007). These authors find, among other things, that such production communities typically experience tensions between members’ rather idealist or rather pragmatist cultural positions (Chen and O’Mahony 2006; Hemetsberger 2006). To get over these tensions, members, for instance, tend to proactively engage in open, meta-level reflections about ideologically problematic decisions (Gabl and Hemetsberger 2012). Such behavior allows the community to dynamically balance their practical approximation to, but also their ideological difference from, the mainstream market.

The communities considered in these studies are typically uninterested in explicitly producing for, and selling commercial products to paying customers. This absence of monetary goals and related economic pressures serves these communities as a powerful marker of difference vis-à-vis more conventional, capitalist market agents. However, a great share of ethically motivated consumer-producer communities (and companies) that try to change the market from within, face the potentially even more intricate situation when selling stuff to subvert the system. How do they cope with the dual risk of selling out, or failing to sell at all?

To address this question, we conducted a longitudinal, extended case study of the “Premium Cola” community (Burawoy 1991). Premium Cola is a user-generated “community brand” that is entirely governed and managed by market-critical consumers (Füller, Lüdicke, and Jawecki 2007; Witt et al. 2006). The community produces and markets a cola soft drink, a beer, and a coffee. Premium Cola was founded in 2002 and has, since then, grown its sales with annual rates of about 100%. In 2012, Premium Cola will sell more than 1,000,000 bottles with the declared mission of proving “that morals and markets can go together” (see www.premium-cola.de).

Over a period of two years, the first author followed the community’s online conversations, attended two offline community gatherings and four “orga meetings,” and conducted 18 long interviews and numerous informal short conversations with community members. The authors interpreted and triangulated data from seven years of online conversation with personal interview and observational data to create a grounded, inductive, longitudinal account of the evolving identities, strategic dilemmas (Jasper 2004), and coping practices of the Premium Cola community. These methods allowed us for garnering three main findings.

1. The community’s rapid growth repeatedly surfaced—and continues to surface—two influential ideological dilemmas. These are, should the community adopt conventional marketing practices such as product advertising or product line extensions, or reject them on moral grounds? And should the community accept some degrees of (fast) efficient-individual decision making that could potentially jeopardize its moral position, or rather rely on (slow) democratic-communal procedures that, in turn, could jeopardize its market progress?

2. As a result of these ideological dilemmas, the community has gradually split into two opposing, yet mutually dependent, camps of pragmatist and idealist members (Hemetsberger 2006). Pragmatist members are interested in proactively managing the community’s progress and pushing for fast, individual decision making. Idealist members, instead, take the role of proactively pushing back to protect the community’s ideals and democratic ethos.

3. These two groups cope with each specific ideological conflict with a combination of four distinct framing practices.

A) Discrediting the evil competitor: Through constantly highlighting the main competitor’s (i.e. the fashionable Fritz Cola) unethical business practices, the community is able to frame even community-externally contested market practices as morally legitimate. This practice documents a particular notion of morality, in which the community does not have to be absolutely good, but relatively better.

B) Framing sales as market subversion: Premium Cola depends on economic survival to make its case. Members are therefore able to frame advertising campaigns, line extensions, or international expansions as a way of spreading “the message through the backdoor” (emic terms), even though it remains unclear what this „back door“ actually is.

C) Emphasizing economically unreasonable practices: The Premium community often engages in practices that most strikingly contradict profit maximization logic. Ostensibly irrational practices, such as using vegan glue for bottle labels, help the community to emphasize its disinterest in profit maximization and vividly demonstrate that the community privileges moral market practice even over its customers’ economic interests.

D) Emphasizing the centrality of the community: Whenever pragmatist community members resolve a key problem individually rather than in democratic ways, these members tend to make up by emphasizing collective efforts preceding their decision, showing how their decision advances community goals, and explaining where the decision reiterates community ideology.

Our research on a consumer-producer community that proactively sells to subvert yields three theoretical contributions. First, the community fosters a relative, rather than an absolute, critical position which enables it to frame almost any decision as morally legitimate. Second, the community depends on emphasizing its disinterest in profit maximization, which is achieved by means of demonstrative economic wastefulness. And third, the community secures its...
moral grounds and reputation by means of inviting and accepting community decisions.

REFERENCES


Revaluation of Nonconscious Brand-Attribute Associations and its Effect on Brand Attitudes
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
A particular challenge for marketers and consumers is that the valence of attributes, or of a particular endorser with which a brand is associated, often changes over time, sometimes even abruptly. For example, “organic” wasn’t such a positive attribute years ago, but for many people nowadays it is: Witness the success of the U.S. organic food chain Whole Foods. As another example, Psy, who did not meet with critical acclaim before “Gangnam Style,” is now enormously popular, including with advertisers (e.g., Samsung).

In these examples, consumers can be considered to be fully aware of the brand’s associated concepts (“organic,” ‘Psy”), and hence it is no surprise that when their valence changes, the brand’s equity follows suit. As we now know, however, much of what consumers learn about brands in daily life is learned with only minimal involvement, and sometimes even unconsciously, and we also know that what is learned unconsciously can influence behavior (e.g., Bargh, et. al 1996). Our first research question is: Suppose the valence of a certain attribute changes, and suppose that attribute had earlier become nonconsciously associated with a brand—would the (conscious) attribute valence change influence evaluations of the (nonconsciously) associated brand? Our second research question is: Is “nonconscious discrimination” possible in the application of revised valence to brand evaluations? To illustrate, suppose an attribute’s valence changed, but only for a subset of several brands associated with it. For instance, suppose an article stated that organic food products from region Z should be avoided because of contaminants: Such information would make ‘organic’ a negative attribute for brands produced in region Z, but not brands produced in other regions. If a brand-attribute association is nonconscious, it is not evident that an attribute valence change would impact brand evaluations at all—let alone impact only brands for which the change is relevant.

We addressed these questions in two experiments. Both involved a three-step process. First, one neutral Chinese ideograph was paired with the negatively valenced attributes “X-ray” and “scan” (both words pretested as negative, likely because of their association with hospitals/illness), and one neutral Chinese ideograph paired with neutral words (e.g., ball pen, stone). The two ideographs were shown subliminally with the words, including “X-ray” and “scan,” shown supraliminally. Step two involved participants being given either an article with information that revalued X-ray/scan in a positive direction in a specific context, or a control article that made no mention of X-ray/scan (see below). In step three, the Chinese ideographs were described as two brands for a service that, in two different ways in the two experiments, either matched or did not match the context specified for attribute revaluation, and the brands were then evaluated.

In Experiment 1, 81 undergrads were randomly assigned to two between-subject article conditions (Hunan virus vs. fuel prices), and one within subject attribute condition (x-ray/scan vs. neutral). In the first task, ostensibly a visual memory task, the two Chinese ideographs were paired with x-ray/scan vs. neutral words. In the second, supposedly unrelated, task (ostensibly a research project for a well-known foreign express mail company that was expanding to Hong Kong) participants read a short news article that supposedly recently appeared. In the Hunan virus condition, it mentioned that the Hunan virus, a bacterial virus from Hunan, China, was now being spread through the mail, including express mail. The article detailed its symptoms and the difficulty curing it. Although invisible to the naked eye, the virus was described as being easily detected with adequate screening devices; therefore, postal/courier services in Hong Kong should scan/x-ray every piece of mail/package to detect the virus before the mail was delivered. The Hunan virus article thus changed the valence of x-ray and scan from negative to positive in the context of courier services.

The control fuel prices article of the same length discussed world oil prices and how express-mail companies were now adding a fuel surcharge. Because the fuel prices article did not even mention the words x-ray and scan, we expected that for participants reading it, the default (negative) evaluation of x-ray and scan would prevail.

Participants then evaluated two express-mail companies, each with one of the ideographs as its name and described with a series of attributes. Attribute toward the ideograph brand (summing across three (-3 to +3) items, negative/positive, unfavorable/favorable, and dislike/like; a = .90) paired with neutral words, was then subtracted from the attitude toward the ideograph brand paired with x-ray/scan.

There was a significant article effect on these difference scores (F(1, 102) = 6.30, p = .01): The (ideograph) brand paired with x-ray/scan was evaluated more favorably than the (ideograph) brand paired with neutral words in the Hunan virus article condition (Mdiff = .38); this pattern was reversed in the fuel prices article condition (Mdiff = -1.16). Therefore, the attribute’s (overt) revaluation was reflected in nonconscious brand-attribute associations and attitudes. An awareness task (Adaval & Wyer, 2004) revealed that there was virtually no trace of the subliminal ideographs in memory.

In experiment 2 we examined if we would see the same effects in a mismatched context, namely by changing the valence of x-ray/scan in a context that did not match the category of the brands to be evaluated. To do so, we included an article condition where the valence of x-ray/scan was changed to be more positive, but not in a situation involving express-mail companies—the article mentioned that new airport scanning devices could detect drug smuggling. The results (only summarized here because of space constraints) supported nonconscious discrimination. The revised valence of x-ray/scan was applied to judgments of the express mail companies by participants in the Hunan virus condition (matched context) but not by participants in the ‘drug smuggling’ condition (mismatched context). Hence, nonconsciously-revalued associations were only used in judgments when they were relevant. Overall, the results of our research are consistent with evidence that has recently begun to accumulate in favor of unconscious processes being strategic, adaptive, and flexible.

REFERENCES
Constructing and Experiencing the ‘Other’: Space and Identity Politics in New Retail Contexts
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This research explores the means through which consumers from diverse social classes construct their space in a new consumption space, and articulate the identity politics at play in consumers’ quest to construct their space and experience the ‘other’ in traditional bazaars, now in the form of High Society Bazaars (HSBs) in Turkey, where the west meets the east. As a result of our findings, we position our paper in the broad literature on identity construction and otherness (of people and spaces) from diverse disciplines. We acknowledge studies on consumers’ unified or hybrid identity projects in consumer research. However, we focus our attention on not primarily identity projects but on a context that made it possible for us to observe phenomena without prior assumptions regarding identity projects or otherwise. When we studied this context, we discovered the means used by people to move away from the modernist impulse of pursuing single identity projects and experience different modes of life as they construct their space in alternative retail contexts. This focus also led us discover the dynamics of identity politics of/within consumption spaces. Furthermore, we find that the ‘other’ is represented and ‘otherizing’ is performed by diverse social classes, and the HSB that we study as the new consumption space is constructed as the other by both social classes. HSBs provide a leveling space for consumers from different social strata initially representing different and conflicting identities (traditional, westernized), where they can negotiate their space on equal footing and construct each other through different means.

‘Otherness’ as an identity project often emphasized the construction of the nonwestern as the exoticized ‘other’ by the West (Costa 1998; MacCannell 1992), and is characterized by conflicts that arise among different identity positions and construction of hybrid identities (Ger and Ostergaard, 1998; Lindridge et al., 2004; Üstüner and Holt, 2007). Orientalist discourses are still dominant reflecting the West’s obsession with exclusion in order to maintain its supremacy (Bardhi et al., 2010; Bousa, 2009; Said, 1979; Tzanelli, 2001). These dynamics of West-East relationships were similarly observed in the relationship between the upper and lower strata, and in their orientations toward the bazaars in Turkey, as also reflected by our informants. Members of the upper classes perceived in themselves qualities of the West (refined, superior). Given the images of the neighborhood bazaar for the westernized, their impulse was to distance themselves from this uncivilized ‘other’. Even in the minds of the lower classes (the traditional), the bazaar signified what the ‘westernized’ represented it as. However, as certain bazaars were turned into HSBs, we find that the westernized have felt the allure of the other, and experiencing and constructing the other has become seductive for the upper and lower classes, signaling changing orientations toward organizing life and identities in globalizing markets.

Using multiple sources to collect data (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994; Patton, 2002), we initially conducted a focus group interview with bazaar shoppers in order to find out the reasons for the growing interest in HSBs and transformations in retail consumption. We asked questions concerning the feelings, motivations, and experiences of people frequenting these bazaars. Focus group interview with mainly lower social class people provided observations of linkages between our initial findings and the theories concerning otherness. We then conducted long interviews (McC racken, 1988) with HSB shoppers from different social classes, in order to get an in-depth understanding of the experiences and relationships among the patrons of the HSB and their orientations toward the HSB. A grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) was used to develop a theory about the phenomena being investigated based on our findings from the focus group and long interviews.

We contribute to the research on identity construction and otherness through identifying the means whereby the other is constructed and experienced in a new consumption space, the HSB. We find that ‘hybridization’ is one significant means that provides a degree of comfort in encountering the other in that each finds license in immersing in a hybrid because it is not a direct intrusion into the ‘other’. HSB becomes a hybrid space where the other can be encountered and accommodated on negotiated terms without concerns of being imposed on. Negotiation is another means that empowers people to pursue their transformational goals, made possible by hybridization. In negotiating license, the traditional find license they did not have before in their relations with the westernized, whereas the westernized accede the license of the traditional, which they did not before. For both elements, the sought consequence of this negotiation is the ability to experience the ‘other’ and ‘being the other’. Negotiating space is a means of licensing those who lacked control over a (public) space of their own the space to claim their own.

The bazaar, once known to be the consumption space that was a signifier of the lower class identity (Urry, 1991), has been redesigned to include upper classes, now in the form of HSBs, and altered the discourse on social class and consumption of space. HSBs as new hybrid sites of consumption provide a leveling space for consumers from different social strata initially representing different and conflicting identities (traditional, modernized), where they can negotiate their space on equal footing, and construct the self as the other to experience different modes of life. Different social classes negotiate their cultural difference and create a culture that is a hybrid, yet not at the expense of losing touch with their own cultures or by resolving them to become a constant part of the hybrid. Construction of space is characterized by a constantly transforming interplay (Meethan et al., 2006) between the lower classes as the local residents of the bazaar, the sellers, and the elite sectors of the population visiting the bazaar. People desire to both experience and construct the otherness of a place from their own perspectives and lived experiences (Belk et al., 2003). The order in HSBs brings the possibility of constant negotiation, thus rendering all customers potential players (Bauman, 1996), along with the thrill of experiencing the other. This presents the opportunity to study consumption of space with a distinct difference from earlier studies, where the spaces consumed are often organized by ‘authorities’—whether governments or private owners of spaces (Benjamin, 2002; Miller, 1998b; Urry, 1995). In the HSB, space is mostly designed by its inhabitants; the sellers, who are small vendors independent of the authorities, and the shoppers, who influence how the stalls will be stocked and displayed by their motion as they visit the HSB. This is a transition from consumption of space to construction of space that is an active, contested and transformative process involving negotiation (Goodman et al., 2010). HSB serves as a physical space that is socially constructed to experience and construct otherness (Lefebvre, 1991), and motivates people to adopt multiple identities to be included in this consumption venue.

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Price Promotion for Emotional Impact
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The process by which consumers respond to price promotions is generally thought to be a cognitive process (Inman, McAlister, and Hoyer 1990). Emotions are seldom considered, unless they are the output of an established deliberative process (Chandon, Wansink, and Laurent 2000) or evoked spontaneously (Naylor, Raghunathan, and Ramanathan 2006). We propose a new interpretation of the way consumers respond to price promotions, acknowledging that behavior is the joint product of affective and deliberative processes (Loewenstein and O’Donoghue 2007).

We suggest that a price promotion lowers the stakes in the decision environment, thereby reducing the motivation of consumers to engage in effortful deliberation. In a dual-process framework, an inattentive consumer is then more likely to rely on affective processes to make purchase decisions and product evaluations. As such, price promotion produces a series of related effects, including a stronger preference for affectively superior goods and valuations that are more polarized and insensitive to scope.

We report five experiments that offer multiple replications and refinements in support of this theory. In Experiment 1, participants approached a table displaying a Snickers Candy Bar and a Nature Valley Granola Bar and were asked to purchase one unit of the preferred product. Both snacks were either sold at full price or at a 50% discount. As predicted, the presence of a price discount shifted preferences towards the affectively superior Snickers Bar. Importantly, participants in the discount (vs. full price) condition performed worse on a feature recall task and reported relying more on their feelings when deciding. We tested for two plausible confounds, a mood and a justification mechanism, but found no evidence of these effects. Experiment 2 is a replication of our basic phenomenon in the context of monetary valuations for a series of products that differed in affective and cognitive content. Consistent with our theory, participants were willing to pay more for products featuring a stronger affective component in the presence of a price promotion, but not in its absence, controlling for cognitive content.

Experiments 3 and 4 test the causal sequence proposed by our theory by introducing situational and dispositional moderators that may influence the motivation to deliberate. In Experiment 3, we increased this motivation by instructing one group of participants to use cognition as the basis for their decisions (Pham et al. 2001). Participants were asked to create a list of DVDs from a sample of ‘highbrow’ and ‘lowbrow’ movies belonging to an online DVD rental service that either did or did not offer a price promotion for 50% off the regular subscription price. The experiment thus employed a 2 (price promotion) × 2 (decision process) between-subjects factorial design. As expected, analyses revealed a 2-way interaction (p = .018). Participants chose more affectively superior ‘lowbrow’ movies in the presence of the price promotion than in its absence when the decision process was unspecified (p = .010). In contrast, when the decision process was cognitive, participants’ relative preferences were not affected by the price promotion (p = .466). Furthermore, a comparison of time spent on the movies information section provides further evidence in favor of the process: participants in the reduced price condition spent less time studying the sample of movies than participants in the regular price condition.

In Experiment 4, we examined whether an individual’s need for cognition (NFC)—known to be a determinant of processing motiva-

REFERENCES


When Expectations Backfire: How Argument Order Expectancies Influence Advertisement Efficacy

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Researchers have long known that the order in which arguments are presented can influence the efficacy of an advertisement. Some research indicates that ads beginning with strong arguments are more persuasive, while other research suggests greater effects for ads ending with strong arguments. These differences have been attributed to a host of message-related factors, but few accounts have considered the role of the receiver. Haugtvedt and Wegener (1994) were among the first to propose that persuasion depends on the extent of recipient elaboration. They found that message order interacts with the relevance of the message to the recipient.

In this paper, we examine an alternative means through which recipients influence how argument order determines ad efficacy. We propose that consumers hold expectations regarding the order in which arguments are going to be presented. These expectations may be based on the recipient’s lay theory about the nature of the communication (cf. Igou and Bless 2007) and what order would be most persuasive. Crucially, consistent with work in expectancy violation (Maheswaran and Chaiken 1991), we propose that ads that violate these expectations will invoke greater processing and thus generate greater persuasion in the form of heightened attitude strength. Increased attitude strength should in turn result in behavioral consequences for the advertised product (e.g., heightened willingness to pay). We test our account in three experiments.

Experiment 1 offered an initial test, manipulating expectations by inducing a pro- or counterattitudinal position toward three products (a truck, restaurant and department store). Pretests showed that people who had a positive attitude toward a product expected ads to end with strong arguments, whereas those with a negative attitude expected ads to start with stronger arguments. After participants reported their initial attitude, we then presented them with an ad that either started with strong arguments and ended with weak arguments or the reverse. They then reported their subsequent attitude, from and the strength with which they held that attitude. We predicted that participants in the counterattitudinal condition, who expect to see an ad that starts with strong arguments will in fact process the ad more deeply, producing greater attitude certainty. We discuss the implications of these results for theories of persuasion and metacognitive influence.

Since the content of the advertisements did not differ across the argument order manipulation, message position only had a main effect on attitude change (F(1,186) = 167.40, p < .001, pro- (counter-) attitudinal advertisement induced positive (negative) attitudes). More importantly, we observed the predicted argument order × message position interaction on attitude strength (F(1,186) = 10.94, p = .001). Participants presented with the pro-attitudinal message reported stronger attitudes following the ad that started, as opposed to ended, strong. Conversely, participants presented with the counter-attitudinal message reported stronger attitudes following the advertisement that ended, as opposed to started, strong. Furthermore, these effects occurred regardless of the product being advertised.

Experiment 2 sought to generalize our results to another product category (laundry detergent) and to a manipulation that didn’t require manipulating receivers’ initial attitude towards the product. We again presented participants with ads containing both strong and weak messages, and manipulated the order of those messages. We also manipulated participants’ expectations regarding the order of those messages, by telling them that the messages were going to be displayed in either a high or low attentional load environment. Pretests indicated that participants expected ads designed for a high attentional load environment (a busy subway station) to start with strong arguments, whereas they expected ads made for a low load environment (a quiet bookstore) to end with strong arguments. We also tested the presumed mediating role of depth of processing and examined willingness to purchase as a measure of behavioral intention.

As anticipated, no differences in attitudes were observed. However, we saw an argument order × message context interaction on attitude certainty (F(1,98) = 11.95, p < .001). Participants in the low load context reported greater certainty following the persuasive appeal that started as opposed to ended strong (F(1,98) = 8.72, p < .01). Conversely, participants in the high load context reported greater certainty following the persuasive appeal that ended as opposed to started strong (F(1,98) = 3.61, p < .06). A parallel interaction was seen for argument recall (F(1,98) = 12.26, p < .001) and this measure mediated the effects of the order × context interaction on attitude certainty (Figure 2). Finally, willingness to purchase also showed that low load participants were more willing to buy after the ad that started with strong arguments, whereas high load participants were more willing to buy after an ad that ended strong (F(1,98) = 19.48, p < .001). Experiment 3 used the same ads as in Experiment 2, but manipulated order expectancies directly, by telling participants that research shows that that ads that start [end] with the strongest arguments are most persuasive. We tested perceived elaboration of the message as a moderator, and willingness to pay for the detergent as a measure of behavioral intention.

We saw no differences in attitudes, but the hypothesized argument order × expectancy interaction (F(1,68) = 9.99, p < .01). Participants who expected ads to start strong were more certain of their attitudes after an ad the ended strong and vice versa. The same interaction was seen for perceived elaboration (F(1,68) = 10.24, p < .01), and this measure mediated the effect of the order × expectancy interaction on certainty. Finally, participants who expected ads to start strong stated higher reservation prices after ads that ended strong and vice versa.

Our results paint a compelling story of how people develop message order expectancies based on notions of which orders will be most effective in a given context. These expectancies then ironically determine their ad processing such that ads with unexpected orders are processed more deeply, producing greater attitude certainty. We discuss the implications of these results for theories of persuasion and metacognitive influence.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

While ego-depletion (whereby requiring consumers to self-regulate subsequently lowers their self-control) is well established in prior literature, relatively little is known about how self-control resource can be replenished (Baumeister, Schmeichel & Vohs 2007). Current article fills this void by examining when exerting self-control may augment, rather than deplete, the self-regulation resources. The focus is different from recent research that has started to examine the moderating factors of depletion, such as the level of autonomy (Nix et al., 1999), self-affirmation (Schmeichel & Vohs, 2009), choice domain (Dewitte et al., 2009), and rest or glucose (Gaillot & Baumeister, 2007). The focus of the current research is on how exerting self-control itself increase self-regulatory resources.

It is proposed that a self-regulation task that gets easier over time (improving experience) can replenish self-control resources and increase self-control in subsequent tasks. The replenishing effect occurs because when people perceive themselves as getting better on an effortful self-regulation task it increases their perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982). Self-efficacy is at the core of human motivation and increasing it can counter the depleting effects of initial self-regulation, consequently increasing self-control in subsequent behavior. Multiple studies support the proposed framework.

Study 1 used a choice between a cookie and a plain yogurt as a measure of self-control (Khan & Dhar, 2007) and anagrams as a potentially depleting task before the choice. Participants were divided into four conditions where they: solved three hard anagrams (condition-1); solved three hard anagrams and then solved four moderate anagrams (condition-2); solved no anagrams before the choice (control condition); took a short break after four hard anagrams (condition-4). Results: choice of yogurt was significantly lower when participants solved three hard anagrams compared to the control (26% vs. 54%; p<.05) suggesting that anagram-solving was indeed depleting. Share of yogurt increased to 84% when participants solved easy anagrams after the hard ones showing that although people solved more anagrams, they were replenished rather than depleted. Finally, a break eliminated the depleting effect of solving hard anagrams but did not increase the share of yogurt significantly above the control (59% vs. 54%; p=.71). The findings show that an improving experience of self-control can be replenishing and the effect is greater than allowing people to rest.

Study 2 replicates the effect, provides evidence for self-efficacy based process and rules out mood and general self-esteem as alternative processes. Participants listened to the sound of a drill by pressing a button as the volume either increased (worsening experience) or decreased (improving experience) over time. Next, they completed self-efficacy, mood, and self-esteem measures. Finally, as a measure of self-control, participants crossed e’s in a text. Results: Compared to a (no-sound) control condition persistence on the e-crossing task was significantly lower in worsening experience condition (M=386 vs. M=463 seconds) whereas an improving order increased persistence (M=386 vs. M=463 seconds, p<.05). The order of anagrams had no significant effect when an external attribution was provided for the experience (M=313improving experience vs. M=334worsening experience seconds). With the order of anagrams fixed, the effect was similar (386 vs. 334 seconds, p<.05).

Study 4 replicated the results. Participants ran on a treadmill and difficulty of the run was manipulated by increasing or decreasing the incline by 1%. Some participants were told that their experience was due to the shifting incline (external attribution) while others were told that the experience was due to their own abilities (self-attribution). A no-attribution, control condition was also included. After the run, participants chose between a cookie and yogurt as an unexpected compensation. Results: In absence of any attribution, an improving experience at the run resulted in greater share of yogurt (55%) than a worsening experience (29%; p=.08). Similarly, an improving experience resulted in greater share of yogurt than a worsening experience in self-attribution conditions (62% vs. 30%; p<.05). However, the difference in the improving (35%) versus the worsening experience (30%) was not significant when an external attribution was provided (p=.78).

As another theory-test study 5 differentiates an improving sequence without self-control from an improving experience of exerting self-control. As an initial task participants either listened to two unpleasant sound-clips or one unpleasant and one pleasant sound-clip either in an improving or a worsening order. A no-sound control condition was also included. Persistence on an impossible puzzle served as a DV. Results: When both sounds were aversive, a worsening order reduced persistence on the puzzle compared to the control (M=386 vs. M=463 seconds) whereas an improving order increased persistence (M=569 seconds, p<.01). When one sound was aversive and one pleasant, a worsening order reduced persistence on the puzzle relative to the control (M=353 seconds, p<.01) but an improving order did not increase persistence beyond the control (M=431 seconds). Thus, an improving experience of listening to the sounds increased persistence more when both the sounds were aversive and required self-regulation rather than when only one sound was aversive (569 vs. 431 seconds, p<.01).

The findings contribute to self-control and depletion literatures and further the understanding of how consumers manage a balancing act between regulating themselves versus not exercising self-control. The studies suggest the importance of appreciating temporal patterns of self-regulation and examining how self-control is exercised and not just whether it is exerted or not. The results also have implications for the ordering of self-control targets that consumers set for themselves (e.g., weight-loss goals) or of tasks that are set for others (e.g., academic performance and sales targets).

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The Preference for Larger Assortments in Feeling-based Decisions
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Past research suggests that consumers typically prefer larger product assortments over smaller ones, as evidenced by a stronger consumer patronage of retailers with larger assortments (Arnold, Oum, and Tigert 1983; Broniarczyk, Hoyer, and McAlister 1998; Pan and Zinkan 2006; see Chernev 2012, for a review). In this research, we propose that, in fact, this preference depends on the decision process that consumers are likely to follow. Specifically, we predict that consumers’ relative preference for larger assortments is generally more pronounced when the decision is likely to be based on affect and feelings than when the decision is likely to be based on more cognitive processes. The phenomenon is likely to be due to consumers adopting a more expansive exploratory mindset in decisions guided by feelings. This expansive mindset may be linked to some experience utility that consumers derive from the process of reviewing product options when relying on their feelings (Pham 1998; Schwarz and Clore 1988). Hence, one would expect this experience utility to increase with the number of options being assessed, triggering an appetite for exploring more options. The predicted effect of reliance on feelings on consumers’ preference for larger assortments was tested in four studies.

The first three studies test the predicted effect and the underlying mechanism by using different operationalizations of the likelihood of reliance on feelings. Study 1 employed a 2 (product type: hedonic vs. utilitarian) × 2 (assortment size: small vs. large) between-subjects design, replicated across two independent sets of participants with two pairs of product categories. Participants were asked to review product assortments that contained either 12 items or 36 items and rate how much they liked the selection of products offered in these assortments. We manipulated the reliance on feelings by varying the product category. Half of the participants were shown assortments of hedonic products (ice cream and jams), and the other half were shown assortments of utilitarian products (pens and detergents). Previous research has shown that there is a strong relation in feelings to be stronger for hedonic products than for utilitarian products (Adaval 2001; White and McFarland 2009). To test our process explanation, we measured participants’ desire to explore the assortments of products. As predicted, we found that the relative preference for larger product assortments was more pronounced when the product category was hedonic than when the product category was utilitarian. The mediation results further supported that the effect appears to be driven, at least in part, by participants adopting a more exploratory mindset when evaluating assortments of hedonic products.

In Study 2, the product category was held constant, and the likelihood of reliance on feelings was manipulated by varying the motive for product evaluation. The study was a 2 (decision motive: experiential vs. instrumental) × 2 (assortment size: small vs. large) between-subjects design. Participants were asked to evaluate a hotel selection that contained either 12 options or 36 options under either an experiential motive or under an instrumental motive. The reliance on feelings has been shown to be greater under experiential motives than under instrumental motives (Pham 1998). The results confirmed that when the motive was experiential there was a strong preference for the larger hotel selection compared to the smaller hotel selection. In contrast, when the motive was instrumental evaluations were comparable for the larger and smaller hotel selections. As in Study 1, the effect of decision motive on the preference for larger assortments was mostly mediated by participants with experiential motives adopting a more exploratory mindset when evaluating product assortments.

Study 3 employed a 2 (trust in feelings (TF): high vs. low) × 2 (assortment size: small vs. large) between-subjects design. Participants, either in high-TF or low-TF conditions, were asked to evaluate either a selection of 12 coffees or a selection of 36 coffees. We manipulated participants’ likelihood of reliance on feelings using the trust-in-feelings manipulation (Avnet, Pham, and Stephen 2012). Before the evaluation task, supposedly in an unrelated study, participants were asked to describe either two (high-TF) or 10 (low-TF) situations in which they trusted their feelings to make a decision and it turned out to be the right decision. It has been shown that recalling two (vs. 10) instances of successful reliance on feelings induce higher (vs. lower) reliance on feelings. We found that the relative preference for the larger coffee selection was stronger in the high-TF condition where participants were likely to rely on their feelings, than in the low-TF condition where participants were less likely to rely on their feelings.

Study 4 aimed to demonstrate our phenomenon with a more implicit measure of preference for assortment size and to provide further evidence for the expansive exploratory mindset process. Participants, whose trust in their feelings was manipulated as in Study 3, were asked to draw a sketch of a cereal display found in a supermarket. We measured the total number of options and the number of different options in the depicted display as well as the size of the depicted display drawing. The results supported our hypothesis that the reliance on feelings increases relative preference for larger assortments. Specifically, it was found that when participants had higher trust in their feelings they drew greater number of options and greater number of different options than when participants had lower trust in their feelings. The results further support our conceptualization that the reliance on feelings triggers an expansive mindset. Compared to participants with lower trust in their feelings, participants with higher trust in their feelings drew larger display, occupying more space on the sheet of paper.

In sum, across four studies, we find that a greater reliance on feelings amplifies the preference for larger (as opposed to smaller) assortments. Specifically, this preference is stronger for hedonic rather than utilitarian products, when participants had experiential rather than instrumental motives, and when participants had higher rather than lower trust in their feelings. Our phenomenon transpires even on implicit measures of preference for assortment size and is driven by consumers adopting a more expansive exploratory mindset whenever a decision calls for a reliance on feelings.

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Antecedents of Brand Trust in the Baby Care Toiletries Product Brands: An Empirical Study in the Indian Context

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Brand Trust which is an extension of Trust relationship theory, has gained the attention and popularity among the marketing academia. The current study through extensive literature review and primary qualitative research, aims at developing a model to examine antecedents of brand trust in baby care product category in the Indian context. In addition to much deliberated and discussed brand characteristic factors in literature such as brand reputation, brand credibility, additional factors of brand intimacy, brand innovativeness and social information influencers have also been proposed as the antecedent factors for building brand trust for the baby care brands.

In the past, much research has been undertaken for the purchase of different products of grown up kids but not for infant or babies, where the purchase decision is totally in the hands of parents and the infant has no influence on it. Few or little work (Broadbridge and Morgan, 2000; Yee and Chin, 2007; Ballester and Aleman, 2001) has been done with respect to the purchase decision of baby care products. Since, trust is the most essential factor while choosing a baby care product brand, hence, it has become important to study the various variables that an individual considers before developing trust for a baby care brand. The purpose of the paper can be defined as to empirically identify the important factors for generating cognitive and affective brand trust in baby care toiletries product brands.

Baby care product category is a category where the buyer and the user are different (Prendergast and Wong, 2003) and involves high level of perceived risk. It is a product category where parents are initially unable to judge brand performance as consumption is undertaken by babies or toddlers (Broadbridge and Morgan, 2000). Baby care toiletries product brands require great deal of trust building since parents would hardly purchase any brands for their infants without knowing and trusting it. Researchers have indicated that mothers do not mind paying high to get quality products (Yee and Chin, 2007) and even willing to sacrifice their own purchases (Broadbridge and Morgan, 2000) to buy the trusted brand for their baby. Factors such as brand image, advertisements, friend’s advice, and brand benefits are empirically tested in past researches to form parent’s perception towards baby product brands (Yee and Chin, 2007).

Brand trust in the present study is based on well-established theoretical precedenents for examining trust from the social psychology literature, which conceptualizes trust as having cognitive and affective dimensions (Lewis and Weigert 1985). Based on the above theory, cognitive brand trust is defined as knowledge-driven trust based on the “good reasons” of which brand to be chosen, for which reasons and under what circumstances. It refers to the careful, methodical thought process used to determine whether a brand is trustworthy or not (Morrow et al. 2004). Whereas, affective brand trust is defined as belief generated on the basis of the level of care and concern that the brand exhibits. It reflects emotional security on the part of customers (Ballester 2004). It is trust based on one’s instinct, intuitions, and feelings concerning whether the other party is trustworthy (Morrow et al. 2004). Therefore, brand trust in this study reflects two separate components: knowledge based and emotion based. Agreeing with McAlister (1995), the study proposes that cognitive brand trust is generated earlier and leads to affective brand trust in baby care toiletries brand, as a baseline expectation of brand performance is necessary for mothers to invest further in the relationship with the brand.

Apart from the literature support, primary research has been conducted to develop propositions. In the next stage, to pre-test the survey instrument; in depth interview of forty mothers of baby under age three is conducted. Final data collection results into 507 fully filled data points to empirically test the hypothesis. Structural equation modeling has been adopted to test the validity and reliability of the model through measurement model. Then path analysis is done to check the relative importance of the antecedents of brand trust.

Confirmatory factor analysis resulted into all eight constructs have composite reliability of more than the cut off criteria of 0.6 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). All items except two loaded more than 0.5 on their respective constructs and these two items are deleted from further analysis (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). All the other items have significant factor loadings ranging from .50 to .91. Discriminant validity of the constructs is also assessed as specified by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) to fix the variance of the latent to 1 and to fix the covariance between the two factors at 1.0 and then compare the $\chi^2$ value for constrained and unconstrained model. Path analysis indicated that brand credibility ($\beta = 0.171$, $p<.01$) and brand innovation ($\beta = 0.094$, $p<.05$) are the significant predictors of cognitive brand trust. Whereas, brand reputation ($\beta = 0.106$, $p<.05$), family influence $\beta = 0.091$, $p<.05$) and brand intimacy ($\beta = 0.132$, $p<.01$) resulted into significant predictors of affective brand trust.

The findings of the paper suggest that knowledge-based and emotion-based brand trust are different and have different factors generating them in the baby-care toiletries brand context. This indicates that to generate these two different types of brand trust, managers need to look for unique and different antecedent factors. Suppose a baby-care toiletries brand has high cognitive brand trust but low affective brand trust, then managers can work on the antecedents that lead to affective brand trust without affecting the antecedents of cognitive brand trust. Since India, has the highest number of infants and baby care market is expanding faster, thus the findings of the study can be beneficial for the companies in tackling competition. The present study might also attract more researches in the less researched context of baby care products.

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Elucidating a Theory of Practice for Consumer Research

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Practice Theory (PT) has the potential to open up our horizons of investigation as consumer researchers in order that we pay attention not only to consumption meanings per se, but also to what consumers actually do, and to the centrality of objects to these doings. But, PT is far from a coherent theory (Gram-Hanssen 2011; Halkier and Jensen 2011) and its incorporation into consumer research is not unproblematic (Brownlie and Hewer 2011). There is a difference in the locus of attention across both domains, a difference that must be accounted for if we are to benefit from the potential of PT. We aim here to begin such a process and, in so doing, focus our attention upon some of the central conceptualizations of practice offered thus far within a consumption context.

A key contention of certain variants of PT (see for example, Shove and Pantzar 2005; Shove and Pantzar 2007; Watson and Shove 2008; Shove et al. 2012) is that exploring processes of transformation and stability within and between social practices holds the potential for understanding change and, further, influencing public policy. Thus, Shove and Pantzar (2007: 155) focus attention upon the changing configurations of elements (competencies, meanings and products), as practices emerge and reconfigure: ‘Rather than holding the practice constant and seeking to understand who does it and why, we are interested in understanding how practices-as-entities are made and reproduced by their carriers’. This contrasts with the typical approach within CCT where much of the focus has been on the consumer as an empowered identity seeker, overlaid with micro-social analysis of consumption communities (Askegaard and Linnet 2001).

A PT designed to track the transformation and stability of practices on a societal level must naturally address the problematic structure/agency divide. Here, the tendency is to favour Giddens’ (1984) theory of structuration in which individual actions or the propensity towards practice is influenced by and further influences structures of rules and meanings. In opting for structuration the influence of both structure and agency is acknowledged, conceptualizing them as a duality rather than a dialectic. This foundation enables Shove et al. (2012: 11) to shift emphasis away from the individual and individual instances of practice, leaving them unable to ‘concentrate exclusively on context specific processes involved in producing localized configurations of practice of knowledge and meaning, materiality and action’. While we sincerely acknowledge these advancements in relation to understanding the emergent nature of practices, we are motivated by alternative aims within consumer research and on this basis we argue for an alternative appreciation of practice within CCT.

Arnould and Thompson (2005: 870) contend that consumer researchers should embrace ‘methodological pluralism’ whenever it can ‘advance the operative theoretical agenda’. Accordingly, our interest in context specific accounts is not born out of voyeuristic tendencies, but rather the belief that theoretical and methodological advances can be made in this vein. In reflecting upon landmark breakthroughs made in consumer research (for example, Holt 1995; Shouten and McAlexander 1995; Murray 2002) through subjective, situated context-specific accounts of consumption, it seems hasty to adopt a PT removed from these foundations. Nonetheless, there continues to be much potential in a practice-informed consumer research which effectively captures the interrelationship between objects, meanings and doings and which embraces subjectivity (Caldwell 2012). In putting forward our account of practice we are informed by Michel de Certeau. According to Highmore (2006: 7): ‘with de Certeau we get a method that values the singularity of close attention to the specific, located object’. Our aim is to allow a space for the multiplicities of practice in everyday life. This is achieved by allowing consumers to contribute to the documentation and history of their practices (Highmore 2006). Accordingly, we welcome subjective individual and group accounts. In contrast to structuration theory, de Certeau address the structure/agency divide in terms of strategies and tactics. Strategies are at play when institutions distance themselves from society in order to formulate panoptic procedures, which de Certeau (1984: 48) views as ‘a weapon to be used in combating and controlling heterogeneous practices’. Alternatively, tactics are deviations from the prescribed strategy intended for the space. Through tactics the environment is subverted as the use of space runs contrarily to its proper purpose as demarcated by strategies. This re-conceptualization attempts to provide an avenue through which the stories of practitioners may be represented.

In developing a framework that will be equipped to meet our requirements we draw together the ‘circuit of practice’ (Magaudda 2011) and the internal and external rewards offered by Warde (2005). This combination allows us to take a step closer to practitioners and the psychological rewards they experience for their engagement. As a consequence, we access the personal motivations of those engaged in practice. Importantly, the addition of external rewards presents an opportunity to situate carriers in relation to like-minded others who engage in similar practices, thus explicating the social nature of practices. As such, our framework allows us to examine specific practices at the individual and social level. Our intention is to investigate the centrality of the interaction between humans and objects in shaping social processes and activities, and the implication of this relationship on the role of objects in social life (Magaudda 2011: 20). Adding internal/external rewards allows us to account for the subjectivity of practitioners within this process. In turn, subjective accounts are analyzed in terms of de Certeau strategies and tactics. Most importantly, analysis of the individual facilitates an investigation of the group dynamics of practices (Alfred and Jungnickel 2012), thereby acknowledging ‘the social organization of consumption’ which tends to be overlooked in individualist accounts of consumption (Halkier and Jensen 2011: 106). This empowers practitioners by allowing them a space to voice their understandings of practices, offering a more vibrant history of practice within consumer research.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The embodied aspects of servicescape experiences remain underexplored, particularly in relation to their transformative potential. The Dans Le Noir (DLN) restaurant chain, where providers serve customers in the dark, provides an ideal context to explore these elements. To elicit powerful transformations, DLN creates a ritual site where its customers experience powerful embodied performance.

Contemporary retail practice often involves narrative construction; thus retail and service sites become discursive statements that invite interpretation (Shields 1992; Mattila 2000; Kozinets et al., 2002). The ability of a themed environment to transcend reality and produce a long-lasting transformational effect depends on its capacity to provide a “threshold” to the liminal margin (Van Gennep, 1960). The liminal margin provides a perfect context for rites of passage and liminality. In Las Vegas; likewise, Arnould and Price (1993, 1998) argue that liminality explains the community that emerges during a wilderness servicescape experience. Rites of passage and liminality are important concepts as we explored our main research question: how do consumers experience a constructed reality when deprived of their sight in a themed servicescape?

We relied on subjective personal introspection, a research technique that interpretive researchers use to gain deeper insights into a scenario and the meaning of the experience. Our informants were seated at tables, enveloped in blackness and now completely detached from their everyday, sight-filled worlds. They experienced the role reversals typical of liminal spaces (Bakhtin, 1968), and perceive the blind servers to be able-bodied. They report learning about themselves, about blind people, and about themselves despite the disablement of their sight. Here, they find the ultimate body—a body which has been removed from their everyday, sight-filled worlds. They experience the touch of “elsewhereness,”or the liminality long associated with the transformation of “elsewhereness,”or the liminality long associated with the marketplace more generally (Agnew 1988). Belk (2000) highlights how liminal qualities play a significant role in constructing themes in Las Vegas; likewise, Arnould and Price (1993, 1998) argue that liminality explains the community that emerges from a wilderness servicescape experience. Rites of passage and liminality are important concepts as we explored our main research question: how do consumers experience a constructed reality when deprived of their sight in a themed servicescape?

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for an exception). Particularly noteworthy is that stigmatisation does
Viswanathan, Rosa, and Harris, 2005; see Sandikci and Ger, 2010
consumer research on stigma remains limited and focuses mainly on
(1998), stigmatization affects how individuals perceive themselves,
(2011)'s recent work which shows that television is still regarded as
stigmatized, TV series are widely popular. In 2011, fiction was rated
the top genre worldwide (41% of the best performing programmes),
and among fiction, TV series were the best performing format, ac-
counting for 69% of the fiction entries (Cassi, 2012). Some TV se-
ries like Madmen have even acquired the status of cultural object in
highly educated spheres (Glevarec, 2012). This suggests that percep-
tions towards television, or at least towards certain TV programs, are
gradually shifting.

Goffman (1963) argues that a stigma “refers to an attribute that
is deeply discrediting”. According to Crocker, Major, and Steele
(1998), stigmatization affects how individuals perceive themselves,
but also how they feel others perceive them. Despite its relevance,
consumer research on stigma remains limited and focuses mainly on
stigma management (e.g., Adkins and Ozanne, 2005; Tepper, 1994;
Viswanathan, Rosa, and Harris, 2005; see Sandikci and Ger, 2010
for an exception). Particularly noteworthy is that stigmatisation does
not affect all TV series in the same manner, as certain series are stig-
matised while others are highly respected. For instance, to define
“quality television” Thompson (1996) referred to Hill Street Blues
or Moonlighting, while Knight Ryder and McGyver were classified
as “regular television”.

We interviewed 16 demographically diverse TV series watch-
ers. The authors asked a mix of grand tour questions and floating
prompts (McCracken 1988). Following a general discussion, partici-
pants were asked to discuss the meanings they associate with series,
their watching practices and whether they believe watching TV series
is associated with social stigma. Interviews lasted from 25 minutes
to 1h05 minutes, were audio recorded and transcribed. An initial
identification of themes was developed, and theoretical categories
were elaborated on during open and axial coding procedures. We
then began a process of dialectical tacking, moving back and forward
between our findings and the relevant literature to deepen our un-
derstanding of the practices and meanings associated with TV series
consumption.

Five key narratives were identified. First, the role of new prac-
tices in the legitimisation process of TV series consumption emerged:

Consumers watch TV series less on television than using streaming,
downloads or DVD box sets. These practices allow watchers to en-
gage in TV series consumption while distancing themselves from the
negative connotations associated with television as a medium. Thus,
consumer narratives replicate the cultural stigmatisation discourses
around television conveyed by the media and scholars, but at the
same time, watching TV series is part of an on-going normalisation
process. Second, this process is facilitated by a shift from consumers’
bond to TV channels’ schedule and agenda, to consumers’ perceived
control of their viewing time, accessing series online or using DVD
boxed sets. Third, a process of ‘reverse stigmatisation’ was identi-
fied: Whereas TV series viewers used to be stigmatised, those who
don not watch any TV series would now be stigmatised as outside
the norm. Fourth, the normalisation process does not apply to all TV
series and is contingent on the low social status of the perceived audi-
ence. A recurring example of genre that remains stigmatised is soap
operas. Non-soap-viewers distance themselves from soap-viewers,
while soap-viewers’ narratives echo confession-like acknowledgment
of their viewing practice, and engage in a strategy of conceal-
ment (Miller and Kaiser, 2001). Fifth, new stigmas are appearing as
new practices develop. A key example of such practices is binge-
watching i.e. watching several episodes of the same TV series in a
row. Binge-watchers are stigmatised by non-binge-watchers, the lat-
ner considering the former as antisocial. Interestingly, stigmatisation
occurs among binge-watchers themselves. Tensions are particularly
evident between those binge-watching socially versus individually.
The social ones use an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ discourse to legitimise their
own behaviour. They present their binge-watching as a group activ-
ity, shared with friends or with their partner, which is considered as
normalised whereas binge-watching alone is regarded as asocial and
deviant.

We contribute to prior work on stigmatisation (Kozinets, 2001;
Sandikci and Ger, 2011) by looking at the dynamics of stigmatisation
and normalisation as social processes in the context of TV series. TV
series seem to undergo a legitimisation process followed by other
popular genres in the past e.g., jazz; graphic novels; thrillers (Gleva-
rec, 2012). This evolution is facilitated by the Internet which has pro-
foundly reshaped the patterns of TV series consumption. However,
we show that far from operating in a linear manner, the dynamics of
legitimisation are complex and accompanied by the reproduction of
existing stigmas, i.e. soap operas, and by the creation of new stig-
mas, i.e. reverse stigmatisation and binge-watching practices. Our
informants’ narratives evince a degree of cognitive reflexivity that
underscores their awareness of the complexities associated with the
legitimisation process. Consider Stefan’s comment: “For TV series
it’s different because TV in a way is sort of stigmatised right now
[…] I think for TV series it’s much more of a cultural thing. The fact
that you don’t watch strictly on TV but you watch on a laptop, it’s
different from watching on TV. And you find a lot of friends who feel
cool when they watch TV series, but they don’t feel cool when they
watch TV. That’s my thought”.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the consumption practices and mean-
ings associated with television series. Specifically, we investigate the
tensions in consumer narratives arising from traditionally negatively-
laden television consumption and the positive evaluations of current
television series viewing, gained from increasing legitimisation and
normalisation processes. We show that these tensions generate com-
plex dynamics through which legitimisation is accompanied by the
reproduction of existing stigmas and the creation of new stigmas.

Television as a medium has been stigmatized for a long time.
Collins (1993) reports that television has traditionally been regarded
by scholars as the least legitimate form of popular culture, judged
as a “bad object” despite increasingly sophisticated textual analy-
ses and equally sophisticated audience research. Lodzj’s assertion
(1986) that heavy TV consumers cannot afford to do anything else
is associated with social stigma. Interviews lasted from 25 minutes
to 1h05 minutes, were audio recorded and transcribed. An initial
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reproduction of existing stigmas and the creation of new stigmas.
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Anchored on the theoretical domain of the narrative paradigm (Bruner 1987; Fisher 1984; Polkinghorne 1988), the constructed character of stories, and the proliferation of narrativizing as a strategic tool in marketing, this paper draws attention to consumers’ role in the commercial storytelling process by introducing the concept of “following the narrative” as a nuanced way in which consumers participate in service environments that we call “storyscapes.”

Consumer participation in the marketplace can be traced in extended service encounters (Arnould and Price 1993), mountain men re-enactments (Belk and Costa 1998), Burning Man rituals (Kozinets 2002), and support groups (Moisio and Beruchashvili 2009) among others. In marketing services, scholars identified customers as actively involved in changing, twisting, rearranging or co-creating the servicescape (Aubert-Gamet 1997; Bitner et al. 1997; Bowen 1986; Kelley et al. 1990; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2000, 2004; Solomon 1998; Vargo and Lusch 2004, 2008; Wikström 1996). Reader-response theory takes us a step further in theorizing consumer interaction with texts by highlighting the active role of the reader (Iser 1980). The meaning of a text, it is argued, does not reside only in the text itself and the intent of the author, but also on the readers who will bring their own experiences during interpretation (Barry and Elmes 1997; Onega and Lada 1996). Helpful as this literature might be, it stops short in addressing consumer engagement with and participation in marketplace storytelling processes. Accordingly, the purpose of this paper is to address this theoretical lacuna by using the concept of “following the narrative” (Braid 1996) and applying it in the context of storyscapes, commercial environments where narratives are formed, told, consumed, exchanged, reshaped, and perpetuated through the interaction of service providers and consumers (Chronis 2005).

The storyline used as the empirical context for data collection was a heritage exhibition in Thessaloniki, Greece. Forty-nine interviews with visitors were conducted that lasted from twenty minutes to more than an hour. Verbal data were read and re-read in order to gain familiarity with the text (Arnould 1998), while the analysis process followed the basic steps of categorization, abstraction, comparison, dimensionalization, iteration, and refutation suggested by Spiggle (1994, 1998). Interpretation was a more abstract, synthetic, holistic, and illuminating experience that resulted to an emergent framework that provides a holistic understanding of the consumption experience (Spiggle 1994).

The starting claim of the proposed framework (Figure) is that consumers do not enter the storyline from an unmediated narrative state. Rather, they bring with them their existing narrative background. Upon entering the storyline, they are surrounded by a plethora of narrative elements and are subject to the storytelling process set up by the organizers. Commercial storytelling at the exhibition occurs through the displayed artifacts, the explanatory labels, texts posted on the wall for each thematic unit, the exhibition printed volume, and the personnel located on each floor of the building. Consumer participation in storytelling is subsumed under the experience of following the narrative that is comprised of four elements. First, consumers are eager to fill narrative gaps on this chapter of history that is commonly tagged as a “dark period.” Each additional piece gathered will help build a particular story – a micro-narrative (life in the city for example) – and the collection of these micro-narratives will contribute to the master-narrative of Byzantium. Second, consumers make constant comparisons between past and present. Whether in the form of jewelry, or utensils, or shape of houses, or superstitions, or pilgrimage, consumers identify aspects of the Byzantine narrative that relate to their own lives. The employment of the present in order to build a meaningful past does not stop with the constant comparisons. In the third process of re-contextualization, consumers employ a multitude of storyscape elements (objects, events, customs, practices) and place them in the context of their present lives. In order to provide relevance and meaningfulness to the occupational salaries in the past, for example, they had to use their knowledge about salaries in contemporary society. Fourth, consumer participation in the narrative of the past is also accomplished through imagining. Consumer imagination is experienced as a vivid narrative. Informants referred to “an enlivening of the period” and “scenes of everyday life” that made “things clearer,” they were “intense,” and they were bringing the past in the present. Oftentimes, consumers were active participants in their narrative imaginings. This experience was expressed by visitors as “transportation” (“You are transported to some other eras”) and as participation in Byzantine life (“I felt that I live in those days”). Furthermore, our findings highlight the importance of materiality in (re)imagining narratives of the past; that is, the exhibited artifacts are an indispensable element of the (re)imagined past. Imagination is not located merely in consumers’ mind but is inextricably linked to the material world.

This research extends our knowledge on the co-creation of value (Payne, Storbacka, and Flow 2008; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2000, 2004; Vargo and Lusch 2004, 2006) by providing insight on the ways in which consumers participate in storyscapes, that is, consumption contexts where narratives are the focal object of consumption. In this context, consumer participation is explicated through the experience of “following the narrative” which is a function of consumers’ effort to fill narrative gaps; to compare objects, events, and practices; to re-contextualize narratives in terms of their own lives; and to imagine “what it feels like to be in the story.” Moreover, the present work furnishes one way to address Grönroos’ (2008) question “if customers are value co-creators, what is the role of the firm?” (p. 303). In our particular context, we can argue that marketers of storyscapes (heritage sites, museums, themed environments, etc.) can enhance the appeal of their service by facilitating their customers’ effort to construct meaningful narratives. By providing informative pieces as elements of a story, drawing connections with and contextualizing their stories in contemporary consumer life, and using strategies of imagineering, storyline managers can generate interest, cultivate consumer engagement, and facilitate the co-creation of the experience.

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Reciprocities of Charitable Giving: Perspectives from Donors, Nonprofits and Beneficiaries
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
The concept of reciprocity, which can be generally defined as the moral obligation to give back in return for someone else’s past behavior (Gouldner, 1960), has been primarily developed in the social and economic sciences (e.g. Gouldner, 1960; Ekeh, 1974; Hobsbawm, 1951; Kolm, 2008; Kolm and Ythier, 2006; Mauss, 1924; Sahlins, 1972) and has also been extensively explored in consumer research mainly through gift giving (e.g. Belk, 1976; Belk, 2010; Belk and Coon, 1993; Giesler, 2006; Joy, 2001; Marcoux, 2009; Ottes, Lowrey and Kim, 1993; Sherry, 1983; Weinberger and Wallendorf, 2012). When it comes to charitable giving, however, the role played by reciprocity is far less understood. Scholars who showed preliminary interest in the phenomenon have argued that the desire to reciprocate can be a strong motivation to initiate the charitable act (e.g. Panas, 2012; Prince and File, 1994; Schervish, 1997). This preliminary conceptualization, however, offers a limited understanding of the concept. In fact, the motivation to donate is unlikely to be the only manifestation of reciprocity in a context where the act of giving creates a chain that links various actors (donors, nonprofits and beneficiaries) with different motivations, intentions, reactions and status regarding the gift (Sherry, 1983). The role of reciprocity in this complex system has yet to be understood. More precisely: What forms of reciprocity can be found in this context? How are they experienced by the actors? What are the theoretical and applied implications of reciprocity in the charitable context? The focus of our study is to shed some light on those questions.

To explore reciprocity in charitable giving, we combined results from three fieldworks. The first is an 8-month ethnographic study (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994) of the Children’s Wish Foundation of Canada (CWFC), a major nationwide charity that grants wishes to critically ill children. The second involves long interviews (Craken, 1988) with nonprofit managers and 27 individuals who raised money as “third-party fundraisers” for the benefits of CWFC (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994; ZMET (Zaltman, 1988)) with nonprofit managers and 27 individuals who raised money as “third-party fundraisers” for the benefits of CWFC (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994), a major nationwide charity that grants wishes (Arnould and Wallendorf, 2012). The third is a ZMET (Zaltman, 1997) of the concept of charitable giving conducted with 10 active donors.

Our data shows that reciprocity is experienced by the three groups of actors and that it operates at two alternating levels. Firstly, our informants experience reciprocity expectations. In other words, they live reciprocity as a thought, a mental representation of what they anticipate receiving – what we call inward expectations – or anticipate being obliged to give in return – what we call outward expectations. Each type of actor nurtures different forms of reciprocity expectations. For instance, donors have a complex relationship with the idea of reciprocity. Primarily, almost every donor from our sample declared expecting nothing in return for their charitable acts. This is consistent with the idea that givers can truly be or seek to appear benevolent or non-calculating (e.g. Belk and Coon, 1993; Godbout, 1998; Prince and File, 1994). Nonetheless, beyond this ostensible selfless discourse, they build two types of expected reciprocities, mainly inward-driven, regarding nonprofits and beneficiaries. First, reciprocity occurs as expected recognition from the nonprofit (e.g. I should receive private and/or public acknowledgment in return for my gift) and the beneficiaries (e.g. a beneficiary should make a public appearance at my fundraising event). Second, it occurs as expected performance regarding both the nonprofit (e.g. in return for my gift, the nonprofit should perform its duty well and should maximize the amount of my donation invested directly on the beneficiaries) and the beneficiaries (e.g. I expect beneficiaries to be happy and smiling, to be transformed by my gift). Nonprofit staff and beneficiaries also experience various forms of reciprocity expectations. Contrary to donors, though, they are not only inward but also outward driven, meaning that they are related to anticipations of receiving as well as of obligations of repaying (further details will be introduced in the presentation).

Secondly, our informants perform reciprocity actions. Actions refer here to acts (physical, emotional, etc.) with an intention and a meaning for the actor (Kolm, 2008). For instance, donating is in itself perceived as a form of reciprocity: consistent with the literature, we found that donation can be the manifestation of a payback. Further, our informants value various forms of donation differently. They consider donating time as morally superior to donating money because of the higher commitment with beneficiaries and the greater sacrifice implied in direct voluntary action. Also, emotions and feelings can be manifestations of reciprocity. For example, some donors experienced Leucan’s Shaved Head Challenge by putting their own heads up to raise donations in order to empathize with beneficiaries (i.e. to understand and share what it means to lose hair because of chemotherapy). Nonprofit actors and beneficiaries also perform reciprocity actions. Nonprofits have various recognition packages for donors. They also maintain high work ethics and practices including emotion work (Hochschild, 1983) and sometimes relationship closure after delivering the service in order to protect beneficiaries from feeling obligated to repay. Beneficiaries also perform reciprocity actions through volunteering, donating, and private and public acknowledgment of charitable actions.

Important implications can be derived from this study. We highlight three of them here. First, if direct reciprocity (Kolm, 2008) is an appropriate concept when studying dyadic gift giving (e.g., Belk and Coon, 1993; Ottes, Lowrey and Kim, 1993), it is inadequate in charitable giving. It must instead be conceptualized as an extended exchange (Bagozzi, 1975) distinct from Giesler’s (2006) gift system and intracommunity giving (Weinberger and Wallendorf, 2012). The concept of liquid reciprocity can be developed in order to capture how charity constituents are related in various and complex ways. In addition, reciprocity has been previously conceived as an outcome of the reformulation stage of giving (Sherry, 1983). We show that it can also occur during the gestation (reciprocity expectations) and presentation (reciprocity actions) stages. Finally, numerous studies have analyzed donors while beneficiaries have remained largely neglected (Bruce, 2005; Ruth, Ottes and Brunel, 1999). We show that studying reciprocity of charitable giving forces putting beneficiaries back into the equation.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The competition for desirable brand names is increasingly fierce. This is evidenced by the success of boutique naming firms charging hefty fees to design names such as “Blackberry” and “Pentium” (Colapinto 2011). The importance of a well crafted brand is well-established; names that resonate with consumers can contribute to brand name memory (Lowrey, Shrum, & Dubitsky 2003), recognition, and recall (Cortese 1998), as well as overall brand performance (Aaker & Keller 1990). However, despite the proliferation of boutique naming firms that have sprouted in response to increasing mainstream demand, there is little scientific evidence for their methods. This begs the question, how do invented brand names differ from brand names that are inherited from the person or place associated with the company’s founding?

An analysis of top ranked brand names reveals linguistic differences between invented and inherited brand names. These discrepancies may be due, in part, to sound symbolism. Sound symbolism - the link between sound and meaning - can convey product attribute information, enhance affinity, and increase purchase intentions. Furthermore, sound symbolism may be one factor contributing to the prevalence of certain linguistic attributes among invented brand names.

Past research has primarily focused on the influence of brand name linguistic characteristics on consumers. Key findings in this domain include the impact of brand name sounds on consumers' product evaluations (Lowrey and Shrum 2007; Yorkston and Menon 2004) and consumption (Maclnnis and de Mello 2005). Sounds are an influential attribute of brand names that can generate positive affect and influence consumers’ product choices (Argo, Popa, and Smith 2010).

This research contributes a unique perspective to the literature by examining the qualities that appear to be selected for by managers and professional name inventors, and how these correspond with what is known about consumer brand name preferences. Our data set consists of 146 brand names from Interbrand’s ‘top 100’ lists for the years 2001 to 2010. Invented brand names were compared with brand names inherited from company founders or places of origin. Results suggest that managers and name inventors select for certain name attributes in ways that are consistent with some previous findings and contrary to others.

We find that word-final fricatives like the “s” in “Guinness” are significantly less common in created brand names than in inherited brand names. This is consistent with Smith (1998), who found that word-final fricatives are perceived negatively because they may disrupt rhythm by drawing attention to the end of the word. However, when analyzed regardless of word position, the fricative “s” generally trended toward over-representation among created brand names. This seeming contradiction may be due to the fact that different portions of a word (i.e., front, middle, back) convey different soundsymbolic meanings (Johnson 1967).

Conversely, however, the fricative “z,” as in “Zurich,” was significantly less common among invented brand names compared with inherited ones. Whereas the “z” sound is identical to the “s” sound in place and type of articulation, the “s” may be selected for by brand name inventors while the “z” is avoided due to the voiced/voiceless distinction between them. Voiceless consonants such as “s” are perceived as smaller, lighter, and sharper (Folkins & Lenrow 1966) as well as more feminine (Klink 2000) than voiced consonants such as “z.”

Contrary to much of the past research on plosives (Cortese 1998; Schloss 1981; Vandenberg Bergh 1990, etc.) word-initial plosives (p, b, t, d, k, and g) were not selected for among invented brand names. To the contrary, word-initial “b” and “t” trended toward under-representation. Plosives have been found to have both positive and negative effects on study participant preferences, (Jenkins, Russell, and Suci 1958; Johnson, Suzuki, and Olds 1964; Lowrey, Shrum and Dubitsky 2003). Our results suggest that, for better or worse, managers and name designers either do not select plosives for invented brand names or select against them.

Finally, word-initial vowels were significantly more frequent among invented brand names than inherited ones. This may be because initial vowels convey magnitude symbolism i.e., largeness vs. smallness (Johnson 1967). Whether the vowel conveys ‘large’ or ‘small,’ however, depends on the particular vowel. We find that the front vowel “a,” as in “Kraft,” was selected for by name inventors, while the back vowel “o,” as in “Honda,” trended toward under-representation among invented brand names. The only other discrepancy in vowel distribution was the mid-central vowel “u,” as in “Samsung,” which was under-represented among invented names. Notably, name inventors appear to select for the front vowel, which bears the magnitude symbolism ‘small,’ whereas they trend toward selecting against back vowel, with magnitude symbolism ‘large,’ (Hinton, Nichols, and Ohala 1994). This is consistent with the pattern of selecting for symbolically ‘small’ voiceless fricatives.

Our analysis suggests that sound symbolism - the link between sound and meaning – may be one factor contributing to the brand name attributes selected for by managers and name inventors. Namers may instinctively choose positive name attributes that appeal to consumers resulting in the observed over and under-representations of certain brand name attributes. Conversely, name inventors may be biased toward/against name attributes for other reasons, at the expense of best naming practices.

REFERENCES


When Goal Conflict Increases Motivation
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Everyday consumers decide how to pursue their multiple goals. The decision becomes difficult when these goals conflict with each other (Fishbach and Ferguson 2007; Kruglanski et al. 2002). For instance, a consumer may want to lose weight and enjoy tasty foods, or save money and travel the world, or may wish to get a promotion at work and spend time with family. Reconciling the pursuit of conflicting goals is psychologically aversive and induces decision-difficulty. Prior literature has noted that goal conflict decreases motivation and the likelihood that individuals will strive to achieve the conflicting goals (McKeeman and Karoly 1991).

Contrary to past research, we propose that goal conflict can have positive impact on motivation. Our proposition is based on the finding that subjective experiences of difficulty can serve as an input into judgment (Schwarz 2004). Though subjective difficulty often decreases subsequent evaluations (Novemsky et al. 2007), recent research suggests that it may also have positive effects, such as making products seem more unique and instrumentally to goal attainment (Pocheptsova et al. 2010; Labroo and Kim 2009), and increasing the perceived importance of decisions (Sela and Berger 2011). Building on this literature, we propose that subjective experience of difficulty associated with negotiating conflict among one’s goals will influence evaluation of those goals. Specifically, we posit that people would expect to experience more conflict when goals are more (versus less) important. Thus, when people experience goal conflict and associated feelings of difficulty in pursuing multiple goals, they may interpret these feelings of difficulty as a signal of goal importance, which in-turn is a key driver of motivation (Kruglanski et al. 2002). Hence, to the extent the subjective difficulty associated with goal conflict increases perceived goal importance, we predict that goal conflict will increase, rather than decrease, motivation. Multiple studies provide support for our proposition.

Study 1 tested the impact of goal conflict on perceptions of goal importance. Participants read a scenario where they were going on a ski trip with friends and also had an upcoming quiz in class either in three weeks after the trip (low-conflict condition) or immediately after the trip (high-conflict condition). Among several unrelated measures, participants rated importance of “academic success” and “spending time with friends”. As expected, participants rated both goals (to do well in school and socialize with friends) as more important when conflict was high versus low (p < .05).

Study 2 tested the effect of goal conflict on motivation. Participants were asked to list two goals that they were currently pursuing. Half of participants were asked to list two examples of how those goals conflicted with each other (high-conflict condition); the remaining were not asked for any examples (low-conflict condition). After filler tasks, we measured how conflicted participants felt and their motivation to pursue the two goals that were in conflict as well as some other goals that did not conflict with the two focal goals. As predicted, participants in high-conflict condition were more motivated to pursue the two conflicting goals (F(1, 25) = 5.98, p<.05). However, no increase in motivation was observed for goals that were not in conflict (p > .25), suggesting that increase in motivation arises from feelings of conflict and is not due to general arousal or mood differences, which should also affect goals that are not in conflict.

Study 3 replicated the positive impact of goal conflict on motivation and showed that enhanced perceptions of goal importance mediated this effect. We activated a performance goal and a hedonic goal for all participants by asking them to endorse statements related to each goal (e.g., “I want to achieve success”, “I want to relax and enjoy life”). Goal conflict was manipulated by asking participants to either list two (high-conflict condition) or eight (low-conflict condition) examples of how these goals conflicted. Listing eight examples is expected to be more difficult, thus creating the perception that the goals were in less conflict relative to the two-examples condition (Schwarz et al. 1991). Next, all participants indicated their willingness to pay for several goal-related products (e.g., highlighters, movie tickets) and completed measures assessing motivation to pursue the conflicting goals and perceptions of goal importance. As predicted, participants were willing to pay more for the goal-related products when they perceived more conflict among their goals (F(1, 68) = 3.72, p < .06). Moreover, goal conflict increased perceptions of goal importance (F(1, 67) = 5.56, p < .05) and motivation (F(1, 68) = 4.16, p < .05) and the positive effect of goal conflict on motivation was mediated by perceived importance of the goals.

Two additional experiments explored when conflict helps and when it hurts motivation. In one study we find that goal conflict increases motivation when goals compete for resources but not when they compete directly. In a 2(conflict type: direct vs. resource) study we described an academic goal (passing an exam) and a social goal (attending a friend’s party) as competing for resources (making progress towards the two goals consumes the same resource of time/energy/money/etc.) or as competing directly (making progress towards one detracts from the other). Motivation towards the academic goal served as DV. Participant indicated they would spend more hours studying when a social goal was present than when it was absent. However, the positive effect of conflict occurred when the goals competed for resources and reversed when they competed directly.

Another study uncovered that level of conflict also influences whether goal conflict helps or hurts motivation. Going from one goal (social) to two goals (social and Health) increased motivation to pursue both goals (higher willingness to pay for goal–related activities). However, going from two to three goal (social, health, and professional) directionally decreased motivation.

Our findings are the first to demonstrate that inter-goal conflict can increase motivation. The research suggests a more comprehensive view of how the relationship among goals affects goal-directed behavior. Given the growing complexity of consumers’ wants and needs, understanding antecedents and consequences of negotiating goal conflict remains an important direction for future research.

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Fluency of Brand Names: Effects of Ease-of-Pronunciation on Non-Word Memory and Product Judgments
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Whereas research on brand names has been dominated by the notion that brand names should be semantically meaningful, fluency research has shown that there is meaning beyond the content. The ease with which we pronounce names of people and objects can have tremendous effects on how high we may climb the career ladder (Laham, Koval, and Alter 2012), how much we might invest in stocks (Shah and Oppenheimer 2007), and if we find a roller coaster safe or adventurous (Song and Schwarz 2009). Building on this knowledge, fluency theory provides us with opportunities to examine the effects of non-word brand names. These can have advantages over semantically meaningful names, meaning they might be easier to introduce globally, ease copyright issues, and, bearing no pre-defined meaning in the name, ease the introduction of brand extensions.

We first experimentally investigate how well easy and difficult non-words are liked and how well they are recognized. We then examine how the fluency of novel, fictitious non-word brand names affects the perception of product novelty and people’s perception of how well the product may perform.

Fluency, the ease or difficulty with which a stimulus is accessed, retrieved or processed, can be informative in its own right and affects judgments and preferences (Schwarz 2004). As summarized above, authors generally found a positive effect of linguistic fluency – the ease of pronunciation – on preference. Based on these findings, we hypothesize that fluent non-words will be preferred over disfluent non-words.

Although research on linguistic fluency has quite consistently shown a direct effect of fluency on judgmental measures, it has not been investigated whether and how it affects memory. Fluency generally increases familiarity (e.g., Jacoby and Woloshyn 1989), so we propose that fluent non-words should be recognized easily. We further propose that very disfluent non-words should be better recalled than moderately disfluent non-words. Two lines of research support this proposition. Firstly, investigating the indirect effect of fluency (e.g., Alter et al. 2007), authors have found that disfluent stimuli prompt systematic processing. Thorough processing, in turn, should let people recognize words better at a later point. Secondly, it has been shown in different settings that simple and complex stimuli led to higher arousal than moderately complex ones (e.g., Berlyne 1967). Since arousal informs memory, easy-to-pronounce and difficult-to-pronounce non-words should be better recognized than moderately disfluent non-words. We therefore hypothesize that there will be a U-shaped relationship between the fluency of non-words and recognition.

Since brand names are generally considered a different word class than non-words (Gontijo et al. 2002), we also sought to investigate fluency effects of non-words as brand names. We were specifically interested in how the well-established effect of fluency – disfluent stimuli being perceived as more novel and more risky – reflects on judgments of novel technological products. We hypothesize that products with fluent (vs. disfluent) names will be perceived as more familiar (vs. more unfamiliar) and that participants will show higher (vs. lower) confidence in the performance of a product with a fluent (vs. disfluent) name.

Stimuli: Following the approach of Laham and colleagues (2012), we created 300 English non-words with the online word database MCIWord (Medler and Binder 2005). After an extensive pre-selection, 30 non-words were tested by 35 undergraduate students for their fluency and by 31 students for their suitability with the product category of cameras. Participants found fluent non-words easier to pronounce than disfluent non-words ($p < .001$). Fluent and disfluent non-words could be deemed unsuitable for cameras with their group means being below the scale mean (all $p < .001$).

**Study 1:** In an online study, 30 undergraduate students evaluated these 30 non-words in a random order. They were asked to indicate how much they liked each non-word and, after a distraction task of 5 minutes, had to fill in a memory test for 32 non-words of which 12 had been shown before. As hypothesized, fluent were preferred over disfluent non-words ($p < .001$), and fluent and disfluent non-words better recognized than moderately disfluent non-words ($p < .001$).

**Study 2:** Six non-words from the pre-study were selected as fictitious brand names for novel digital cameras and combined with six different one-sentence descriptions. In a repeated measurement design with 24 undergraduate students, we found that cameras with more fluent names were perceived as more familiar ($p < .05$). We could not find a linear but a curvilinear effect of fluency on confidence ($p < .001$). Fluent names evoked more confidence in the product’s performance than less fluent ones. However, very disfluent names also led participants to believe that the product might work well.

Our findings have theoretical and managerial implications. The direct effect of fluency on liking of non-words supports findings from extant fluency research. More importantly, to our knowledge, effects of linguistic fluency on memory have not been investigated. Although we tested non-words, the effect we found supports the notion from anecdotal brand name research that distinctive names, in this case disfluent, might serve the requirement of brand names for recognizability. Future research should further test memory effects of brand name fluency.

The second experiment produced a direct fluency effect on product familiarity, a finding with important managerial implications: perceived product novelty has to and can be managed through the name to achieve the optimal balance which neither scares consumers off nor blurs a product’s originality. The expected direct effect of fluency on confidence was only supported insofar that very fluent as opposed to moderately fluent names increased confidence. However, participants showed also higher confidence ratings when the product was presented with very disfluent names. A post-hoc explanation may lie in the use of incrementally rather than radically innovative products as stimuli. Disfluent names might have caused more thorough processing which, in turn, might have led participants to not only rely on the name as a heuristic cue as in the case of fluent names but also on the product description. The presented features of the products could be easily imaginable as fully functional, therefore increasing confidence ratings. Future research should further test the interaction of brand-related information and name fluency.

REFERENCES


Advertisting Beauty Can Influence Children’s Advertising Model Perception, Self-Perception and Advertising Effectiveness
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Research using adult samples has shown that attractive (versus unattractive) models are rated more positive on other unrelated characteristics. This is explained by the physical attractiveness (PA) stereotype, also called the “what is beautiful is good” stereotype or the perception that physically attractive individuals possess more positive qualities and experience more satisfying life outcomes than do unattractive individuals (Dion et al., 1972). This PA stereotype leads people to believe that attractive people are, for example, also happier, more popular etc. People also agree more often with the opinion of attractive (versus less attractive) individuals (Kardes et al., 2011) and attractive sources are more persuasive than less attractive sources (Solomon et al., 1992). Research on adults has also shown that attractive models in advertising can negatively influence self-ratings of attractiveness, self-esteem and mood (e.g. Thornton and Moore, 1993).

In two experimental studies, we determine how the use of attractive (versus less attractive) models influences children’s (study 1: 8-10 years old; study 2: 11-13 years old) state of mind. We investigate (1) whether the physical attractiveness stereotype applies to children, (2) whether children’s self-perception is influenced by the attractiveness of an advertising model, (3) whether children’s attitudes and buying intentions are influenced by the attractiveness of an advertising model, and (4) whether age affects (1), (2) and (3).

Our contribution to the literature is threefold: (1) we add to the limited research on the PA stereotype in children by investigating if the PA stereotype differs for children of two different age groups. Research on cognitive development suggests that the effects of the PA stereotype should be larger for younger children compared to older children; (2) To date, only one study exists on the influence of attractive (versus less attractive) models on the self-perception of children (Van de Deen et al., 2011), which concentrates on the influence of idealised attractive models on girls between 10 and 13 years old. We extend this by investigating both boys and girls between 8 and 13 years old and by concentrating on non-idealised attractive models; (3) no research on the effects of using attractive models in advertising on children’s attitudes and behaviour exists - while attractive models are often used in advertising to children.

In both studies, children were randomly confronted with an advertisement using either an attractive or less attractive same-sex model of their own age group. The models (one boy and one girl for each study) used in the studies were the same person in both the attractive and less attractive ad, but were depicted as less attractive by changing some facial characteristics using Photoshop. Pretesting showed that the “attractive” and “less attractive” models were identified as such in both age groups. In study 1, 79 children between 8 and 10 years old participated (47% girls; M = 9, SD = .59); In study 2, 61 children of 11-13 years old participated (49% girls; M = 13, SD = .53). In study 1 children saw an ad for a new pencil case, in study 2 children saw an ad for a new Wii game; a pretest showed that both products are gender-neutral. Before exposure to the ad, children reported their age and gender. Then, they completed all five items from the ‘general self-worth’ and two items of the ‘physical appearance’ subscales of the Dutch version (Treffers et al., 2002) of Harter’s (1988) Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents (SPP-A). The children responded to the questions on a five-point scale, for which each answer possibility had verbal anchors (study 1 and study 2) and/or non-verbal anchor points (emoticons; study 1). Next, children saw the ad and filled in questions about their attitude towards the ad, purchase intention (Derbaix and Pecheux, 2003) and the attractiveness of the model on 5-point scales. To assess the “what is beautiful is good” stereotype, we asked children to rate the sources on individual characteristics, which were adapted from previous studies and adjusted to the age of our sample on a five-point scale. Finally, children completed the SPP-A subscales again. Reliability analysis were performed for all individual scales and indicated coefficient alphas within the acceptable range. Our results confirm the “what is beautiful is good” stereotype in children; attractiveness predicted evaluations of characteristics related to attractiveness (i.e., “being friendly”, “being kind”) and unrelated to attractiveness (i.e. “being good at sports”). Children of 8-10 years old also related characteristics like “being smart” and “following the rules” to attractiveness while 11-13 year old children did not, showing the extent to which children attribute positive characteristics to attractive people decreases with age.

We also found that more characteristics were predicted by attractiveness for girls (versus boys) of 8-10 years old while 11-13 years old boys and girls attribute about the same number of positive characteristics to attractive models but some of the specific characteristics that are attributed differ. Future research could additionally investigate these gender differences to identify the origin of these gender differences. Our results also show that only the self-perception of the youngest boys in our studies is negatively affected by exposure to attractiveness in advertising which contradicts previous studies. Most previous studies, however, used idealised or highly attractive models, whereas this study employed moderately attractive models versus unattractive models. Future research should focus on the drivers behind this effect and should examine if lower self-perception is temporarily induced, why exposure to attractive models causes shifts in self-perception, why gender differences exist and if children with high (versus low) self-perceptions are responding differently to advertising stimuli.

An attractive (versus less attractive) model results in higher message effectiveness as measured by attitude towards the ad and purchase intention, but only for 8-10 year old children. These results are consistent with previous studies that indicate that children between 8 and 10 have low ability and motivation to process arguments in advertising, making peripheral information (such as model attractiveness) more important (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986).

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Not All Power is Created Equal: Role of Social and Personal Power in Decision Making
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Power has been the focus of much academic inquiry in the past decade (e.g., Briñol et al., 2007; Galinsky et al., 2003). Extant literature, however, primarily focuses on social power and overlooked personal power. In this paper, we empirically differentiate between personal and social power and examine its effects on commonly reported context effects. Power is generally defined as the ability to control resources for oneself and others without interference. This definition has two distinct components: social and personal power. Social power is individuals’ ability to exercise control over others (French & Raven, 1959). Alternatively, personal power is the ability to control one’s own outcomes, without being influenced and constrained by others (Van Dijke & Poppe, 2006). Even though some researchers have acknowledged the existence of the social power and personal power distinction (Galinsky et al., 2003; Van Dijke & Poppe, 2006), most studies have treated power as a single construct (for an exception see Lammers, Stoker, & Stapel 2009).

We argue that one important distinction between social and personal power is the sense of freedom the power holder feels. High personal power individuals act independently, with little or no consideration of their social environment. As such, they have a high sense of freedom. Alternatively, social power is associated with interdependence (Fiske & Depret, 1996), which is associated with connection to others (Cross, Bacon & Morris, 2000), which presumably limits their sense of freedom. Therefore, we hypothesize that having personal power, compared to social power, leads to higher sense of freedom.

We further suggest that this sense of freedom (or lack thereof) has important implications for the host of context effects. We theorize that feelings of freedom should make consumers less likely to restrict themselves and more likely to make decisions that would give them the option to act freely. As such, we would expect feeling personal power to highlight the need to be free and make the consumers more likely to choose extreme options, thus diminishing the compromise effect. One might suggest that because compromise effect is driven by how easy it is to justify choices, higher levels of compromise observed under social power might be due the increased salience of others under these circumstances. This account would predict that having social (personal) power should increase (decrease) any effect that is rooted in justifying decisions to others (e.g., the attraction effect).
Our theory, however, predicts otherwise and indicates that since the attraction effect does not relate the sense of freedom, it should not be influenced whether the power experienced is social or personal. We further argue that power type also influences the extent to which consumers are willing to make a choice in the first place. That is, we would expect the those who feel personal power to be more likely to defer choice, thus keeping their options open, than those who feel social power and neutral.

A pilot study tested the basic premise our theory by having participants recall an event where they had social or personal power, and having an independent coder examining the written responses. We found that while those with personal power had more thoughts relating to freedom than those with social power, their responses did not differ in their stated confidence or mood. Study 1 was designed to examine the compromise effect. Participants (N=113) first completed the power-inducing task. Next, they made a choice for a wine from three options. We varied the set composition so that option B would either be a compromise {ABC} or an extreme alternative {BCD}. We found that participants with social power chose option B more when it was the compromise option (79%) in set {ABC} than when it was the extreme option (38%) in set {BCD}. However, this compromise effect (difference of option B choice) was present only for those with high social power and not for those with personal power.

Study 2 examined the mediating role of experienced freedom. Participants (N = 89) completed the power-inducing task and then made a choice for an investment among three options, one of which was compromise. As predicted, we found that high personal power individuals chose the compromise option (57%) less than those with social power (77%). More importantly, we find that the feelings of elicited freedom mediated the effect of power type on the choice of compromise option.

Study 3 was designed to rule salience of others as an alternative explanation and examined the role of power type on attraction effect. Participants (N = 220) completed the power-inducing task and then made a choice between three cell phone plans. We varied the set composition so that the third option was either dominated by option A (A’) or by option B (B’). As predicted, we found that choice share of option A was higher (82%) in set {A’AB} than set {ABB’} (47%). More importantly, power type did not interact with decoy location and attraction effect was observed for both for personal power ( {A’AB} = 69%; {ABB’} = 54%) and for social power ( {A’AB} = 67%; {ABB’} = 47%) .

In Study 4, participants (N = 138) completed a power-inducing task. Next, they made a choice between two CDs and had the option to either choose one of these CDs or to defer choice and search more. As predicted, we found participants who recalled an incident of personal power chose to defer their choice more (41%) than those who recalled an incident of social power (19%) or those in the control condition (28%). An examination of the verbal protocols revealed that having personal power increased the thoughts relating to freedom and that this heightened sense of freedom mediated the effect of power type on deferral.

Five studies demonstrate that the effect of power on context effects depends on its type: while personal power attenuates the compromise effect, it augments the choice deferral, having no effect on the attraction effect. We further demonstrate that it is the heightened sense of freedom those with personal power feel that drives these effects.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Since Veblen coined the term conspicuous consumption the received wisdom has been that wealthier consumers seek to distinguish themselves by flaunting wealth via luxury consumption the masses cannot afford. But recently terms such as ‘luxury,’ in a postmodern, multicultural, transnational, and urban world, have been reframed, giving birth to the concept of ‘new luxury’. New luxury is where affordability, mass market proliferation, status divorced from social class and availability in the mass market can invert a brand’s luxury status. This diminution of the term luxury is having a reciprocal effect on the appeal of conspicuousness at the upper end of the market.

There is evidence that the conspicuousness of brands rises with price, to a point, and then begins to decline, suggesting that those who can afford truly high end brands may prefer inconspicuous consumption (Berger and Ward 2010). This shift from conspicuous to inconspicuous signals can be seen in luxury brands — e.g., Louis Vuitton using a subtle V in the knitted pattern of a sweater rather than its formerly ubiquitous and easily identifiable logo (Dougan 2012). In part this may be because the rich prefer not to provoke envy and anger in times of economic austerity (Belk 2011; Ledbury 2012). In part it may be due to the desire of high status consumers to distinguish themselves from the over-the-top conspicuous consumption of the nouveaux riches and the aspirational consumption of lower status consumers who weaken a brand image by consuming more mass market versions of luxury goods, as with rapper consumption of “bling” jewellery and “chavs” consumption of Burberry goods in the UK (Jones 2012; Nueno and Quench 1998; Silverstein and Fiske 2003; The Economist 2005; Thomas 2007; Wilson and Morgan 2011). And in part it may be that in an anonymous urban society with increasing options to temporarily rent or lease luxury purses, cars, and dresses, it is getting increasingly difficult to “know if the guy who drives past me in a Ferrari owns it or is just renting it for the weekend” (The Economist 2005). With urban anonymity it is also possible to sacrifice less visible “necessities” like food, medical care, and adequate shelter in order to afford more visible “luxuries” like designer clothing, watches, and mobile phones, which Belk (1999) terms “leaping luxuries.” And for those who cannot afford to make such sacrifices, there are knock-offs and counterfeits. All these trends dilute the status signalling ability of luxury goods. In addition, there is evidence that those with well-established social status seek luxury goods not so much for their status signalling ability as for the pleasure they provide (e.g., Postrel 2008).

How can we understand this shift from conspicuous to inconspicuous consumption, and what are its implications? One clue can be found in a study by Charles, Hurst, and Roussanov (2007). Using nationally representative U.S. data they found that blacks and Hispanics devote a larger portion of their incomes to conspicuous consumption (Mukerjee 2006). Instead they appear to be related to racial reference groups. That is, because overall blacks and Hispanics in the U.S. have lower incomes than whites there is a greater need to distinguish oneself and elevate one’s status in order not to be judged by the stereotype of being poor. In order to do so, members of these disadvantaged groups spent less on lower visibility goods like education, health care, and savings. Whites, by contrast, come from a relatively privileged group and are therefore more inclined to spend inconspicuously, devoting more to health, education, and retirement savings and less to visible bling. Moreover, in states where there was less of an income gap between these minority groups and whites, the differences in conspicuous consumption were attenuated. There is also evidence that lower status groups in India spend relatively more on their weddings (Bloch, Rao, and Desai 2004) and that when wealthy Hong Kong residents move to Canada they engage in less conspicuous consumption than they did in their homeland (Chung and Fischer 2001). Such findings suggest that differential conspicuous consumption can take place outside of the U.S. and among different reference groups. Postrel (2008) suggests a similar explanation for the conspicuous consumption of nouveaux riches consumers in otherwise poor countries such as the BRIC nations, which suggests that there should be a shift from conspicuous to inconspicuous consumption as these nations become wealthier.

Indeed, we can see this already in China, a country notorious for ubiquitous conspicuous consumption. Hermes is developing the inconspicuous luxury brand Shang Xia (http://www.shang-xia.com/en) which appeals to the elite in China. Inconspicuousness can also take varying forms in markets within Asia. For example, according to a survey reported by Chadha and Husband (2006), of Tokyo women in their 20s, 94 percent reported owning at least one Louis Vuitton item, 92 percent reportedly owned Gucci, with Prada (57 percent), and Chanel (51 percent) also quite high. When this many people own such luxury goods, it is a matter of fitting in rather than standing out. It would be conspicuous not to own such goods under these circumstances.

These trends point toward a need to understand how to manage brands inconspicuously. A sophisticated inconspicuous brand denotes complexity. Subtlety moves thinking beyond concepts of social class and snobbery, decoupling the idea that brand strength and attractiveness are delivered through share of voice and ‘loudness’. Instead, nuanced minimalism, cool and co-opting the mundane are tacit cues which transport brands into different contexts and spaces, allowing for greater private pleasure as well as brand transcendence and an ability to demonstrate cultural capital. This paper challenges conventional understandings of the importance of conspicuousness. In analysing the economic and social trends that are leading to the rise of inconspicuousness, we can begin to understand how consumer constructs such as luxury and class are being redefined.

REFERENCES


In the Long Run, Other-Focused Happiness-Boosting Activities are more Effective than Self-Focused Activities

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Happiness has become a household term in the modern Western society, and firms offer a range of different products and services that either directly or indirectly promise happiness to consumers (Kurtz and Lyubomirsky, 2011). Scholars studying happiness have pinpointed that, without directions, consumers are likely to fail in their quest to become happier. Firstly, happiness appears to be strongly genetically predetermined which means that it can be difficult for people to influence happiness in the long-run (Frederick and Loewenstein, 1999; Lykken and Tellegen, 1996). Secondly, people often hold beliefs about what will make them happier, but empirical data shows that people are bad at knowing what actually will make them happier (Lyubomirsky, 2008). However, although happiness is largely a genetic trait, scholars have documented that by engaging in so-called happiness-enhancing activities, people can at least partly increase their long-term happiness and these researchers have devoted research attention to study the effectiveness of different types of happiness-enhancing activities, people can at least partly increase their long-term happiness and these researchers have devoted research attention to study the effectiveness of different types of happiness-enhancing activities (Lyubomirsky, Dickerhoof, Boehm, and Sheldon, 2011; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, and Schkade, 2005). In this study, we separate between two types of activities and investigate the effects of: 1) self-focused happiness enhancing activities aiming to enhance self-esteem or sense of worth, for instance by achieving one’s goals (Lyubomirsky and Ross, 1997), 2) other-focused happiness-enhancing activities aiming to approach other people, for instance helping other people (Schwartz and Sendor, 1999).

Recent development in the modern Western culture place much emphasis on the importance of self-esteem as it is assumed that high self-esteem leads to well-adjustment (Baumeister, 1991). Therefore, it is commonplace today that people are encouraged to focus on happiness-enhancing activities that are self-focused, such as treating and “being kind” to oneself, telling oneself that one is great, and love oneself more (Baumeister, 1991; Twenge and Campbell, 2003). Indeed, in empirical studies, self-esteem usually correlates with happiness (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, and Vohs, 2003). However, we propose that this positive effect may only be effective in the short run. Studies on narcissists, who score high on self-love and that are highly self-focused, show that although narcissists are happy in the short term, they become unhappier later on in life. Scholars argue that this is probably because their self-centeredness (Campbell, 1999; Rose and Campbell, 2004) hinders formation of meaningful social relationships and undermines the human universal need to belong (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). Thus, although self-focused happiness-enhancing activities might have a positive effect in the short run, they might be less effective in the long run. In this study we examine this prediction by investigating the long-term effects of self- and other-focused activities on happiness.

Data collection. We collected data over a period of six weeks at a major University in the Netherlands. Participants were students that voluntarily took part in the study for a small monetary compensation. Of 100 participants, 97 completed all questionnaires for the study, and were included in the final sample. Data was collected in the beginning of the study (with a longer questionnaire), daily (with a shorter questionnaire), and after the study was completed (a longer questionnaire, filled in six weeks after the starting date). Six happiness activities were given to participants to complete each week. The happiness activities were classified into five categories: gratitude, optimism, kindness, goals, and body (Lyubomirsky, 2008). The activities were randomly distributed to participants. To prevent fatigue effects, we generated a large number of activities within each category. Each participant was only exposed to the same task once. After each week, we asked participants to reflect on their favorite activity, i.e. the activity they would continue doing in the future. We used this number to code activities into self- vs. other-focused categories. We classified gratitude and kindness as other-focused, whereas optimism, goals, and body were classified as self-focused. Although this distinction is somewhat crude, it is in line with previous literature on happiness (Lyubomirsky, 2008). Based on the activities, we assigned every participant a percentage of self vs. other-focused focus (ranging from 0 = completely self-focused to 100 = completely other-focused). We measured happiness using the satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) (Diener et al., 1985; Pavot et al., 1991). The weekly means for the SWLS ranged from 5.00-5.18 (on a seven-point scale) and the corresponding SDs ranged from 1.04-1.18.

Results. Using simple regressions (in which we regressed the percentage of self-vs. other focused focus on satisfaction with life), the results show that in the long-run, participants who chose to focus on happiness activities that emphasize other- rather than self-focus experiences greater satisfaction with life at the end of the six weeks (day 35), $b = .209, t = 2.04, p < .05$, with positive results already being visible on the fifth week into the study (day 28), $b = .219, t = 2.14, p < .05$. No effect was found before week five, showing that in the short term, a focus on self-focused activities generates as much happiness as a focus on other-focused activities. It is only in the long run that individuals that choose to focus on other-focused strategies experience greater levels of happiness. These results show that other-focused activities, as compared with self-focused, appears to be a better strategy for long-term happiness.

REFERENCES


Bad Celebrities are Good? The Effects of Celebrity Image on Consumer Self-Esteem and Purchase Intensions

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

“Good” celebrities, i.e. celebrities holding a positive public image, are typically more desired as product endorsers than “bad” celebrities, i.e. celebrities holding a negative public image, as traditional endorsement models propose that the image of the celebrity color off on the endorsed product. However, empirical data on self-esteem and social comparison suggests that upward comparisons, i.e. comparing oneself to people who are better than oneself (like a good celebrity), decreases temporal self-esteem while downward comparisons, i.e. comparisons to people who are worse than oneself (such as a bad celebrity), increase temporal self-esteem (Heatherton and Polivy, 1991; Smith, 2000). In three studies, we investigate the interplay between good and bad celebrities and consumer self-esteem and purchase intentions for celebrity endorsed products.

Study 1 investigated the effects of bad and good celebrities (versus non-celebrities) on consumers’ self-esteem. We manipulated positive and negative information about a celebrity (Jessica Alba) versus a non-celebrity (Jessica Melba). A story was used to manipulate celebrity image (positive, negative) that portrayed Jessica Alba/Melba in a positive (versus negative) light. Forty females read the story and answered questions about their temporal self-esteem (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). A 2 (celebrity portrayal: negative, positive) x 2 (type of person: celebrity vs. non-celebrity) between-subjects ANOVA showed a significant interaction effect between the two factors, F(1,37) = 7.64, p < .01. In addition, the main effect of celebrity portrayal was marginally significant, and the main effect type of person was significant. Subsequent mean comparisons revealed that a bad celebrity (i.e. a negative story about the celebrity) leads to greater temporal self-esteem than a good celebrity (i.e., a positive story about the celebrity). These effects were the opposite for the non-celebrity: The negative story led to a decrease in self-esteem, whereas the positive story increased self-esteem.

Study 2 aimed to study possible spillover effects of the change in self-esteem to the celebrity endorsed product. Drawing upon theories of similarity-testing of assimilation or contrasting (Gentner and Markman, 1996; Mussweiler, Ruter, and Epstude 2004), we hypothesized that the extent to which a similarity- (vs. contrast) focus is induced by the celebrity, the temporary feelings related to self-esteem will be transferred (vs. not be transferred) to purchase intentions. A similarity focus means that people focus on the similarities between themselves and another person, and a dissimilarity focus means that people focus on the dissimilarities between themselves and another person (Markman and Gentner, 1996). Ninety-one questionnaires were collected from young females and we used a picture comparison task to test subjects’ assimilation or contrasting (Markman and Gentner, 1996; Mussweiler et al., 2004). The results were examined with ordinary least squares regressions and the independent variables were centered before creating the interaction effect (Aiken and West 1991). We found a significant interaction effect between similarity/dissimilarity focus and self-esteem on purchase intention: β = .141, t = 1.87, p < .05. The interaction effect shows that the extent to which a similarity- (vs. difference) focus is induced by the celebrity, the temporary feelings related to self-esteem evoked by the celebrity will be transferred (vs. not be transferred) to purchase intentions. The more the consumer assimilates the more temporal changes in self-esteem impact purchase intentions.

The aim of Study 3 was to validate the findings across a greater range of celebrities and to study whether the effects found in Study 1 and 2 also hold for true self-esteem. True self-esteem refers to the stability of self-esteem, and relates to the degree to which a person’s basic needs are thwarted versus fulfilled (Deci and Ryan, 1995; 2000; 2002; Gagné and Deci, 2005; Kernis, 2005). This research has documented that people whose basic needs are thwarted are prone to self-esteem instability while the opposite is salient for people whose basic needs are fulfilled. Based on this literature, it was expected that consumers who are low (vs. high) in true self-esteem are likely to be especially sensitive to exposure to good celebrities. Five hundred and twenty seven participants viewed a celebrity endorsed product and answered the true self-esteem scale (Deci and Ryan, 2002; Mtrue self-esteem = 15.93, SD = 1.45) and purchase intention (Mpurchase intention = 4.56, SD = 1.88). Two significant main effects were found: the main effects of type of celebrity (good, bad) and self-esteem on purchase intention (β = -.306, t = -7.48, p < .01) and (β = .254, t = 4.58, p < .01). Also, we found a significant interaction effect between the two variables (β = -.169, t = -3.05, p < .01), showing that for people whose self-esteem is low (vs. high), a bad (vs. good) celebrity leads to greater purchase intentions for the celebrity endorsed product. In contrast, for people whose self-esteem is high, there is no significant difference between good and bad celebrities.

Study 1 showed that exposure to a good celebrities decrease consumers’ self-esteem and bad celebrities increase self-esteem, suggesting that celebrities, in comparison to non-celebrities, make consumers more sensitive to social comparisons. In Study 2, it was documented that the more the consumer assimilates to the celebrity, the more the consumer’s change in self-esteem transfers to purchase intentions. In Study 3, it was shown that bad celebrities have a better effect on purchase intentions than good celebrities for consumers scoring low in true self-esteem but that consumers high in true self-esteem react no differently to good and bad celebrities. In conclusion, good and bad celebrities differently affect temporal changes in self-esteem and these changes in self-esteem spill over to the celebrity endorsed product if consumers engage in assimilation. Also, in comparison to good celebrities, bad celebrities seem to be a safer choice than good celebrities.

REFERENCES


Spinsters and Bachelors: Negotiating the ‘Single’ Identity in a Couple-Orientated Marketplace

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This paper endeavours to shed light on the neglected and often ‘unspoken’ narratives of ‘single’ adults. In particular, we focus on the narratives of British singletons as they attempt to make sense of their lived experience of ‘being single’ in a marketplace that upholds the ideal of couple relationships. In his pioneering paper, Wortzel (1977) stresses the importance of studying the ‘single life-cycle’ in consumer research, which promises to illustrate consumption practices and symbolic exchange of goods that are orientated towards “personal growth and enriching personal experiences” (pp. 324). Meanwhile, census data and national surveys consistently highlight the growth of the single population (Euromonitor 2012), indicating ‘singleness’ as becoming a chosen way of living (Stein 1975; Budgeon 2008) and a reflexive project of the self (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Santore 2008). In Britain, the single population has increased by 14.5% between 1971 and 2011, while single-person household has reached 7.7 million in 2011 (ONS 2012).

Since Wortzel’s publication, there is surprisingly little research exploring the ‘single’ self-identity and how this is negotiated through consumption experiences. We argue that such an oversight mirrors broader marginalisation of ‘singleness’ as a troubled cultural category (Reynolds and Wetherell 2003). Accordingly the marketplace is structured within what Berlant and Warner (2000) call ‘heteronormativity’ – a framework that defines and reproduces practices that privilege heterosexual coupledom (Budgeon 2008). Such a framework persistently espouses the ideology of marriage (Rosenail and Budgeon 2004) and the nuclear family (Bryne 2003). This is often encapsulated through the ‘imaginary of intimacy, coupling and kinship’ (Budgeon 2008:306). Consequently, ‘heterosexual familism’ constitutes a reference point from which one’s intimate lives are judged (Byrne 2003). Hence, the single self is rendered ‘pathological’ (Reynolds and Wetherell 2003) and deviant (Sandfield and Percy 2009).

In recent years, sociologists have commented on the transformation of intimacy in Western societies (Giddens 1992). This is engendered by the deinstitutionalisation of marriage (Cherlin 2004) and the dissolution of the ‘patriarchal nuclear family’ leading to the emergence of the ‘brave new family’ (Stacey 1998) - which encompasses a diversity of postmodern living arrangements (such as cohabitation, single parenthood, non-heterosexual partnerships, stepfamily). However, van Every (1996) argues that such pluralisation of kinship serves only to reinforce the ‘family’ as a unit of analysis (Budgeon 2008) and thus, silences the voices of those who fall outside of the convention of couplehood and parenthood. In consumer research, we witness a burgeoning body of work exploring the consumption experiences of contemporary married women (Thompson et al 1990), working parents (Thompson 1996), single fathers (Harrison et al 2012), mothers (The Voice Group 2010). This study aims to reinstate the ‘voices’ of ‘single’ individuals as they assert their self-identities and manage their life projects outside of the heteronormative framework.

According to Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002:22), modern individuals in Western society are thrown under the condition of individualisation, where identity is no longer tied to a ‘given’ tradition; rather it is reflexively ‘worked upon’ as part of one’s biographical project. Drawing on Bauman’s Liquid Love (2003) and Gidden’s Confluent Love (Giddens 1992), Beck and Beck-Gernsheim observes how the impermanence of interpersonal relationships in modernity has heightened individuals’ freedom to fashion their interpersonal relationships. In other words, both singledom and couplehood are elective biographies, chosen by individuals to fit into their personal narratives. This potentially creates an emancipatory space where single individuals are able to carve out their significance and remove the stigma attached to singleness. However, Budgeon (2008) argues that this involves individuals being able to position themselves in relation to cultural meanings that are available.

This paper explores the extent to which individuals are able to transcend their marginalised position of ‘being single’ and how they draw on available cultural resources to construct a biography that reflects their struggles, agencies and triumphs. Drawing on the hermeneutic tradition (Thompson 1996), phenomenological interviews were conducted with 10 single adults (aged 22-40, 5 men, 5 women) to illustrate how participants construct emic meanings pertaining to ‘being single’ and how these are negotiated through various consumption contexts. A thematic analysis of the research findings reveals 2 overarching themes, which depict how (1) the single self is experienced as marginalising/self-actualising and how (2) the marketplace constitutes an alienating/emancipating space in relation to the heteronormative frame of reference.

Firstly, our participants consistently defend against the prevailing narrative that constructs the single self as problematic while at the same time attempting to assert their ‘singleness’ as a self-actualising project (Theme 1). Their narratives evoke stereotypical images of single women as ‘spinsters’, ‘crazy cat lady’ and ‘desperate’ while single men are ‘lonely’, ‘mama’s boy’ and ‘sleazy’. Bridget Jones and Mr. Beans embody the stigmatized dimension of singleness. Their salvation is predicated on finding Miss/Mr. Right that ideally culminating in marriage. For some participants, previous experience of couplehood/marriage is often rife with disharmony and feeling of disempowerment. For them, choosing to live a single life is empowering as it engenders a sense of personal development and freedom. In spite of this, all our participants continue to experience a sense of ‘alienation’ and social exclusion.

This sense of alienation is often intensified through their participation in the marketplace (Theme 2), which they considered to be orientated towards couple relationships. From single supplements to 2-for-1 promotional deals, our participants experience the marketplace as an oppressive space that (1) exploits their vulnerability (e.g. dating services), (2) makes conspicuous their stigmatized position (e.g. dining alone in restaurants) and (3) discriminates against their single status (e.g. single supplements). Yet, most participants are able to creatively appropriate cultural and interpersonal resources to (1) circumvent the marginalizing forces of the marketplace (e.g. sharing promotional deals with friends) and (2) cultivate new rituals that celebrate their singleness (e.g. pampering as self-gift). In sum, this paper contributes to consumer research by exploring the undertheorized area of single identity and its consumption contexts. Our findings illustrate that singleness is a reflexively negotiated identity project, enacted by individuals to manage and fashion their interpersonal lives against the prevailing ideology of couplehood.
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When Later Never Comes: Postponing Consumption Boosts Self-Control
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Modern human life proves to be a challenging environment for successful self-control. Not only do humans have larger waistlines than ever before, they also have unsurpassed debt-levels. Much research has focused on the mechanics of self-control and reasons for failure and yet little research hints at ways to increase self-control. Indeed, the most common self-control strategy – restraint – often backfires. Not only does restraint rely on limited resources, such as time, energy, and motivation (e.g., Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven and Tice 1998; Carver and Scheier 1981), it also increases desire for the forbidden fruit (e.g., Mann and Ward 2001; Patrick, Lancellotti and Hagtvedt 2009). Given the limited nature of self-control resources, and the ever-growing demands on consumers’ self-control resources, a critical goal for emerging research is to identify new routes toward self-control success.

The current research systematically examines a novel self-control strategy that was hypothesized to boost self-control in the short and long term: postponement. Whereas deprivation may heighten temptations’ allure, thereby jeopardizing self-control success, postponement may diminish desire in the heat of the moment (Hoch and Loewenstein 1991), thereby facilitating self-control.

At first blush, one may expect that postponement should increase consumption in the long-term. Indeed, making steps to perform an action in the future tend to increase the likelihood that the action is performed (e.g., Gollwitzer 1999). This is because making simple rules or intentions (e.g., “I can have ice-cream the next time I am on the boardwalk”) will trigger the behavior when the cue is encountered. However, indefinite postponement, putting consumption off until some later, undefined time, may avoid such a trap. Because no specific cues are linked with the action, the action is less likely to be triggered and enacted compared. Furthermore, people tend to routinize actions that help them achieve their goals, particularly in response to environmental cues (Fujita 2011), so it possible that people who initially use postponement will continue to use postponement as a rule-of-thumb.

Experiment 1 served as an initial test of the hypothesis that postponement more effectively facilitates self-control relative to restraint. Participants were presented with a bowl of M&Ms and were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions. Participants in the restrain condition received the typical suggestion to not eat the M&Ms whereas participants in the postpone condition received a suggestion to have the M&Ms some later time. In the satiation condition, participants were allowed to eat freely. Amount eaten during this time (Time 1) served as a manipulation check. As expected, postponement and restraint participants ate fewer M&Ms than satiation participants.

A strict test of the postponement hypothesis required that participants be given a second, later time to eat the candy anonymously. To facilitate this, participants completed several other experiments and received a false debriefing, signaling the conclusion of the experiment. They were then given the cover story that they were the last participant and therefore could eat as many or few of the remaining M&Ms as they liked. Supporting the hypothesis that postponement facilitates self-control, postponement participants ate less of the candy relative to restraint participants. Postponement and satiation participants did not differ, which is consistent with previous work indicating that satiating desire for an item reduces subsequent intake (McSweeney & Swindell, 1999; Rolls, Rowe & Rolls, 1982). Examining total amount eaten across the entire experiment also revealed results supportive of predictions: postponement participants ate less than restraint and satiation participants; the latter two groups did not differ significantly from one another.

In Experiment 2 we examined the long-term effects of postponement on consumption. Additionally, we examined whether postponement works regardless of whether the strategy is assigned by someone else or chosen for the self. In the no choice condition, participants (high school students) were randomly assigned to receive a suggestion to eat the chips (satiation), refrain from eating the chips (restraint), or postpone eating the chips. In the choice condition, participants read a description of all three and chose one to implement. Participants recorded their consumption of healthy and unhealthy snacks in a dairy on a daily basis. As predicted, postponement reduced total chip consumption across the week, relative to both restraint and satiation conditions. Notably, this main effect was not moderated by the choice manipulation, nor was there a main effect of choice, indicating that postponement works similarly whether chosen for the self or assigned by someone else. Additionally analyses indicate that the effect of postponement was specific to the postponed snack. Postponement did not lead to compensatory consumption for other unhealthy items nor did it increase healthy consumption.

The main goal of Experiment 3 was to compare specific postponement to indefinite postponement. We hypothesized that indefinite postponement would diminish consumption but specific postponement would encourage eating at the specified time. Additionally a baseline condition was included. This time participants were told they were completing an experiment investigating timing of exposure and pleasure of consumption. A plate of cookies was placed in front of participants. Those in the specific condition received a suggestion to eat them at the end of the experiment, if they desired, whereas those in the indefinite postponement condition received a suggestion to eat them some later time, if they desired. Baseline condition participants were told they would receive additional instructions at a later time. The cookies were taken away and then participants completed filler tasks. Then all participants were given the opportunity to eat as much or as little as they wanted to. As predicted, indefinite postponement participants ate less as compared to specific postponement and baseline participants. Additionally, eating restraint did not interact with condition.

In sum, three experiments suggest that postponement is an effective route toward self-control success. The current research provides novel insight into the fundamental nature of self-control and suggests new avenues for research on desire, consumption, self-control, and transformative consumer behavior.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In consumer research, studies on fanaticism/fanatics have gone through three distinct phases of development. A first phase of introduction or exploration in the late 1980’s is characterized by the appearance of the phenomenon. Holbrook (1987) and Lehmann (1987) were the first to explore the topic through an introspective analysis – the first one an avid consumer of jazz music, the other devoted to extended weightlifting. In the late 1990’s and early 2000’s a whole school of study (known as studies on market cultures; Arnould and Thompson, 2005) grew. This area of study focuses on the analysis of social formations generally known as subcultures of consumption, brand communities and consumer tribes and on the practices developed among the members (Cova et al., 2007). During this period, fanaticism remained in the background, silently binding to the various cultures of consumption, without rising as a central theme. The widespread presence of hard-core fans in these studies is proof that such a link exists. This is the incubation or latency stage, where fanaticism is enriched with additional elements - the collective dimension (or fandom), identity and social discrimination. During the 2000’s, a whole series of studies were undertaken which aimed at putting the issue of fanaticism as a central theme in the debate on consumption. In this phase, which we call the statement phase, the attention of researchers is focused on the definition of fanaticism/fanatics and their characteristics (Chung et al., 2008; Redden and Steiner, 2000; Smith et al., 2007; Thorne and Bruner, 2006).

However, these contributions fail in providing the uniqueness of the phenomenon of brand fanaticism. They do not clearly distinguish fanaticism from other relational concepts which share strong resemblance with it i.e. love, loyalty, and devotion. Consequently, an important void is left in our understanding of the relational characteristics of fanaticism and it differs from other seemingly related concepts.

Our research is conducted in a naturalistic setting (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) through participant observation. The collection of life stories can be considered the most appropriate approach to the in-depth understanding of the life experiences of consumers as they have influenced who consumers are today (Atkinson, 1998). In our work, life stories are collected in the form of phenomenological interviews (Thompson et al., 1989). Phenomenological interviews lead informants through their experiences with a specific brand throughout their lifetime since their first contact with the brand. Connecting those experiences enable the emergence of a set of thematic patterns providing the overall context of the consumer’s life-world. “The goal of phenomenological investigation is to describe experience in lived rather than conceptually abstract terms” (Thompson et al., 1989, p. 140). In addition, we held an outside view interviewing significant others in order to collect data on the relevant micro-social environment of our main informants. Photo-elicitation (Schroeder, 2006) has been an additional technique through which we try to enrich our data collection. It has been conducted with informants, sometimes together with their significant others, using personal book pictures in which the object/brand plays an important role. The data collection has been conducted over the last 9 months and it is still ongoing. For the data analysis we use the hermeneutic approach (Thompson, 1997). We approach and present our five persons/cases adopting the case study format (Thompson et al., 1990).

Our field of research is composed of five persons/cases who have been developing an exclusive relationship with a specific brand during a large part of their life. The brands concerned are: Apple, Vespa, Playmobil, Nirvana, and Walt Disney. Because of the social stigma affecting the word ‘fanatic’, it is difficult to access people. The five persons/cases mentioned above have been identified and selected thanks to their significant others who have recognized those people as more than simple fans, even fanatics. Furthermore, all the persons/cases are ready to define themselves as more than fans but they are not comfortable at all – except Amy (Walt Disney) – with the fanatic label.

Previous research agrees with the idea that fanaticism in consumption is a detrimental phenomenon for consumers and that fanatics are dysfunctional consumers. Thorne and Bruner (2006) associate fanatics with obsessive and compulsive behavior, “the literature in the field has generally focused on behavior as it express itself through obsessive or compulsive activities, actions that are viewed here in characteristic of only a subset of fans (latter referred to as the dysfunctional fan)” (p. 52). Redden and Steiner (2000, p. 330) define consumer fanatics as “destructive and often deadly instincts that create a pathological disjunction among fanatics’ state of mind, their behavior and their goals. Their thinking, behavior and goals not only not support each other, but also sometimes actively work against each other illogically and counterproductively (destructively)”. Chung et al. (2009) go further in that direction exploring the “dark side” of consumer fanaticism.

On the contrary, our first findings show the bright side of consumer fanaticism. One of the most recurrent themes is “to save one’s life”. Here, fanaticism for a brand is lived by consumers as the way through which their own life has been “saved” thanks to the brand. Contrary to the common idea surrounding fanaticism and its detrimental effects, data from the field highlights the constructive power for the fanatic consumer. For example, Olivier states that “Playmobil saved my life”: He started his passion when he was a child. He is used to say ‘Playmobil was born in ’74, me in ’76, we can say we are born together’. He was a marginalized little boy during his childhood, Playmobil was his magic, ideal, perfect world ‘where everyone was happy’. Once he is adult he gets his chance, his passion for Playmobil is expensive and he needs money to buy new toys. Thanks to his partner he starts a little company – Kiklobil (from “Kliki” the ancient name of the Playmobil toys) – in which Olivier buys old Playmobil toys, restoring and selling them. The business is an economic and media success. That’s Olivier’s revenge. Another example is Robert who states that “Vespa saved me”: he started his passion when he was a child thanks to his uncle who died in a young age and left his Vespa to Robert as a legacy. He is used to say “I was born, I was baptized in Vespa water”. In the adulthood, after an accident, he had to entirely reorganize his life and he did it with Vespa. In his opinion Vespa “is therapeutic for both the body and the mind”.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research has shown that ethnic minorities use consumption to negotiate host and original cultures by constructing multiple identities in differing cultural contexts (Lindridge et al., 2004) or demonstrate adaption to the host culture (Verbeke et al., 2005). However, these studies have focussed on relationships with the dominant society, failing to understand how similar ethnic minority groups use consumption to engage with each other. Extant consumer acculturation studies therefore fall short in explaining how and why migrants reproduce distinction among themselves. Elaborating on Bourdieu (1979), we define distinction as the set of practices supporting affirmation of a personal identity and social vision.

Risks of over-simplification stem from how Western culture defines notions of culture and ethnicity. Culture is “a dynamic set of socially acquired behaviour patterns and meanings common to the members of a particular society or human group, including the key elements of language, artefacts, beliefs, and values” (Sojka and Tansuhaj, 1995, p. 469). Inherently linked to culture is ethnicity, describing a group who share: a common nationality, culture, language, and common descent (Hunt, 2002) often becoming evident when people are considered outsiders (Péñaloza, 1994). Relying upon such positions, Cooper (2006) asserts that White society categorises Black men as outsiders through the ‘Bad Black Man’ (crime-prone and hyper-sexualised) or ‘Good Black Man’ (dissociating from Blackness, to associate with White norms).

This study explores this issue through understanding how Africans in Britain use consumption to negotiate their identity, when British Whites may categorise them as Black, whilst African migrants see themselves as separate from African-Caribbean communities. While British Whites are often unable to see distinction among various subgroups of British Africans, the latter may resist or negotiate assimilation to a meta-African culture if they do not want to succumb to such reductionist positions. Our research question becomes: How do African migrants use consumption to engage with each other, African-Caribbean communities (who they share a perceived homogeneity with) and White society that classifies these two groups as Black?

Wamwara-Mbugua and colleagues (2008) studied Kenyan migrants, in the United States noting how Kenyan consumer behaviours were shaped by White American, African-American and Kenyan cultures. Although, the study noted the Kenyans inter- and intra-group tensions around consumption, particularly towards African-Americans, these issues were not explored. Our paper aims to explore these issues further.

Participants consisting of 10 first-generation Ghanians living in Britain (six men and four women) recruited from a town north of London, achieving theoretical saturation (McCracken, 1988)

Participant interviews were conducted on a sequential basis. Each participant was interviewed and then transcribed, notes written up and then analyzed. Following this process the participant was then interviewed separately again to clarify the research findings. The interviews were conducted by one of the authors who identified himself as Ghanaian. Interviews, transcribed, and the subsequent data analysed, ranged from 45 to 120 minutes.

Participants’ arrival in Britain triggered an almost prescribed level of behaviour, in which local British White culture and original Ghanaian culture represented the two preliminary key cultural references. Arrival in Britain was facilitated through informal networks consisting of other Ghanaians who assisted them in integrating into the British consumer environment, for example by introducing them to African food shops (such as Sabi) which sold primarily African and Black Caribbean items (for example, salted fish, plantain, smoked fish). Typically these networks were introduced to participants through extended family members or social contacts. Engaging with the local Ghanaian community also offered opportunities for participants to exercise their cultural identity, which was regularly achieved through conspicuous consumption of Ghanaian clothing products at family gatherings, parties, and religious events.

Alternatively, as part of this socialisation process participants were introduced to mainstream British supermarkets (such as Tesco). Access to British White culture tended to be limited to a need to engage basis. Whilst participants did not necessarily feel that this self-exclusion was a consequence of racism, this behaviour was indicative of a sense of cultural distance. Instead engagement was often motivated by economic reasons, such as food products being cheaper to access through British supermarkets rather than specialty stores. Familiarity with brands available in Ghana and Britain facilitated this engagement, such as Coca Cola. Social contacts with British White culture was limited to encounters that were either work related or necessary. In such instances, clothing and food consumption necessitated an imposed sense of conformity that participants could identify with their own places of work in Ghana.

Whilst participants readily identified with other Ghanians and self-excluded themselves from British Whites, the reality of being an ethnic minority encouraged participants’ reconstruction of their self-identities within the British African community. With other Black Africans living nearby cultural differences and negative stereotypes gave way to a wider sense of African identity in which consumption played an important role. An identity consolidated through social events where foods were shared and clothing compared, often resulting in merging of cultural differences; for example through amalgamation of clothing and fashion designs.

Broman et al. (1988, p.148) defined Black identity as “the feeling of closeness to similar others in ideas, feelings, and thoughts”. This perspective evident in the emergence of an African identity partially extended towards African-Caribbean’s. Whilst participants engaged in these groups social events, comparing food differences and similarities, such engagements tended to be based upon a shared Black identity. For example, at a local African-Caribbean carnival, whilst participants shared the experience of being Black, they also took the opportunity to wave Ghanaian flags, along with related clothing, to assert their identity.

Our findings suggest that a migrant group selectively seek out alliances with related ethnic minority groups to reinforce their own sense of cultural identity, whilst submerging themselves in a broader ethnic group based upon shared ethnic characteristics. Facilitating this process of alliance building is the use of consumption to assert not only affiliation but also to assert distinction of their ethnic identity; an identity that also engages with the dominant culture but in a manner that supports and does not compromise it.
Conspicuous Sensory Consumption as a Means for Self-Worth Restoration
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Sensory consumption is understood to be consumption of products or experiences that engages the senses of the consumer; in other words, the consumption experience is processed through one or more of the five sensory modalities of taste, vision, sound, smell and touch (Krishna 2011; Hirschmann and Holbrook 1982). In this research we investigate how consumers can use heightened sensory consumption as a means of restoration of their feelings of self-worth.

Another stream of research that is relevant for this work explores the relationship between self worth and conspicuous consumption. Individuals under self threat and low-status consumers have been found to a) use high status-goods as a means of affirmation (Sivanathan and Pettit 2010) and b) respond more favorably to the status-enhancing attributes of products rather than utilitarian benefits (Rucker and Galinsky 2009). Han, Dreze and Nunes (2010) find that consumers with a high need for status choose very conspicuously branded luxury products as a means of projecting their status. More recently, Townsend and Sood (2012) find that choosing a product with an aesthetically appealing design reaffirms a consumer’s sense of self.

In several of these instances of conspicuous consumption, it may be noted that compensatory consumption involves heightened involvement of one of the five senses, typically vision. Dubois, Rucker and Galinsky (2012) find that low-status consumers often equate the magnitude of a product to its status-enhancing properties, while Dubois, Rucker and Galinsky (2010) find that low-status consumers generally display an accentuation bias, wherein they overestimate the size of valued objects. The research question we investigate in this work is whether this effect can be generalized to conspicuous sensory consumption in general. Specifically, if a consumer’s sense of self-worth is threatened, would they indulge in conspicuous consumption in different sensory domains to compensate for this feeling of inadequacy? Contrary to the spirit of the work on conspicuous consumption, we propose that following a threat to self-worth we would see compensatory effects even in consumption experiences which are not publicly visible, thus proposing conspicuous sensory consumption to be a means for self-restoration (Sivanathan and Pettit 2010).

In Study 1 we investigate the impact of self-threat on compensatory consumption in the visual domain, specifically looking at consumers’ choices of visually conspicuous, “loud” product designs. Adapted from Han et al.’s (2010) definition of brand prominence, we define “product loudness” as the extent to which a product attracts attention, as reflected in its visual properties, including its material composition, the use of prominent colors, sizes, shapes, and other conspicuous design elements. 68 MBA students participated in this 2 (Self Worth: Low, High) X 2 (Visual Product Conspicuousness: Loud, Quiet) experiment. Self-worth was manipulated by informing participants that they had performed among the lowest 5% (low self-worth) or highest 5% (high self-worth) of all participants in a problem-solving activity (Sivanathan and Pettit 2010). Participants were told that as a reward for participating, they would be entered in a lottery to win one of two flash drives (pretested to differ only along a composite scale for “loudness” of their visual properties, not on other measures such as overall attractiveness). Participants provided their attitude toward the flash drive, purchase intentions and willingness to pay (WTP). Subjects in the high self-worth condition exhibited no differences in evaluations of the loud and quiet flash drives. However, those in the low self-worth condition liked the visually loud flash drive more than the visually quieter flash drive (M\text{low}=4.94, M\text{quiet}=4.17, t=1.61, p<.05), had a higher purchase intention (M\text{low}=4.10, M\text{quiet}=3.29, t=1.70, p<.05), and were willing to pay a higher amount for it (M\text{low}=721.32, M\text{quiet}=462.94, t=2.67, p<.05).

In Study 2 we investigated whether low self-worth consumers would still prefer visually loud products after being given an opportunity to affirm themselves. 71 MBA students participated in this 2 (Self Worth: Low, High) X 2 (Affirmation: Positive, None) experiment. Self-worth was manipulated as in Study 1, after which the participants were asked to either write about the most important value in their life (positive affirmation) or the least important value (no affirmation; Townsend and Sood, 2012; Sivanathan and Pettit, 2010). All participants then evaluated the visually loud flash drive. For participants in the low self-worth condition with positive affirmation, evaluation of the loud flash drive along all three dependent measures was significantly lower than those not given an opportunity to affirm themselves (attitude: M\text{no affirmation}=5.25, M\text{affirmation}=4.11, t=2.68, p<.01; purchase intention (M\text{no affirmation}=5.13, M\text{affirmation}=3.0, t=3.87, p<.01; and WTP (M\text{no affirmation}=631, M\text{affirmation}=338, t=3.39, p<.01). There were no differences in evaluation measures for any of the other conditions.

In Study 3 we investigate whether this desire for more conspicuous (heightened) consumption under self-threat extends to other sensory domains like the auditory. 92 MBA students participated in this 2 (Self Worth: Low, High) X 2 (Affirmation: Positive, None) experiment. Participants were exposed to the same self-threat and self-affirmation manipulations as in Study 2, following which they were asked to listen to and evaluate a piece of capella music, unfamiliar to the participants. The key dependent measure was the volume level that participants chose when listening to the audio clip. Participants who were subjugated to self-threat but did not receive an opportunity for self-affirmation listened to the music clip at a significantly higher volume than those who were subjugated to self-threat but received an opportunity for self-affirmation (M\text{no affirmation}=5.69, M\text{affirmation}=4.32, t=2.66 p<.05). However, there was no difference between high self-worth participants who did or did not receive an additional opportunity for self-affirmation nor was there a difference between low self-worth and high self-worth participants who received an additional opportunity for self-affirmation.

In ongoing work we explore the idea of sequential sensory satiation. The hypothesis is that individuals under self-threat, if given an opportunity to conspicuously consume in one sensory domain would have less of a need to conspicuously consume in a subsequent sensory domain. This is similar to the notion of cross-domain satiation, wherein rewards in one domain can compensate for unmet drives in other unrelated domains (Berger and Shiv 2011). We plan to generalize our findings to all sensory domains including olfactory, touch and taste.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Due to empirical evidence questioning the impact of satisfaction-related constructs on behavioral loyalty (Mittal and Kamakura 2001; Seiders et al. 2005), research on explaining customers’ repurchase behaviors has been broadened. Most notably, an increasing number of studies investigate the role of switching costs (SC) as moderator of the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty (e.g. Jones, Motherson, and Beatty 2000; Patterson and Smith 2003; Woisetschläger, Lentz, and Evanschitzky 2011). As these studies reveal inconclusive results, we conducted a meta-analysis and four empirical studies to investigate the moderating effect of SC on the satisfaction-behavioral loyalty link. The main contribution of this research is to resolve existing inconsistencies by suggesting an inverted u-shaped moderating effect of SC.

For the meta-analysis, we followed standard practice such as keyword and manual search of all relevant journals. As a result, we collected 231 studies conducted between 1989 and 2011. We found 77 quantitative-empirical studies of which 27 have directly assessed interaction effects between satisfaction and SC on loyalty. A review of these 27 studies reveals empirical evidence for positive as well as negative moderating effects of SC: seventeen studies report a negative interaction between satisfaction and SC, five report a positive interaction, and five find no effects. In total, our meta-analysis did not find the level of SC to be a significant moderator (β=.187, p>.10) of the satisfaction-loyalty relationship.

Considering theoretical approaches that explain the moderating role of SC, we found evidence for two opposing effects:

First, there is theoretical evidence for a negative moderating effect ("lock-in effect") which is particularly important for high SC. It is assumed that decreasing satisfaction levels do not result in lower loyalty if SC are high because customers face psychological and/or economic effort if they switch (Bell, Auh, and Smalley 2005; Jones et al. 2000). The benefits from switching to a more satisfying provider are encumbered by increasing SC. Thus, increasing SC weaken the satisfaction-loyalty link as intentions to switch might be hindered (linear, decreasing curve).

Second, there is theoretical evidence for a positive moderating effect ("amplifying effect") which is particularly important for low SC. This effect suggests that increasing SC strengthen the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty (e.g. Blut et al. 2007). Research has shown that a high number of alternatives (i.e., low SC) may lead customers to choose others than their preferred providers and switch to less satisfying alternatives (Sela, Berger, and Liu 2009). One explanation for these irrational decision behaviors is customers’ need for variety (Ratner, Kahn, and Kahneman 1999; Seetharaman and Che 2009) which induces customers with low SC to switch because switching is so easy. With increasing SC, customers will no longer switch to less satisfying alternatives and satisfaction is more likely to translate into loyalty. Thus, the satisfaction-loyalty link strengthens with increasing SC at a decreasing rate (concave up, increasing curve).

Combining these two effects, the moderating effect of SC can be described as follows: The amplifying and the lock-in effect complement each other depending on the SC-level: For low SC, the amplifying effect overlaps the lock-in effect as the former increases faster. For high SC, the lock-in exceeds the amplifying effect as the latter decreases faster. Thus, the moderating effect of SC is supposed to follow an inverted u-shape. We assume the satisfaction-loyalty link to be strongest for intermediate SC-levels. Customers with low SC switch retailers due to reasons other than satisfaction (weak link). Customers with high SC are hardly able to switch regardless of their satisfaction (weak link). For intermediate SC, the amplifying effect is already strong whereas the lock-in effect is not yet strong enough to compensate (strong link).

Contrary to existing studies that propose either a positive or a negative linear moderating effect of SC, we hypothesize a non-linear (quadratic) effect:

SC moderate the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty in a curvilinear (inverted u-shaped) way. The relationship is strongest for an intermediate level of SC.

We empirically tested this hypothesis with data from four companies (grocery retailing, DIY, banking services, B-to-B services). In each of the four studies, questionnaires were sent to customers via postal mail. In total, we received 1,816 (food), 5,695 (DIY), 276 (banking), and 214 (B2B services) usable responses. Satisfaction and SC were measured with established scales (Fornell et al. 1996; Ping 1993). Loyalty was measured with actual purchase data (customers’ spending at the focal retailer) in two of the four industries (grocery and DIY retailing). These transaction data from the retailers’ loyalty card programs were available for 12 months (food) and 6 months (DIY) after the survey. For the other industries (banking and B-to-B services) we used an established seven-point multi-item scale (Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1996) to measure behavioral loyalty.

Using hierarchical regressions, we find positive main effects of satisfaction (food: b=123.17, t=3.76, p<.01; DIY: b=4.61, t=2.01, p<.05; banking: b=15.68, t=3.56, p<.01; B-to-B: b=90, t=5.66, p<.01) and SC (food: b=34.62, t=2.57, p<.01; DIY: b=2.39, t=2.24, p<.05; banking: b=11.65, t=3.77, p<.01; B-to-B: b=26, t=2.78, p<.10) on repurchase behavior. We also show that the linear interaction term between satisfaction and SC is insignificant (p>.10), whereas the quadratic interaction term is significant in all studies (food: b=20.06, t=2.14, p<.05; DIY: b=-14, t=2.23, p<.05; banking: b=9.10, t=2.64, p<.01; B-to-B: b=-17, t=2.06, p<.05). The negative sign of the quadratic term indicates that the moderating effect is inverted u-shaped. Thus, our results confirm that the effect of satisfaction on loyalty is strong for medium SC and weak for low and high SC-levels.

This has important implications for customer retention management. Retailers and other service providers should consider customers’ SC-levels when defining future investments in satisfaction management. While focusing on satisfaction is a viable and rewarding strategy for customers with medium SC, it is not sufficient for customers with low or high SC.

To sum up, our paper offers new theoretical insights and contributes to a better understanding of the link between satisfaction and behavioral loyalty. It brings together the conflicting results on the moderating role of SC and gives a reasonable explanation for existing inconsistencies.

When Does Satisfaction Lead to Loyalty? A New Perspective on the Moderating Effect of Switching Costs

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REFERENCES


“Make Someone Happy”: Romantic Gift Giving of Teenagers in Japan

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This study investigates the romantic gift giving of teenagers in Japan. Teens are a crucial consumer segment for the purchases they make themselves and for their influence over others. Not only do they present their gifts to romantic others (Belk and Coon 1993), but also they strive to perfect their gifts for expressing their selfless altruistic feelings (Belk 1996), vocalizing their “wish lists” (Tuten and Kiecker 2009), and using gifts to delineate their perimeters of intimacy (Zelizer 2005). How do Japanese teens practice romantic gift giving? How does the contemporary Japanese culture amid whirling socioeconomic turbulence manifest in their romantic gift giving?

In today’s Japan, youth represent a pivotal, and at the same time, problematic segment in the society. Unlike the “New Breed” at the height of the Bubble economy (Anderson and Wadkins 1991), they live in a nation that has been infested by a “sick economy,” with chronic deflation, a high unemployment rate, and disparity of wealth (Shirahase 2011). The prolonged recession in the aftermath of “Bubble” economy of the 90s has led to the restructuring of organizations, abolishing the lifetime employment system and emphasizing merit over seniority. On the other hand, the falling birthrate and increasing life expectancy have made Japan an aged society. To ensure long-term sustainability of the nation, there has been much effort among policymakers to ensure the creation of adequate social infrastructure for the young to become competitive laborers and to support women to stay in the labor force after marriage and during childbearing years (Inui 2003; Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare 2012). Growing up with material abundance and a bleak outlook for the future has made them “youth without desire” (Yamaoka 2009).

In the consumer research, gift giving has been studied as a multidisciplinary area of inquiry (Belk 1979; Sherry 1983; Giesler 2007). Most of the prior research has dealt with the North American context (e.g., Belk and Coon 1993; Fischer and Arnold 1990), and interrogation of romantic gift giving by specific age groups has been largely neglected. Japanese gift culture has not been much explored in consumer research despite its importance and traditions (Minowa and Gould 1999; Rupp 2003). Investigating the gift giving practices of teenagers in Japan is significant for at least three reasons. First, there has not been a study that has explored romantic gift giving of teenage consumers in Japan. Second, this study investigates the early life gender and gift giving socialization that are influenced by family structure (Moschis 2007) and behavioral manifestations of love and emotional expressions that are socially cultivated and culturally constrained (Jankowiak 2008). Early life gift giving socialization is particularly critical as the imprint carries forward in time. Third, this study explores the meaning of romanticism for teenagers in Japan.

Based on depth interviews with eight teenage participants, we generated narratives about their practices of romantic gift giving, memorable gift giving experiences, gender socialization, and familial influences on their practices. All participants were residents of Metropolitan Tokyo. They consisted of four males and four females, ages 17 and 18. Occupations varied from a high school, college, and professional school students to part-time service jobs. Interviews lasted about 60 minutes. A whole-to-part iterative strategy was employed for the analysis of the verbatim interview transcripts (Spiggle 1994). Repeated ideas and similarities across the transcripts were analyzed utilizing the computer program NVivo. Our holistic understanding yielded four emergent themes.

The narratives of teenage informants revealed that their ideal romantic gift giving practices are constructed in two levels: One is the intimate sphere, and another is the synthetic cosmic order. Specifically, the analysis produced the following emerging themes:

Synthetic Cosmic Order. The informants expressed that their perfect gift-giving should take place within a safety zone. Teenagers recreate the synthetic cosmic order with a collage of images from cultural media – manga and anime in particular. The world-system beyond their intimate sphere is perceived as dangerous. A surprise gift within a discernible domain is felicitous. No “magic gift” that is larger than “the size of their palm” is desired. Extravagance should be avoided as it dislocates them from the cosmic order.

Disneyfied Intimate Sphere. The pacifist politico-societal climate of the nation has cultivated “herbivorous” men and women whose sexuality is downplayed. They are juvenile, kidults-in-training (Barber 2007). Gender socialization is influenced by media: Their ideal masculinity and femininity are modeled after protagonists in the media stemming from a unique synthesis of Western and Japanese comic/anime cultures. The themes may originate in Chinese/Japanese mythologies (e.g., Fruits Basket). Furthermore, these fictional characters may be transfigurations of haunted animals and the popularity of stuffed animals as gifts seems to reinforce the traditional animistic folk beliefs as tacit knowledge (Ito 2007; Minowa 2012).

Body and Soul. Despite the popularity ofkeitai (mobile phones) and text messaging, the teenagers consider that the handmade – gifts, cards, wrapping papers made by hand – acquires certain spirit/power of “mono,” or the material object (Daniels 2009; Ito 2007). Material objects engraved with the giver’s name and attached to the body, such as accessories, would impregnate the giver’s aura; the desire is to remain physical and to be remembered by the recipient. Thus, the role of language in the extension of the giver’s power is culturally contextualized within the romantic gift giving ritual.

Playing Liquid Romance. Their ambiguous anxieties about ontological security manifest in romantic gift giving practices as a regression to children’s playful fantasies of eternal romance. The relationship begins with a confession, equivalent to a “contract.” Monthly couple anniversaries confirm that not everything is ephemeral and these are important occasions to celebrate with romantic gifts; the desire is to avoid having no bonds yet handle them loosely in “liquid modern” times (Bauman 2003). Gift selections may be influenced by superstitions about calendrical coincidences with the anniversary. Lacking ambitions, both genders take pride in consequential accomplishments, such as baking from scratch and, with the sweet gifts, wish to “make someone happy” in a time of turbulence.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Gift giving is both an economically and socially important (Sherry 1983) phenomenon that helps individuals signal their commitment and caring in social relationships (Belk 1976, 1979; Caplow 1982). An increasing number of gift givers are turning to “gifts that give twice”—that is, gifts that support a worthy cause (Maciejewsky 2008), such as craft items supporting fair trade or providing a charitable donation. This choice is often motivated by people’s desire to “do good” (“warm-glow” theory of charitable giving; see Andreoni 1990) and to more closely align themselves with their moral selves (Aquino and Reed 2002). But is doing good always good for gift givers? This paper shows that, under certain conditions, doing good can actually be bad for gift givers, as do-gooder gifts can inspire a backlash from recipients. Specifically, we find that reactions to do-gooder gifts and interpretation of their meaning largely depend on the nature of the giver’s relationship to the recipient. Both men and women show differences in appreciation for socially responsible gifts (that benefit others) versus more traditional gifts (that benefit the recipient directly).

To date, most research on gift giving has focused on gifts that benefit the recipient directly, such as products of different values, money, or gift certificates. In this paper, we focus on socially responsible gifts and examine whether gift recipients evaluate these types of gifts differently depending on their relationship to the giver. Socially responsible gifts, such as a charitable donation that a gift giver makes in the recipient’s name, do not benefit the recipient directly; rather, they are intended to produce an indirect psychological benefit in the recipient, namely a sense of satisfaction and happiness from helping a third party in need (e.g., a charity). The practice of giving socially responsible gifts has become increasingly popular in today’s society (Maciejewsky 2008), but no prior study has examined whether such gifts are actually appreciated by recipients.

We hypothesize that a recipient’s evaluation of a gift is a relative judgment—i.e., that factors other than the gift itself influence the recipient’s valuation and appreciation of the gift. Specifically, we argue that recipients interpret the meaning of gifts according to their relationship with the giver. Thus, we expect recipients to react differently to an identical gift from different givers. We examine this possibility in three studies using U.S. representative samples.

**Study 1** employed a 2 Gift Giver (Child/Spouse) x 2 Gift Recipient Sex (Male/Female) x 2 Gift Type Received (Donation in Name/Tangible Gift Box) between-subjects design. Participants (N = 606; M_{age} = 41.98, SD = 10.15) were asked to imagine that their child or their spouse was selecting a $50 Christmas gift to give to them: either a donation given on their behalf to Oxfam to support coffee growers or a gourmet coffee gift box. Half the participants were then asked to imagine that their child or spouse had chosen either the socially responsible donation or the tangible gift option. Participants then indicated their appreciation for the chosen gift (Flynn and Adam’s 2009).

Gift appreciation analyses for both men and women revealed a significant two-way interaction between the gift-giver and the gift-type manipulations. Both male and female participants appreciated the socially responsible gift more when they received it from their children than when they received it from their spouses. However, in the case of the tangible, traditional gift, they reported feeling equally favorable when receiving these gifts, regardless of the gift giver. In sum, both men and women show different amounts of appreciation for socially responsible gifts depending on the giver who gave the gift to them.

**Study 2** (N = 198; M_{age} = 44.05, SD = 13.88) employed the same design and procedure as Study 1 with only one difference. In this case, participants received a $75 massage certificate and a $75 donation given in the recipient’s name to Oxfam (both intangible gifts).

Gift appreciation analyses for both men and women revealed a significant gift-giver X gift-type interaction. In the case of the socially responsible gift, participants felt more favorable when they received the socially responsible gift from their children as opposed to their spouses. However, in the case of the tangible, traditional gift, they reported feeling equally favorable when receiving these gifts, regardless of the gift giver. These results demonstrate that men and women penalize their spouses but not their children for giving socially responsible gifts.

**Study 3** investigated the psychological mechanism explaining the effects demonstrated in Studies 1 and 2. Specifically, we test the hypothesis that gift recipients interpret the meaning of socially responsible gifts differently based on the giver’s relationship to them. We also measure the self-importance of moral identity (Aquino and Reed 2002) to examine whether our effects are robust when controlling for this trait. Females (N = 266; M_{age} = 39, SD = 9.84) were recruited for a 2 Gift Giver (Child/Spouse) x 2 Gift Type Received (Donation in Name/Tangible Gift Basket) x 2 Price Point ($25/$75) between-subjects design. Participants were presented with one of the two gift options: either a donation given on their behalf to Oxfam to support a women’s soap-making business or spa gift set. Both options had the same economic value (either $25 or $75). We measured appreciation, reactions to the gift, and moral identity.

Consistent with our prediction, the interaction gift-giver X gift-type interaction was significant. Women penalized their husbands but not their children for giving socially responsible gifts, regardless of the amount spent on the gift. Notably, gift recipients’ moral identity did not influence their appreciation of the gifts nor did it moderate the effect of gift type on appreciation. Path analyses testing for moderated mediation revealed that perceived commitment to the recipient explained the moderating effect of gift type on the relationship between the gift giver and appreciation.

These findings extend and contribute to the gift-giving and prosocial behavior literatures in multiple ways. First, we introduce a previously overlooked type of gift, namely socially responsible gifts. Second, we highlight a unique dynamic surrounding socially responsible choices (Sen and Bhattacharya 2001; Strahilevitz and Myers 1998) made for others. Third, holding closeness constant, we show that relationship type shapes the symbolic meaning attached to socially responsible gift choices.

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Can’t See the Forest for the Trees? Media Multitasking Leads to Local Perceptual Processing and Concrete Construals in Subsequent Tasks

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A substantial proportion of media consumption today occurs simultaneously, a phenomenon termed media multitasking (Roberts & Foehr, 2008). However, over a century of dual-task interference research has demonstrated that the human ability to perform multiple tasks simultaneously is primarily limited to automatic, habitual behavior (Pashler, 1994). In serial processing contexts, frequent switching between tasks also implies significant processing costs (Monsell, 2003). Researchers have already established that this shift in media consumption behavior has detrimental effects on learning, memory, and cognitive information processing (Armstrong & Chung, 2000; Pool et al., 2003; Ophir, Nass, & Wagner, 2009; Lin, 2009; Cain & Mitroff, 2011). However, its potential effects on the way consumers attend to and process subsequent, unrelated information have not been explored. In three experiments, we compare multitasking to single media consumption contexts, providing an initial account of these carryover effects.

Action identification theory posits that difficult tasks require the action at hand to be encoded at a lower level of abstraction, where attention is highly focused on task details (Vallacher & Wegner, 1987). This notion that successful performance of challenging tasks is associated with a narrow attentional scope should hold for media multitasking contexts, where viewers’ attention constantly shifts between complex, continuous streams of information. Furthermore, mindset switching has been shown to deplete self-regulatory resources (Hamilton et al., 2010; Rubinstein et al., 2001). In turn, self-regulatory depletion prompts a narrow scope of attention and cognition and a lower construal level that is carried over to subsequent tasks (Wan & Agrawal, 2010; Bruyneel & Dewitte, 2012).

Study 1: We test the hypothesis that a media multitasking context leads to more local perceptual processing (e.g. seeing trees rather than a forest) compared to a traditional, sequential media context. Participants were asked to browse a website on a portable computer and watch short animated films on a flat screen TV. In the control condition exposure was sequential, alternating the medium order between participants. In the multitasking condition the website and short films were presented simultaneously. In both conditions participants were instructed to pay attention to both displays. Immediately after exposure, construal levels were measured by the BIF. Media multitasking behavior radically altered the context of media consumption. We have demonstrated that its fragmented nature, and especially the frequent switching between different information streams can lead to a more narrow attentional focus and a more concrete construal that carry over to subsequent tasks. Construal level has been studied in the context of various facets of consumer behavior: evaluating product attributes, making choices, exercising self-control etc. (Trope et al., 2007). The observed effects could have relevant implications for the affective and cognitive processing of media content and persuasive messages and, consequently, for media planning strategies (Pilotta et al., 2004; Voorveld, 2011). As media consumption habits continue to evolve, marketing and advertising practitioners could benefit from more experimental research on the contextual effects of media multitasking behavior.
REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Past literature has examined guilt arising from inter-personal settings and found that the feelings of guilt can sometimes lead to a greater tendency to seek negative experience (Bastian et al. 2011; Wallington 1973). For instance, Wallington showed that people who cheated someone else (and presumably felt guilty), imposed a higher intensity of electric shock to himself afterwards (Wallington 1973). The tendency to seek negative experience when feeling guilty has been largely explained as an affect-regulation process, in which people use one kind of negative experience (e.g., physical pain) to get rid of another (e.g., psychological pain).

The current paper, however, offers a forward-looking, goal-regulation perspective to understand how guilt arising from intra-personal settings affects consumers’ hedonic consumption tendencies. Imagine that a person has felt guilty after violating a personal goal (e.g., monetary prudence). Would she be more likely to watch a sad movie than a happy movie afterwards?

Guilt involves a goal failure that is due to one’s own responsibility (Passyn & Sujan 2006). As individuals reflect upon the self-responsibility, they would experience a heightened sense of contingency between their actions and potential outcomes, believing that they would achieve the desired outcomes if they behave appropriately (Duhachek, Agrawal & Han 2012, Thompson, Armstrong & Thomas 1998). Given this heightened sense of contingency, the goal failure would pose a threat to one’s self-view regarding whether one would behave goal-consistently in the future (e.g., being accountable in the matter). We propose that, people experiencing guilt would take actions – in our cases, seek negative experience (i.e., avoiding pleasure and/or seeking pain), to ensure that they would behave more goal-consistently in the future. If this forward-looking, goal-regulation view holds true, we would expect seeking negative experience to be more likely to happen when people experiencing guilt believe that enduring in negative experience can help them to better achieve their goals (Study 1), when they want to persist with the unachieved goals (Study 2), or when they believe their personal qualities is changeable over time (Studies 3 & 4).

Across four experiments, we evoked guilt through recalling a past event in which participants had failed personal goals such as academic achievement (Study 1) or monetary prudence (Studies 2-4). Specifically, in the event recall task, participants recollected a recent past experience where they did not do well in an academic task [spend their money prudently] and they felt responsible for the negative consequence; for the control condition where no guilt was elicited, the goal failure was not due to their fault. Manipulation check confirmed that the two emotion groups differed only in the feelings of guilt (measured by “guilt”, “shame” and “regret”), but not in other general negative emotions (i.e., “sad”, “unhappy” and “distressed”).

Study 1 showed that guilt would lead to a greater tendency to seek negative experience when people believed that negative experience is linked with goal success. After the event recall tasks to induce different emotions, all participants responded to two hypothetical choices: how likely they would accept a free concert ticket from a close friend, and how likely they would forgo a coupon to dine at a 5-star restaurant. The first one was reversely coded and the average of the two served as the dependent variable, with a larger value indicating a greater tendency to seek negative experience. After filler tasks, participants filled up a survey regarding their view about certain behaviors, in which instrumentality beliefs about seeking negative experience (i.e., self-punishment) were measured (3 items, e.g., “People who punish themselves for their failures are more likely to succeed”; a = 0.77). Supporting our proposition, we found participants who felt guilt (vs. mere negative emotions) were more likely to seek negative experience when they were high in instrumentality beliefs (1SD above the mean; 3.77 vs. 3.06; ß = 0.71. t (140) = 3.37, p = .001), but not when they were low in instrumentality beliefs (1SD below the mean; 3.08 vs. 3.23; ß = -0.15, t (140) = -0.69, p = .493).

If negative experience is indeed sought to ensure future goal-consistent behavior, then participants should be more likely to do so when they want to stay with the goal after its failure. Thus, being persistent in goal pursuit would play a moderating role. In study 2, participants firstly received a sentence unscrambling task to prime goal persistence, followed by the event recall to induce different emotions. Tendency to seek negative experience was assessed by a choice between two articles, with one being more unpleasant than the other (e.g., “A baby who died because of child abuse” vs. “How to take a true relaxing and enjoyable vacation”). As expected, participants experiencing guilt (vs. mere negative emotions) were more likely to choose the unpleasant article to read when they were high in goal persistence (63.0% vs. 30.8%; Wald’s Z = 5.30, p < .05). This tendency to choose the unpleasant article, however, diminished when participants were not primed goal persistence (34.6% vs. 37.0%; Wald’s Z = 0.03, p = .85).

We argued that guilt involves a threatened self-view with regards to whether one would be accountable in the matter and calls for action to ensure goal-consistent behavior in the future. If this is true, individual beliefs regarding whether personal qualities can change will influence people’s tendency to seek negative experience. In studies 3 and 4 we either measured or manipulated such individual beliefs. The tendency to seek negative experience was captured through choice of the unpleasant article (Study 3) or duration of listening to a noise clip (a painful experience based on the pretest; study 4). We found in both studies that guilt lead to a greater tendency to seek negative experience (e.g., choosing the unpleasant article or listening to noise longer) when participants held malleable views about their personal qualities, but not when they held fixed views. Furthermore, the effectiveness of seeking negative experiences was also assessed, and we found seeking negative experience might facilitate the same goal pursuit (e.g., monetary prudence), but not a different goal pursuit (e.g., time prudence).

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The Impact of Thoughts In Consumer Evaluation As a Function of Ease
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Considerable attention has been paid to the perceived ease with which thoughts are generated in the consumer domain (Schwarz, 2004). In their seminal research, Schwarz and colleagues (1991) asked participants to generate few or many thoughts about something. They found that those thoughts were more impactful on subsequent evaluations after retrieving few rather than many.

There are several explanations to account for this effect. The traditional interpretation has relied on an availability heuristic approach and argued that people who generate many thoughts use them less because the difficulty of generation leads them to infer that there are fewer supporting reasons available than people who generate just a few thoughts. Other explanations are based on mood (Winkielman & Cacioppo, 2001), the perceived validity of the thoughts generated (Tormala et al., 2002), or the number of un-requested thoughts (Tormala et al., 2007; for a review on the various mechanisms, see Briñol et al., 2013).

Since the initial demonstration, the ease of retrieval effect has been observed in numerous domains (see Alter & Oppenheimer, 2009; Schwarz, 1998, 2004). In most cases, ease of retrieval is manipulated by asking people to generate different numbers of thoughts with greater numbers of thoughts being associated with greater the difficulty. However, other research has kept the number of thoughts constant while varying other aspects of the situation such as using the non-dominant hand with which thoughts are written (Briñol & Petty, 2003), using a low-contrast font to write the thoughts (Briñol et al., 2006; Reber & Schwarz, 1999), or a format difficult to pronounce (Alter & Oppenheimer, 2006; McGlone & Tofighakhsh, 2000).

The present research examines a new way to vary the ease or difficulty associated with thoughts: the length of the thoughts. Keeping the number of thoughts constant, we argue that when people do not care about something, using fewer words to express a thought can be easier than using many words. In contrast, for important topics it should be easier to express thoughts using more as opposed to fewer words. This reasoning is conceptually consistent with previous research suggesting that aspects such as the clarity or the complexity of the external information can influence the ease with which it is processed (Lowrey, 1998; Oppenheimer, 2006; Reber et al., 1998).

We examined the relationship between the length of thought expression and the subsequent impact on evaluation. In experiment one, we presented participants with a proposal on an unimportant topic (a color). Participants generated either positive or negative thoughts about it. The critical manipulation was that participants had to express their thoughts in one or more words. After generating thoughts, all participants reported their attitudes toward the proposal. We hypothesized that when people have to think about unimportant topics, using fewer words this should facilitate subsequent use of the thoughts. Results revealed that using only one vs. many words led to a greater impact of the thoughts on evaluations of the proposal. As a consequence, when people generated mostly positive thoughts, expressing those thoughts in one vs. many words increased persuasion. In contrast, when participants generated mostly negative thoughts, expressing those thoughts in one vs. many words decreased persuasion.

Our second experiment aimed to show the opposite pattern of results under conditions of high importance. In experiment two, participants first generated thoughts about themselves. Specifically, participants were asked to use one or many words to express good or bad self-qualities. Then, we measured self-esteem. In this experiment we found that expressing thoughts in one word reduced (rather than increased, as found in Experiment 1) the impact of the thoughts on attitudes. As a consequence, self-esteem increased for participants who wrote about their strengths when they used many words instead of when they used a single word. In contrast, self-esteem decreased more for participants who wrote about their weaknesses when they used many words instead of a single word. This is the opposite interaction between length and direction of the thoughts obtained in Experiment 1.

Taken together the first two studies showed that the length of thoughts can have opposite effects on attitudes depending on the circumstances. When a topic was relatively unimportant (colors), the use of a single word facilitated the use of thoughts. By contrast, when the task was more important (self), the use of a single word hindered the expression and subsequent impact of thoughts. In a third study, we randomly assigned participants to think about an issue that was framed to be more or less personally important. We manipulated the extent to which participants received a highly valuable reward for participation (economic aid) or a less valuable outcome (merely helping the researcher). We found that when participants cared little about the study, using many vs. one word to express thoughts reduced the impact of those thoughts on attitudes (as in study 1). In contrast, when participants cared about the study, thoughts were used to a greater extent in conditions when people used many vs. one word (as in study 2).

Instead of varying a motivational variable such as personal importance, a final experiment examined the role of prior training and familiarity with thought length. Participants in this experiment were trained to express their thoughts either in a single word or in many words before carrying out the experimental tasks. The results of this study showed that for participants who were trained to express their thoughts in many words, the expression of thoughts in a single vs. many words reduced the impact of their thoughts on attitudes. In contrast, for participants who were trained to expressing thoughts in one word, the direction of the thoughts affected their attitudes to a greater extent than in the condition in which thoughts were expressed in many vs. one word.

In conclusion, participants experienced more fluency when expressing thoughts about something important using as many words as they needed rather than when expressing their thoughts using a single word. When the topic was relatively less important they felt more difficulty when expressing thoughts in one vs. many words.

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The Self-Definitional Approach to Corporate Social Responsibility: The Moderating Roles of CSR Support and Ethical Ideology

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The self-definition approach to CSR has been the main research stream (e.g., Bhattacharya and Sen 2003; Currás-Pérez et al. 2009; Du et al. 2007; Lichtenstein et al. 2004). Specifically, consumer’s CSR images induce them to do self-relevant appraisal, positive image may attract them to the company identity and further facilitate consumer-company identification (C-C identification). C-C identification brings positive outcomes to companies (e.g., better evaluation and purchase intention) (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003). However, the contention concerning self-relevant appraisal may not be warranted. Human beings are cognitive misers and tend not to process information deeply in every situation (Feldman and Lynch 1988). The diagnosticity (personal relevance) of information for consumers should be taken into consideration (Herr, Kardes, and Kim 1991). On confronting CSR initiatives, consumers may have different degrees of support (Sen and Bhattacharya 2001) and varied ethical ideologies (Forsyth 1980). These factors may influence the perceived diagnosticity of CSR information and then make self-relevant appraisal mechanisms more or less likely to function. Hence, this study seeks to extend self-definition approach to CSR by investigating the moderating roles of CSR support and ethical ideologies on the relationship between CSR image and C-C identification.

CSR images reflect the organization’s status and activities related to its perceived societal obligation (Brown and Dacin 1997). Consumer-Company identification is a cognitive state resulting from the process of self-categorization, by which consumers perceive themselves to be members of a certain company (Bergami and Bagozzi 2000). Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) developed a C-C identification framework which contends that consumers form CSR images as a basis for self-relevant appraisals. When consumers find a corporate’s CSR image consistent with their self-concepts, they are likely to be attracted and further identify with a company. Hence, CSR images positively influence C-C identification if self-relevant appraisal is triggered when consumers evaluate CSR image.

Hypothesis 1: CSR image positively influences C-C identification.

Accessibility/Diagnosticity Model

Accessibility/diagnosticity model indicates that whether information is used for judgment depends on the accessibility and diagnosticity of the information (Feldman and Lynch 1988; Herr, Kardes, and Kim 1991). High diagnosticity means that the information can be classified into a cognitive category clearly and unambiguously or the information has high relevance to receivers. If the information on hand has high diagnosticity, it tends to be used for appraisal.

CSR Support

Consumers’ support for CSR initiatives reflects the degree to which these initiatives are relevant to their self-concept (Sen and Bhattacharya 2001). If consumers have high (low) support toward CSR initiatives, these initiatives have high (low) relevance to consumers, and according to accessibility/diagnosticity model, consumers tend (not) to use the CSR images for self-relevant appraisal. Hence, the relationship between CSR images and C-C identification is stronger when CSR support is high than low.

Hypothesis 2: CSR support positively moderates the relationship between CSR image and C-C identification.

Ethical Ideology

Ethical ideology is a set of values, attitudes, and beliefs that help people judge ethical issues. It is the frame of reference or guidance concerning ethical issues (Forsyth 1980; Forsyth and Bye 1990). Consumers with high idealism tend to consider positive CSR images to be good for the society (Forsyth 1980). Positive CSR images have high diagnosticity for consumers with high idealism because the company having positive CSR images can be easily categorized into a good company. Conversely, consumers with low idealism tend to consider the same CSR images have mixed value for the society because good actions may accompany negative outcomes, thus CSR images have low diagnosticity for them. According to accessibility/diagnosticity model, CSR image is more likely to be used for appraisal when it is considered as high diagnosticity. Hence, the relationship between CSR image and C-C identification is stronger for consumers with high idealism than low idealism.

Hypothesis 3 Idealism positively moderates the relationship between CSR image and C-C identification.

Hypothesis 4: Relativism negatively moderates the relationship between CSR image and C-C identification.

METHOD

This research used a 2 (Valence of CSR initiatives: positive/negative) x 1 between-subject design experiment to test hypothesis. A pretest was conducted to select appropriate CSR initiatives in retail industry. The dependent variables were CSR images and C-C identification. 174 consumers having shopping experience in a hypermarket participated. All measures were from established scales in previous research.

RESULTS

The Effect of CSR Initiatives Valence on CSR Images

The results of ANOVA indicated a significant main effect of CSR initiative valence on CSR images (F(1,172)=646.5, p<.001).
Specifically, positive initiatives generate better CSR images than negative initiatives (M<sub>pos</sub>=5.45, M<sub>neg</sub>=2.09; t(172)=25.43, p<.001).

**Moderation Analysis**

Lance (1988)'s residual-centering method was used to test moderating hypotheses and avoid multicollinearity problem. The results were as follows. CSR images positively influence C-C identification (beta=.84, t(170)=20.15, p<.001), supporting H1. Furthermore, the residual term for CSR support*CSR image interaction positively influences C-C identification (beta=.11, t(170)=2.56, p<.02), supporting H2. The residual term for idealism*CSR image interaction positively influences C-C identification (beta=.13, t(170)=3.08, p<.01), supporting H3. The residual term for relativism*CSR image interaction has no significant influence on C-C identification (beta=-.02, t(170)=.49, p>.62). Therefore H4 is not supported. A partial F test was conducted where regression coefficients for the three interaction terms are set as zero. The significant result indicates incorporating diagnosticity factor into self-definitional model increases explanation power (F(3,167)=4.02, p<.01).

**SUMMARY**

We extend past studies by indicating CSR support and idealism dimension of ethical ideology positively moderate the relationship between CSR image and C-C identification. The self-definitional approach to CSR is more complete by incorporating diagnosticity factor.

**REFERENCES**


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumer research holds a relatively long preoccupation with intergenerational influences (or carry-over effects) that capture the social reproduction of behaviours, attitudes and values from one generation to the next. Intergenerational transmission can be interpreted as a form of market stability, which in turn can be used to underpin theories of long term brand value and brand equity development (Bravo et al 2008; Moore et al 2002; Viswanathan et al 2000) and consumer socialisation (Eskstrom 2007; Minahan and Huddleston 2010; Moore et al 2001; Moschis 1985). Studies have examined consistencies in financial planning (Hill 1970; Olsen 1995), brand preferences, choice strategies and marketplace beliefs (Bravo et al 2008; Mandrik and Fern 2004; Moore-Shay and Lutz 1988; Moore et al 2002), the development of market competences and skills such as consumer savvyness (Nancarrow et al 2008) as well as intentional and perceived brand loyalty (Higgins et al 2010). A dyadic prediction method is the predominant approach employed in intergenerational studies, where a matching of mother-daughter dyads is sought in terms of behaviour, markets beliefs and markets skills. Mothers and daughters have been shown to often share brand preferences and shopping strategies, suggesting childhood experience is important in the formation of intergenerational agreement, and emphasising a parental modelling approach with a unidirectional flow of influence from mothers to daughters (Moore-Shay and Lutz 1988; Moore et al 2002; Perez et al 2011; Collodo et al 2012). This study adopts a different conceptualisation of mother-daughter relations. It takes a dialectical approach (Holt 2002; Blume and Blume 2003) to define mother-daughter relations as fluid identity positions that emerge within the context of relationships. Women not only move between mother/daughter roles but can and do occupy both at the same time. Rather than conceptualising intergenerational effects as being activity produced by an ‘older’ generation for passive consumption by the younger, identity positions are formed and reformed through the contradictions and ambiguities that structure them.

Families have consistencies over time, that implicate consumption and the market and which are central to the replication and solidarity of these norms and values (e.g. Bugge and Alamas 2006; Castano et al 2010; Curasi et al 2004; Epp and price 2008; Levy 1981; Moisio et al 2004; Wallendorf and Arnold 1991), but intergenerational research is complicated by differing definitions and ideas of generation. From a cohort or historical approach generations are constructed as periodic entities made up of individuals of a defined age who experience similar social, political and economic conditions but are limited in their ability to examine cultural transmission down family chains. A family based definition is more localised to particular family units and refer to an inter-relational definition over time (Alexander 2009; Kelova 2009; Zhu 2010). The data is drawn from 87 in-depth interviews with women in 23 family groups. In most families there were three generations of blood-related women (grandmother, mother and daughter) but due to illness/bereavement the grandmother in two families did not complete the study. All families live in the Midlands, UK. Some were geographically close, others live at a distance. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed thematically. In this paper we concentrate on a descriptive commentary of two family chains from the larger data set. The two cases were chosen because they provide interesting contrasts to illuminate the dialectic relation in family chains.

The data illustrates the evolution of many different aspects of marketing and consumer practice, from the emergence of the supermarkets and self-service and promotion, the development of discourses of choice and the self, as well as ideologies of modernity, progress and reproduction. We show shifts in consumer culture from highly organised forms of collective social practice to individuated ‘disorganised’ forms of social practice epitomised most clearly by the supermarket. In family accounts we also observe the emergence of discourses of the self in consumption, consumer identity and the notion of consumption as freedom and markets as sites of progress.

We show intergenerational memory to converge in shared family signatures of consumption passed from one generation to the next in a dialectical process around notions of ‘control’, ‘innovation’ and ‘progress’. We see that what are often understood by participants as unique and private family signatures are shown to resist, conform and adapt to cohort-like influences across different generations. A similar idea, tradition, behaviour or ritual is qualitatively changed in response to changing times and the market as daughters and mothers in different cohorts makes sense of their own family life. Food preparation, changing food technologies (including the freezer and ‘ready meals’) and retail transformations (including self-service and the supermarket) are examples of sites where family is practiced, negotiated and transformed. It is through these that we trace changes in mass consumer culture and how these become understood and incorporated in family chains.

We conclude to propose that our approach responds to Wilkie and Moore’s (2005) call for a method of intergenerational analysis that is ‘layered’. We highlight that consistency rather than resistance has been the focus of intergenerational research in marketing and show that consistencies can be recognised and understood to only exist in direct relation to resistances, intentional differences and distinction. We illustrate that mother-daughter relations are different in their similarities and similar in the differences.

REFERENCES


Creative Consumers Cook up Value in Conversations
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Ramaswamy (2011:195) argues that the core principle of co-creation is “engaging people to create valuable experiences together, while enhancing network economics.” Little research has been conducted to date to show how engagement results in value creation, or how by coming together and conversing on these platforms, individuals can create more value than when acting separately or communicating only with firms (with the exception of Schau et al. (2009) on the value of community practices). We focus on how consumers generate novel ideas in online conversations, and search for evidence of a collective form of creativity so as to answer the questions of how online consumer conversations generate creativity, and how this results in value co-creation.

In line with Service Dominant Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), we see the mechanism of value creation as an interactive process among networks of stakeholders, enabled by different platforms, allowing resources to be exchanged and internalised, or “integrated” (Kleinaltenkamp et al., 2012). We explore conversations in an active consumer forum and argue that these constitute collective creative processes enabled by the platform itself, and that these creative processes create value.

We use conversation analysis (CA), a widely accepted methodology in anthropology and sociology, to explore conversations and the interaction patterns which support them. We focus on these emergent patterns, and show how they enable casual participants to act collectively and creatively. We use the standard CA procedure of moving from a particular initial conversation in which patterns are identified, to a wider analysis of a collection of conversations, to establish robustness and validity. In contrast to traditional CA, we analyse written asynchronous conversations in which participants do not benefit from non-linguistic cues such as gestures and facial expressions, and in which the largest part of the audience is anonymous and does not participate. Very little work has been performed online using CA, and we establish a precedent for the use of CA in online consumer behaviour and social media research.

We analyze a collection of eight conversation threads (averaging 52 contributions each) from the forums hosted on Epicurious.com, an amateur cooking website. The initial data sample yielded 31 categories of actions ranging from “sharing a problem” to “endorsing a solution.” More generally, the contributions revolved around problem-solving and the introduction of creative ideas in the form of experiences, knowledge, opinions and emotions, which were in turn solicited, shared and acknowledged.

While creativity is a notoriously fragmented research topic, most definitions include two dimensions: novelty and appropriateness/value (Hennessey & Amabile, 2011). Echoing Vygotsky, Glaveanu (2010) proposes that creators externalise their novel ideas (gleaned from previously internalised experiences in other contexts, “repurposing” them in a new context), thereby producing new creative outcomes, which are, in turn, internalised by audiences. As audiences and creators trade roles throughout a conversation, creativity results from the cyclical internalisation and externalisation of novel ideas (novelty), which are then “acknowledged, recognised, valued and used” (appropriate and valuable). Following our initial conversation analysis and based on this socio-cultural view of creativity in conversations, we posited three hypotheses and gathered seven more conversation threads against which to test them.

Hypothesis 1: By engaging in online conversations, consumers internalise and externalise their experiences, ideas, knowledge, opinions and emotions, and as a result, contribute to creativity.

Our data shows clear instances of novel contribution resulting from the internalisation of observed practices, or “reorganisation of incoming information and mental structures” (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003). We claim that it is because participants are engaging in these conversations that they go through the creative process of internalising and externalising their ideas.

Hypothesis 2: Consumers actively build conversation structures that support the emergence of creativity through the internalisation and externalisation of experiences, ideas, knowledge, opinions and emotions.

CA uncovers the methods and competences deployed by participants to conduct successful conversations, which we claim turn them into acts of collective creativity. Sawyer (2001) argues that participants have free creative range to build coherent contributions to allow audiences to understand the conversation successfully. In face-to-face conversations, participants rely on non-linguistic cues to signal who they are addressing, when they want to take the floor, when they disagree etc. Our analysis reveals patterns suggesting that participants provide their own creative cues to promote coherence and continuity in the conversation (e.g., “meta-talk,” acknowledging or soliciting contributions, addressing others by their name, etc...)

Hypothesis 3: Value is co-created by both the brand and consumers as the creative outcomes of internalisation and externalisation, characteristic of conversations, are validated and applied to consumption production.

Throughout the analysed threads, participants validate proposed ideas or solutions and refer to their intention to put them to use, providing clear indications of value creation. More generally, this validation process also creates value for users and the site owner, as the entire forum gains in novelty and appropriateness. By providing new reliable content, conversations increase the legitimacy, the usefulness and, as a result, the size and engagement of the platform’s audience, thus affording clear economic value in the form of advertising opportunities and brand equity.

Our data shows how consumers’ conversations promote creativity, which in turn contributes to value creation. Consumers internalise and externalise ideas in creative ways, resulting in value for all involved. We provide useful insights for marketers, both academic and practicing by proposing a new framework for the exploration of value creation by consumers, based on the creativity inherent in conversations: we answer Ramaswamy’s call (2011:196) for a “fresh frame of reference of value (human experience) and its creation (co-creation), one that is based on collaborative, dynamic, contextual and generative human interactions at the core-supported by engagement platforms that facilitate such interactions in multi-sided fashion to generate mutual value through productive and meaningful experiences.” In addition to this and our methodological contribution,
we also expand the notion of consumer creativity (Burroughs et al., 2008) by suggesting that consumers act creatively through more mundane consumption than the often highlighted examples of “creative consumers” (e.g., lead users) or “creative product uses.”

REFERENCES


For Whom Is Attainment Less Alluring? The Impact Of Cultural Values On Consumers’ Motivation For Goal Pursuit
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumer behavior is influenced by cultural values (e.g., Maddux et al. 2010) as well as the goals consumers hold (e.g., Fishbach and Ferguson 2007). Cultural values are the shared, abstract ideas about what is good and desirable in a society (Williams 1970). An important dimension of culture is whether individuals value independence vs. interdependence (Brewer and Gardner 1996; Markus and Kitayama 1991): Individuals from Eastern cultures tend to have interdependent self-construals and uphold such values as maintaining harmony and social order. However, those from Western cultures tend to have independent self-construals and uphold such values as personal achievement and being distinct from others.

Consumer goals, on the other hand, can be broadly dichotomized into attainment and maintenance goals: Whereas for attainment goals the actual state differs from the desired state (e.g., decrease one’s weight from 165 to 164 pounds), for maintenance goals the actual and the desired states already match, and the actual state should be better than or, at least, the same as the desired state (e.g., keep one’s weight at the current 165 pounds or lower this year).

Although extant research examined how attainment versus maintenance goals may influence valuation of one’s labor (Brodoschall et al. 2007), satisfaction (Koo and Fishbach 2010), and perceived difficulty (Stamatogiannakis et al. 2010), it is unclear under what circumstances consumers are more motivated to pursue each type of goal. It is also unknown whether consumers from different segments or cultures may behave differently towards the two goal types. The current research seeks to fill these gaps.

Because independent cultures emphasize values that involve going beyond a current state, having these cultural values is likely to increase the appeal of attainment goals. Thus, individuals who value independence are likely to be more (less) motivated to pursue attainment (maintenance) goals. Conversely, because interdependent cultures emphasize values that involve maintaining the current state, having these values is likely to increase the desirability of maintenance goals. Therefore, individuals who value interdependence are likely to be more (less) motivated to pursue maintenance (attainment) goals. That is:

Hypothesis 1: Individuals who value independence (interdependence) should tend to be more (less) motivated to pursue attainment goals, and vice versa.

Further, the independent and interdependent values can coexist within any person (e.g., Markus and Kitayama 1991; Singelis 1994), and their accessibility can be temporarily increased by contextual factors (e.g., Brewer and Gardner 1996; Maddux et al. 2010). For such situationally activated cultural values, we expect to observe the same pattern of behavior.

Hypothesis 2: Activation of independent (interdependent) values accentuates motivation for pursuing attainment (maintenance) goals, but attenuates motivation for pursuing maintenance (attainment) goals.

Finally, independent (interdependent) cultural values emphasize undertaking actions driven by one’s own will (sharing the vision of one’s social group; Markus and Schwartz 2010). Thus, framing an attainment goal as reflecting an individual’s own will (and hence highlighting the correspondence with independent values) is likely to boost the person’s motivation for that attainment goal. In contrast, framing a maintenance goal as reflecting the will of a close social group (and hence highlighting the correspondence with interdependent values) is likely to increase motivation to pursue that maintenance goal.

Hypothesis 3: Attainment (Maintenance) goals tend to be more motivating when they are framed as reflecting one’s independent will (the will of one’s close social group), and vice versa.

Five studies tested these hypotheses. Study 1 had a 2 (national culture: USA vs. China) × 2 (goal: attainment vs. maintenance) between-participant design. Participants read two goal contexts (saving and exercise) and indicated how motivating they found the goal to boost the person’s motivation for that attainment goal. In contrast, highlighting the correspondence with independent values) is likely to increase motivation to pursue that maintenance goal.

Study 2 used a 2 (priming: independence vs. interdependence) × 2 (goal type: attainment vs. maintenance) between-participants design. First, we primed independence (interdependence; Brewer and Gardner 1996). Next, participants were asked to think about their favorite charity, and to indicate any amount they would like to donate to it. Subsequently, they indicated their willingness to pre-commit to donating exactly the same amount (maintenance goal), or the same amount plus 1 cent (attainment goal), in a year’s time. As expected, the priming × goal type interaction was significant ($F(1,181)=7.84, p<.006$). Willingness to pre-commit to an attainment (maintenance) goal was higher in the independence (interdependence) priming condition.

Study 3 used a 2 × 2 mixed design with goal domain (weight and GPA goals) as the within-participants factor and goal type (attainment versus maintenance) as the between-participant factor. Moreover, participants completed an independent vs. interdependent tendency (Singelis 1994) and a regulatory focus orientation scale (Higgins 1997). Replicating previous results, the goal type × cultural tendency interaction was significant, ($t(106)=3.2, p<.002$). Regulatory focus did not have any impact on the results.

In study 4, participants were assigned to a 2 (goal type: attainment vs. maintenance) × 2 (goal framing: for self vs. for close social group) between-participants design. Half of the participants read the attainment (vs. maintenance) goal version of three goal pursuit contexts (savings, weight, and GPA). In addition, half of the participants were told that each goal is pursued following individual (vs. one’s close social group; e.g., family) will. Consistent with our hypothesis, the framing × goal interaction was in the predicted direction ($F(1,185)=9.9, p<.002$).

Finally, in Study 5, we tracked and analyzed 1,607 consumers’ weight goal pursuit behaviors in the field. Compared to individua-
als who value independence (and thus have fewer friends supporting their efforts), those who value interdependence (and thus have more friends supporting their efforts) were more (less) likely to adopt ($z=4.94, p<.001$), and also tended to be more (less) motivated to pursue maintenance (attainment) goals ($t(1603)=2.18, p<.03$).

Theoretically, our work is amongst the first to bridge two important research streams in consumer behavior—goals and cultural values. Managerially, our results suggest that the two types of goals should be leveraged differently across cultures to optimize motivation for goal pursuit. Managers can also engineer consumption contexts to activate respective cultural values, nudging consumers towards goals congruent with firms’ marketing objectives.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In marketing research – as in other disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, history, and economics – a fundamental assumption about the nature of credit-debt relationships holds that the creditor always has legal power (and implicitly, moral superiority) over the debtor. Marketing literature on consumer credit and debt focuses on the lending practices of businesses (Hill 1994; Hastak 2004; Bolton, Cohen, and Bolton 2012) and consumer use of and reliance on credit, particularly in the form of credit cards (Soman and Cheema 2002; Bernthal, Crockett, and Rose 2005; Pehalozza and Barnhart 2011; Thomas, Desai, and Seenivasan 2011). This imbalance of power appears to be inherent in the nature of credit/debt relationships. Since the most fundamental feature of credit/debt is the way it links the present to the future (credit) and the present to the past (debt) (Peebles 2010), psychologists have also focused on questions such as how to develop models of consumers’ mental accounting (Prelec and Loewenstein 1998) and their abilities to elaborate potential outcomes of their consumption behavior (Nenkov, Inman, and Hulland 2008). These consumer psychology approaches are also underpinned by the basic assumption that to be in debt is to be in an undesirable position, and so consumers’ ability, or inability, to avoid debt is an important area of study.

This paper analyzes a seemingly unique circumstance in vendor-consumer relationships: in the lower Brazilian Amazon, customers not only have the option to decline to pay what they owe to direct sales representatives, but direct sales representatives have no legal recourse to demand either the return of the product or payment in full if the customer decides to keep their purchase. In this situation, the indebted customer has power over the seller since the representative, as an independent contractor working for a direct sales corporation, must absorb the loss and pay out of pocket what is owed to the company. I argue that in order for us to begin to understand an exchange relationship that reverses such fundamental assumptions about what it means to extend credit or enter into debt, we need first to understand the cultural and social context of these relationships. There are three key elements for understanding a situation in which creditors can be beholden to their debtors: 1) direct sales as a marketing system designed to take advantage of the personal networks of independent representatives; 2) local cultural customs concerning the extension of informal credit; and 3) the direct sales representatives’ social positions as it relates to their exchange relationships with their customers.

This paper is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted from October 2008 to August 2009, focusing on the ways in which direct sales representatives for Avon, an American beauty company, and Natura, a Brazilian beauty brand, negotiate customer relationships in Ponta de Pedras, a rural municipality located a three hours away from the nearest metropolitan city, Belém. The municipality consists of a small town surrounded by two distinct types of rural communities: roadside communities accessible by car and bicycle, and riverine communities accessible only by canoes or motorboat. As an anthropologist focusing on cultural practices and meanings, fieldwork consisted primarily of participant-observation, but also included semi-structured interviews, one focus group, and a small-scale survey (Bernard 2006). In order to capture the similarities and differences between representatives living in different types of communities that have different degrees of access to consumer goods and government services, I alternately lived with families in a river interior community, a road-side interior community, and in the town of Ponta de Pedras.

The direct sales system is uniquely suited to reaching base-of-the-pyramid consumers, especially in developing regions in which the poor have restricted access to traditional retail outlets. As Biggart explains, “whereas bureaucratic firms seek to exclude nonwork social relations in order to control workers, the direct selling industry pursues profit in the opposite way, by making social networks serve business ends” (Biggart 1989:8, emphasis in original). However, corporations using this system must strike a delicate balance between encouraging sociality among their representatives in the service of sales goals, and discouraging “wasteful” socializing with customers that does not lead to higher profits. Similarly, the social relationships representatives have with their customers (who are often close friends and family members) should not interfere with the representatives’ ability to collect payments. The need to adhere to this protocol is built into Avon and Natura’s ordering system: within fifteen days of the product shipment, the company requires its distributors to pay for the products, minus their commission. This is where local practices of informal credit enter the picture, for in many cases, representatives have to pay for their shipments entirely out of pocket or are unable to pay.

In rural Amazonia nearly all businesses – from vegetable vendors to the large supermarkets that accept credit and debit cards – are expected to extend informal credit to their customers. This system of informal credit can be traced back to the colonial period in Amazonian history, in which selling on credit emerged as a fundamentally unequal exchange relationship: wealthy trading post owners and storeowners extended credit to poor laborer/extractivists, who were commonly kept in a state of permanent debt to trading posts. While debt peonage is rare today, the use of informal credit in this region has persisted alongside the increasing availability of a variety of consumer goods. Today, direct sales representatives in Ponta de Pedras are most often lower-class women unacustomed to exercising authority or commanding the respect necessary for collecting payment from customers, many of whom are members of the local elite. However, findings suggest that women living in the most remote and impoverished communities have less difficulty collecting payment from their customers than women living in the town, with greater connection and exposure to middle-class Brazilian lifestyles. Using Graeber’s (2011) moral principles of economic relations to examine the unusual situation in which legal power and social position are reversed from what is considered “normal,” this paper contributes toward a broader understanding of the social, historical, and cultural mechanisms behind credit/debt exchange relationships.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Age, gender, status, wealth and occupation are transcended by an unselfish attachment to and affection for the iron road which wraps residents and regular visitors alike in its ferroequinological thrall... people demonstrate an underlying need to be absorbed in the day to day welfare of their line... We want to be involved, whether it’s filling flower tubs, delivering leaflets, running tea rooms, bunk houses and excursion trains, or simply buying a ticket to ride. [The railway is] a vehicle for social integration, an endless topic of conversation, a force for good. (Pearson, 2009).

Our research is based on the context of ‘Adopt A Station’ a partnership between First ScotRail (franchise for rail services in Scotland) and groups who ‘adopt’ their local railway station. The scheme allows the utilization of space within the station to provide services or facility improvements that benefit the local community. Since its launch over 150 stations (from 343) have been adopted and projects include gardening, cafes, art galleries and heritage centres.

Interpretive consumer research has followed Casey (1993, ix) and recognised that our lives are ‘place-oriented’ and ‘place-saturated.’ A space becomes a place when it is consumed (Sherry 1998), involving a process of appropriation that leads to a sense of belonging and symbolic meaning (Visconti et al. 2010). Places to which we develop strong emotional attachments become important to the extended self (Belk 1988). We contribute to this research stream by focusing on place transformation. We address the following research question: What role does the consumer play in transforming community places? In particular we consider consumer involvement in transforming stations from spaces of transit to places of community life.

Research was conducted over 2.5 years using ethnographic methods. We visited 19 adopted stations, spending from 2.5 hours to a 2 night stay. More than 100 adopters participated in in-depth interviews and informal conversations. Data collected includes: 321 pages of interview transcriptions, 6 hours of video and 886 photos, comprehensive field notes from participant observation and archival material. We followed a hermeneutic approach to interpretation and present findings in relation to the following themes:

Roots: Adoption affords communities the opportunity to take ownership and customise stations. Flexibility is a key attraction, reflected in the range of adopters’ activities. We distinguish between individual and group adoptions and those motivated by commercial and community interests. From ScotRail’s perspective, the provision of rent free space is justified as “if it’s lived in, it’s loved” and otherwise it would be “a no-man’s land.”

Commitment: Adopters contribute significant time from several hours per week to, as one adopter specifies, “between one and three days a week, leaving home at 8.30am and returning about 8.30pm.” Another simply stated “it’s my life.” Adopters’ emotional and affective bonds provide strong evidence of place attachment (Altman & Low, 1992): “I could not stand seeing the stations going into decline.” The adopters might be described as “local heroes” (Cutcher, 2010, p. 79) whose regeneration efforts create an “ethical surplus” (Arvidsson, 2005, p. 241).

Gateway: Participants recognized the station’s role as a gateway to the community that become “flags of identity” (Palmer, 2005) reflecting core community values: “To showcase the community for people passing by or people visiting for the first time.” A steady decline in manned stations was described negatively: “the place basically died.” Adopters’ physical presence at the station was therefore central in contributing to a welcoming spatial narrative.

Aesthetics: Adoption has transformed stations. Pre-adoption stations were: “an embarrassment,” “unloved and uncared for,” “dismal,” and “uninviting”. In contrast, they are now more “cheerful,” “colourful,” and transformed with “the brightness and beauty of the flowers.” While floral displays are prominent, the regeneration of the station buildings also contribute to aesthetic appeal and activities can extend to other areas of the community: “It is like ripples on a pond...now everybody takes a part, individual businesses look stunning, residents’ gardens are beautiful.....it has a knock-on effect in the community.”

Heritage: Adopt a Station plays an important role in the preservation and regeneration of railway buildings to make them fit for modern uses. Some projects have explicit links to heritage (heritage centres, historical murals) while others recreate a perceived authentic appearance (through floral displays). Alternatively, the work of adopters is seen as creating as much as preserving heritage: “the glory days of rail travel [can be] what and when you want them to be...the heritage is now if you like.”

Benefits: The adopters mention a range of personal benefits including camaraderie and social contacts, the opportunity to engage with an activity that they enjoy such as gardening, satisfaction and pride in achievements, improvements to wellbeing and gaining respect from the local community. A sense of ownership empowers the community and legitimises their activities. For the firm, “adoption means that they have got other eyes looking after their stations,” an unofficial labour source, policing the station and alerting them to potential problems. Other benefits include positive public relations, charitable fund raising, and improved environments for station staff, passengers and tourists.

In conclusion, our research reveals the latent potential residing in communities. The knowledge, skills, passion and expertise of local residents in the study suggests that the community role in place transformation may be far more extensive than previously acknowledged. While noting potential tensions and challenges, community members are willing to make significant efforts to improve, protect and preserve their local areas. We observe transformation at multiple levels offering both utilitarian and symbolic benefits where redundant spaces are resurrected and imbued with new meaning. Community involvement allows place distinctiveness to emerge and offers an alternative perspective to the growing homogenization of public places reported in the literature. Our research suggests that it is at the local level where place transformation might be best enacted whereby residents construct and maintain both individual and collective identities and regain control of their communities from within.

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One Chocolate Cake and a Short-term Mate: The Influence of Unhealthy Foods on Short-term Mating
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Anecdotal evidence suggests a strong link between foods and sex/mating. For example, some foods are proposed as being “better than sex” (Food Network.com 2012), others as aphrodisiacs (e.g., oysters) (Lawlis 2009), and still others are used during sex (e.g., whip cream) (Fisher 2011). However, from a theoretical perspective, the relationship between food and mating remains unclear. In that context, this research examines how certain types of foods (e.g., healthy vs. unhealthy) might influence short-term mating (STM) tendency. STM is defined as a brief non-romantic sexual encounter that lacks emotional depth (Buss and Schmitt 1993).

Recent reports show that STM is increasing among all age groups (McGuire 2010). This increase is potentially disconcerting because there are serious health related consequences of STM (Garcia et al. 2012). In addition, some evidence suggests that STM influences consumer behavior (Monga and Gürhan-Canli 2012). While several studies examine the consequences of STM less research examines the situational antecedents of STM. We focus on the situational influence of consumption of certain types of foods on STM tendencies. Understanding this link is practically relevant since although individuals often have direct control over their food choices, there are many instances when food choices are limited (e.g., weddings, catered events).

Exposure to unhealthy foods can simultaneously activate conflicting goals related to indulgence (Shiv and Fedorikhin 2002) as well as restraint (Geyskens et al. 2008). This occurs because consumers learn to associate unhealthy foods with indulgence (e.g., cake for birthday/wedding celebrations) as well as self-control (e.g., foods to avoid when dieting) (Redden and Haws 2012), and overtime exposure to unhealthy foods automatically activates these conflicting goals (Chartrand and Bargh 1996).

We propose that when consumers sample an unhealthy food item they symbolically breach self-control and hence the indulgence goal wins out. One breach of self-control often leads to others (Sommer and Cheema 2004) because once individuals breach self-control they tend to say “what-the-hell” (Cochran and Tesser 1996, 99) and subsequently engage in other behaviors that undermine self-control (Polivy and Herman 1985). We predict that sampling an unhealthy food will represent a symbolic breach of self-control which will lead individuals to say “what-the-hell” when it comes to STM. Sampling a healthy food will not lead to self-control breach and thus will not influence STM.

There is a rich stream of literature documenting gender differences in mating. Men have stronger desires for engaging in STM (Haselton and Buss 2000) and more favorable attitudes towards STM than women (Clark and Hatfield 1989). There are several proposed reasons for this difference including greater social acceptability for men to engage in STM (D’Emilio and Freedman 1997) and greater parental investment for women than men (Trivers 1972). Consistent with this stream of research we predict that unhealthy foods will influence STM to a greater extent in men than in women.

STUDY 1

We test this prediction with a 2 (sampled food: healthy vs. unhealthy) X 2 (participant gender: male vs. female) between subjects design. Participants sampled a healthy (i.e., fruit salad) or an unhealthy (i.e., chocolate cake) food (e.g. Shiv and Fedorikhin 1999). Subsequently, as part of an “unrelated task”, participants responded to measures related to interest in STM (Schmitt 2005).

Sampling an unhealthy (vs. healthy) food item influenced STM tendency, but only for males. Females’ responses regarding interest in STM were not influenced by the type of food sampled.

STUDY 2a

Visceral factors decrease self-control (Loewenstein 1996). In the context of eating, hunger is a visceral factor that represents a state of food deprivation. High levels of hunger can inhibit individuals’ ability to exercise self-control (Nederkoorn et al. 2009) even in non-food domains (Briers et al. 2006).

Because visceral factors lead to decreased self-control if as we theorize a symbolic lapse of self-control leads individuals to say “what the hell”, the effect of unhealthy food on STM should only exist under low hunger when sampling the unhealthy food is viewed as a breach of self-control. Under high hunger sampling the food may be related to fulfilling a basic physiological need to reduce hunger (Maslow 1943) and would not represent a self-control breach. Overall, we predict that the effect of unhealthy (vs. healthy) food on STM will only exist under low (vs. high) hunger.

We test this prediction with a 2(food type: healthy vs. unhealthy) x 2(hunger: high vs. low) between subjects design. The procedure and stimuli were identical to Study 1 except that hunger was manipulated by having subjects participate before or after a meal (e.g. Goukens et al. 2007).

As predicted, the results show that under low hunger participants report a greater interest in STM after sampling an unhealthy (vs. healthy) food. However, unexpectedly under high hunger, sampling a healthy (vs. unhealthy) food led to greater interest in STM. One possible explanation for the reversal of effects under high hunger might relate to the low perceived satiating power of fruit (Rolls et al. 1990). If the chocolate cake was perceived as more filling/satiating than the fruit, participants who were hungry and sampled the fruit may have been relatively hungrier than participants who sampled the cake leading the former to respond more impulsively to the STM measures.

STUDY 2b

In Study 2b we investigate the influence of unhealthy (vs. healthy) foods on STM when individuals merely imagine consuming the food. This seems important since consumers may be tempted by images of unhealthy foods and since prior research shows visual images of food items have similar, albeit relatively weaker effects than actual food items (e.g. Shiv and Fedorikhin 1999; 2002).

This study employed a 2(food type: healthy vs. unhealthy) x 2(hunger: high vs. low) between subjects design. The procedure was similar to Study 2a except we used an online panel (e.g. Mechanical Turk), participants viewed an image of a healthy or unhealthy food, and we measured hunger.

The results of Study 2b replicate the results of Study 2a and show that merely imagining consuming an unhealthy food can influence interest in STM.
CONCLUSION

Our experiments show that unhealthy (vs. healthy) foods can influence STM tendency.

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Clicktivism or Slacktivism? Impression Management and Moral Licensing.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Recent research has demonstrated moral licensing effects in a number of contexts, including consumer choice (Khan & Dhar, 2006; Mazar & Zhong, 2010). Under certain conditions, after engaging in prosocial or morally appropriate behavior, individuals consider that they can “afford” to engage in less ethical behavior, without discrediting themselves (Merritt, Effron, & Monin, 2010). For example, in Mazar and Zhong (2010), participants who made environmentally friendly product “choices” in a first phase—their choice set only contained green items—were more likely to cheat on subsequent tasks than participants who did not have the opportunity to make similarly green choices. Such effects are typically explained in terms of fluctuations in the moral self-image (Cornelissen, Bashshur, Rode, & Le Menestrel, Forthcoming; Jordan, Gino, Tenbrunsel, & Leliveld, 2012). Individuals hold a certain aspiration level regarding how “moral” they ought to be. A moral or prosocial act elevates the working level of the moral self-image (Monin & Jordan, 2009). If this working level exceeds the aspiration level, an individual feels licensed to engage in self-interested behavior.

This paper makes two contributions to previous moral licensing research. First, we test whether a mere symbolic moral action (i.e., one that is not costly and does not generate tangible benefits for the recipient) is sufficient to produce a moral licensing effect. For example, when building a user profile on social network websites, one may attempt to generate a favorable impression by indicating that one supports charitable and pro-social organizations. In two studies, we test whether having the opportunity to engage in such merely symbolic actions decreases an individual’s motivation to engage in actual moral or prosocial behavior. Second, we propose that impression management concerns provide an alternative route to moral licensing. Being perceived as a moral person by others is generally considered desirable (Alexander, 1987; Goffman, 1959; Wedekind & Milinski, 2000). However, once an individual has established or signaled one’s moral character in the eyes of others, s/he might be more likely to pursue his/her self-interest subsequently. If this is true, we expect that moral licensing effects of symbolic actions will be especially pronounced for individuals that are highly concerned with impression management.

In Study 1, we tested whether having the opportunity to engage in a symbolic action leads to a moral licensing effect. In a first phase of the experiment, 73 participants read a short description about the work of a charitable organization (i.e., UNICEF). At the end, about half of the participants could choose whether or not to tick a box that said “I support UNICEF” (similar to the “like” option on a Facebook page). The box did not appear for the other half of the participants. After that, instructions explained that the organization in question is collecting short and catchy slogans to communicate their mission. Participants were invited to help and provide such slogans, although it was mentioned that doing so was voluntary. Results indicated that participants produced fewer slogans after they could express their support to the organization symbolically (M = 0.43, SD = 0.85), compared to those who did not have that opportunity (M = 0.90, SD = 0.77, F(1, 71) = 5.65, p = .02). In Study 2, 119 participants first read a paragraph about an NGO working on fair trade issues (i.e., Intermon Oxfam). Then about half of them were given the option to express their support to this organization symbolically by clicking a box saying “I support Intermon Oxfam.” In a second phase, participants received a bar of fair trade chocolate marketed by that NGO, and were offered the opportunity to donate a part of their show-up fee (9€) to support the NGO’s activities. Afterwards, we measured individual differences in self-monitoring as a proxy for impression management tendencies. We found an interaction effect between self-monitoring (as a continuous variable) and having the opportunity to contribute symbolically (t(118) = -2.28, p = .02). Spotlight analysis showed that, for participants high in self-monitoring, having the opportunity to contribute symbolically reduced their financial contribution to the NGO. For participants low in self-monitoring, we did not find such an effect.

Together, these results show that having the opportunity to express one’s support or positive intentions symbolically may have adverse effects on “real” contributions made. This effect is especially likely to produce for individuals who care relatively more about their image in the eyes of others. These results are especially relevant in domains where symbolic expression of one’s opinion is the norm, such as when individuals build a profile on social networks, or activities in online activism programs. Our results show that such “clicktivism” may have an undesirable impact on subsequent prosocial behavior.

REFERENCES

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the Irish heavy metal scene. Despite the longevity and cultural relevance of heavy metal subculture on a global scale (see Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 2000; Wallach et al., 2011), it has been noticeably absent as a subject of study in consumer research. This is relevant when we consider the growing emphasis in consumer research, particularly in Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), on the ‘sociocultural, experiential, symbolic and ideological aspects of consumption’ (Arnould and Thompson, 2005: 868). Subcultures, or ‘subcultures of consumption’ (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995) have been particularly beneficial for researchers who have found that they ‘provide influential meanings and practices that structure consumers’ identities, actions and relationships’ (Kozinets, 2001: 67).

Recently, Maffesoli’s (1996) neo-tribal framework has been adapted to contexts concerning consumer communities, which address some of the problematic aspects of the traditional Birmingham subcultural model, whilst illuminating the fluid, sociable, creative and emancipatory nature of such communities (see Goulding et al., 2002; Goulding et al., 2009). It is argued in this paper, that heavy metal has been overlooked as a context within this framework because it fails to empirically fit within the constraints of the consumer tribe model.

This also reflects some of the broader challenges that CCT has faced. This, for the most part, relates to what is perceived to be an overemphasis on the agentic qualities of consumer communities, at the expense of incorporating broader historical or structural processes to enhance explanations of consumer behaviour. Such a theoretical impasse has been widely acknowledged in cultural studies, in addition to CCT research (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Askegaard and Linnet, 2011). I argue that Elias’s (2000) figural sociology can be used to address such an issue and enhance explanations of consumer communities – in this case the Irish heavy metal scene. Elias outlines the specific, but interrelated trajectories of different nations and how certain social processes (e.g. technisation, feudalisation, industrialisation and sportisation) combined with developments in the individual psyche, transform the nature and scope of social relations. This framework is used to generate insights into the ways in which what are taken as forms of agency are produced by and produce agency. I articulate how this perspective, relatively unexploited in previous consumer research, despite its status in the field of sociology, can be incorporated into the broader CCT framework, a relatively new discipline in which the boundaries are still being constructed.

Elias’s focus on civilising processes and the importance of self-restraint and self-steering in social life makes heavy metal a particularly interesting context in which to apply the figuralional lens. Heavy metal has been described as ‘uncivilised’, ‘violent’ and ‘immoral’ (see Gore, 1987; King, 1988; Shuker, 2001). This is a consequence of its association with Satanic and transgressive or ‘extreme’ themes (Kahn-Harris, 2007) and the prevalence of aggressive (and at times violent) rituals such as headbanging, crowd-surfing and moshing (Riches, 2011). I position the behaviour of heavy metal fans within the context of broader civilising processes, focusing in particular on the emergence of Irish consumer culture (Dolan, 2009a, 2009b), technisation (Elias and Dunning, 2008) and sportisation processes. I connect the historical positioning of heavy metal subculture with data collected from the Irish heavy metal scene, drawn from over two years of interviews, participant observation of live gigs and observation of specialised fan forums. I address some of the shortcomings of previous figuralational research through documenting the practicalities of incorporating the Eliasian methodological approach of a ‘detour via detachment’. This is particularly relevant considering the unusual position I take on as an ‘outsider-participant’, differing from the predominant ‘insider’ accounts that usually emerge from heavy metal subcultural fan spaces.

In opposition to the traditional view of heavy metal rituals as anarchic or chaotic, I explain how such fan practices are controlled through a combination of evolving subcultural codes, the actions of other scene stakeholders (e.g., musicians) and the influence of marketplace resources. This complex figuration allows for the ‘controlled de-controlling’ of emotions (Elias, 2008) to take place, demonstrating how the therapeutic and cathartic qualities of such rituals are heightened through the expression of anger. Additionally, I explain how the controlling nature of the subcultural code varies in different fan spaces (i.e., virtual spaces) and connect the seemingly ‘unrestrained’ or ‘de-civilising’ behaviour of the heavy metal fans in such virtual spaces to the increasingly regulated and rationalised ‘live’ or ‘face-to-face’ scene.

The theme of control is extended further to illustrate how fans are socialised into the subculture, how heavy metal hierarchy is constructed and subcultural capital is distributed throughout the Irish metal community. Although previous post-subcultural and CCT frameworks (e.g., Thornton, 1995; Kates, 2002; Brownlie et al., 2007) have been used as a resource to explain the fluidity and transitory nature of consumer communities, the issue of control (both individual and collective) has been overlooked, particularly in how it relates to the nature of social relationships and the distribution of subcultural capital within the scene. This is where figurational explanations differ; there is more emphasis on how structures of control inform social relationships, and consequently how evolving social codes and widening/narrowing chains of interdependencies inform such structures.

**REFERENCES**


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Distaste is a research domain that has attracted less attention from scholars compared to its positive counterpart, yet one which could potentially be revealing, primarily because rejection is more determining in drawing social distinctions (Wilk 1997). We consider existing conceptualisations of distaste to be reductionist, treating the construct as a static, binary opposite to external tastes. The aim of this paper is to make a first step towards a dynamic conceptualisation that accounts for its complex nature in collective contexts.

Distaste has been defined by Bourdieu (1984) as refusal of the taste of others and as a basic component of the mechanism through which social structures are perpetuated. Consumer research with the help of social psychology has well established the relationships between (dis)tastes and social groups, the main argument being that individuals develop tastes consistent with their membership groups or ingroups (Bearden and Etzel 1982; Muniz and Hamer 2001), and adopt tastes consistent with their aspirational groups. Antithetically, distastes are developed when consumers are acting in specific ways in order to avoid outgroup membership (Escalas and Bettman 2005), while dissociative reference groups in particular strongly influence negative consumption (White and Dhal 2007). Rejection of tastes by members of the ingroup occurs to make sure that others understand where the group stands in the social space, in relation to the external and often competitive “them” (Berger and Heath 2008). It is “them” that provide the coordinates for the undesired self, and in extension to that for what should be rejected (Hogg 1998; Hogg et al. 2009).

An underlying principle that we deem problematic in these studies is the treatment of collective distaste as passive rejection, a mere binary opposite to the tastes of “them”. Our approach here is different: instead of treating the concept as taken for granted, we account for the manner in which collective dislikes are constantly co-created amongst members of a group in order to match the community’s common purpose. Such negotiations concern not only which tastes of “them” should be rejected but also how external practices can be appropriated in manners that are in line with the group’s joint enterprise.

We conducted ethnographic research in the context of an arts cooperative, consisting of one year participant observation (Spradley 1980), 15 ethnographic interviews (Spradley 1979) and over 30 unsolicited accounts (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995) from members. The choice of an arts cooperative as a research context was based on the oppositional identity of the community and its positioning as an alternative, anti-establishment space for the enjoyment of the arts, making expressions of distaste of central importance to the practices of the group. Findings demonstrate how cooperative members use “them” as a focal point in their narratives and resignification of practices, in order to socially externalise outgroups and maintain symbolic boundaries.

As anticipated, our research reveals that members can operate in the community due to their shared understanding of what distinguishes them from a variety of dissociative groups, including various types of art venues and their audiences, art subcultures and even society as a whole. This is expressed in a series of narrative juxtapositions, centred on notions of autonomy, radicalism, anti-commercialism, and romanticism that characterise the community, as opposed to the robotic, dependant and obedient practices of outgroups.

Narrative oppositions are accompanied by conspicuous absence of known practices of the dissociative groups (e.g. absence of Hollywood movies, overtly shabby décor). However, findings show that while “them” is always a central point in drawing symbolic boundaries, it is not the only factor triggering (dis)taste-making.

First, differences in personal views of members on the community’s “common purpose” (Wenger 1998) and its positioning in relation to outgroups, means that the intensity of rejection of outgroup practices is far from homogenous within the group. From this standpoint, “them” is unable to provide the coordinates for what constitutes distaste, but may be used as a convincing tool in negotiations amongst members, in order to demonstrate how engaging in similar practices with avoidance groups would jettison the group’s core principles (e.g. if our purpose is to redefine what an arts space offers to people we cannot sell popcorn at the bar like mainstream cinemas do). The prevalence of heterogeneity of tastes however, means that some members may attempt to encompass selected practices of dissociative others. In arguing their position, those members will ignore the connection of the practice in question to “them” and focus on the benefits of encompassing it (e.g. let’s get a popcorn machine as it will be a fun thing to have on offer). As such, distaste is not only to be found externally in “them” but may be brought on by members of the group who have incommensurate views of where their group stands in the social space.

Second, even in cases when a particular outgroup is commonly rejected by all members, our findings contradict the assertion that those outgroup’s tastes will be completely rejected in fear of signalling the wrong identity. As Arsel and Thompson (2010) point out, avoidance of “them” is not necessarily exhibited through rejection of outgroup tastes but through alternative ways of performing them. We identified that (dis)taste negotiations are not solely revolving around “what fits and what does not” but also to whether members are able to resignify the practice in question and provide a suitable rationale for its inclusion. As such, practices that on a first instance seem ill-suited to the group may become accepted if the metaphysical context produced by the members (Ostergaard et al. 1999) along with the practice is an appropriate one (for example showing a mainstream film like Nolan’s “The Dark Knight”, a choice which would normally be fitted to the local multiplex, may become acceptable as part of a comic book culture event). In this case, encompassing the tastes of “them” becomes acceptable by diminishing the role of the outgroup to a “mindless practitioner” who is unable to comprehend the meanings behind the tastes in question in the same way as the ingroup does.

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*The Complexities of ‘Us and Them’: Negotiating Collective (dis)Taste*  
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Does One Step Forward Seem Larger Than One Step Back? Initial Evidence of a Positive Progress Bias in Goal Monitoring
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Consumers often pursue continuing goals, like saving for retirement or maintaining a healthy weight, where attainment depends on a number of behaviors and decisions made over time. Although the literature suggests that accurately monitoring progress towards such goals is essential for goal attainment (Baumeister and Heatherton 1996; Carver and Scheier 1982), surprisingly little research investigates whether consumers are typically accurate in monitoring goal progress. Accurate monitoring requires that consumers perceive the impact of their behaviors on goal progress in an unbiased manner. At a minimum, accuracy requires that the influence of a behavior be perceived similarly irrespective of whether that behavior moves the consumer closer to or further from goal attainment. For example, a consumer with a savings goal should perceive a $30 departure from a budget as carrying the same psychological weight regardless of whether it represents extra savings or extra spending.

The focal question of our research is whether consumers accurately weight the influence of goal-consistent behaviors, like saving $30 or resisting a scoop of ice cream, relative to goal-inconsistent behaviors, like spending $30 or eating a scoop of ice cream, on perceived goal progress. Research suggests that consumers’ perceptions of goal progress could be biased in either direction (Baumeister et al. 2001; Ahluwalia 2002). However, because (1) consumers selectively distort information in order to maintain a positive impression of themselves (Dunning 1999, 2007; Taylor and Brown 1988), and (2) goal-consistent behaviors reflect positively on one’s self whereas goal-inconsistent behavior threaten one’s self-view (Prelec and Bodner 2003), we hypothesize that consumers overweight the influence of goal-consistent relative to goal-inconsistent behaviors when assessing their progress.

Our first study asked members of an online survey panel to think of a personal goal, one behavior that moved them closer to the goal, and one behavior that moved them further from the goal. Consistent with our hypothesis, respondents were more likely to recall a goal-consistent behavior than a goal-consistent behavior (89% vs. 64%); furthermore, respondents who listed both behaviors rated the goal-consistent behavior as having a larger impact than the goal-inconsistent behavior ($M = 6.7$ vs. 4.8; scale from 1-9).

Studies 2 and 3 used hypothetical scenarios to explicitly control for the magnitude of the goal-consistent and goal-inconsistent behaviors that participants evaluated. In study 2, undergraduate participants rated running one more mile as having a larger influence than running one less mile on progress towards and exercise goal ($M = 2.3$ vs. 1.4; scale from 0-4). Similarly, in study 3, undergraduate participants believed that saving an additional $30 helped their progress towards a savings goal more than spending an additional $30 hurt it ($M = 4.2$ vs. 3.3; scale from 1-7).

In study 4, we measured perceived goal progress indirectly by having participants estimate the calories in desserts. Because weight loss depends on the number of calories consumed, the calories in a food provide an objective measure of the impact of eating (or not eating) a food on progress towards a weight-loss goal. Consistent with the hypothesis that consumers underweight the impact of goal-inconsistent behaviors relative to goal-consistent behaviors, participants perceived desserts (i.e., a piece of cake or five ounces of ice cream) that they imagined eating as having fewer calories than desserts that they imagined foregoing ($M_{cake} = 386$ vs. 475; $M_{ice\,cream} = 197$ vs. 262).

Our final two studies explored whether the tendency to overweight the impact of goal-consistent behaviors relative to goal-inconsistent behaviors is related to goal attainment. Consumers who perceive goal-consistent behaviors as having a larger influence than equivalent goal-inconsistent behaviors may think that they are making adequate goal progress even when they are not. Consequently, an optimistic goal monitoring bias may cause consumers to prematurely release their goals (Fishbach and Dhar 2004; Zhang, Fishbach, and Kruglanski 2007), thus discouraging goal attainment.

Study 5 investigates whether consumers who are typically less successful at attaining long-term goals reliant upon self-regulation are more likely to show an optimistic bias in goal monitoring than consumers who are more successful at attaining such goals. As in previous studies, undergraduate participants who imagined studying one or two additional nights thought their behavior would help their performance on an upcoming exam more than participants who imagined studying one or two fewer nights thought their behavior would hurt. Importantly, however, this tendency was less prevalent amongst participants with high self-control than participants with low self-control ($M_{high\,-\,control\,\,(+1\,SD)} = 4.7$ vs. 4.5; $M_{low\,-\,control\,\,(+1\,SD)} = 4.9$ vs. 3.6).

Online panel respondents in study 6 played a multi-round word game in which they won or lost points during each round. We manipulated the difficulty of the first two rounds such that most participants lost 100 points in one round and gained 100 points in another. As in previous studies, participants thought that gaining 100 points helped their progress towards a high score goal more than losing 100 points hurt it ($M = 6.9$ vs. 6.3; scale from 1-9). Furthermore, participants who showed a larger optimistic bias in the first two rounds performed worse in subsequent rounds than participants who showed a smaller optimistic bias ($M_{high\,-\,bias\,\,(+1\,SD)} = 43.1$, $M_{low\,-\,bias\,\,(+1\,SD)} = 148.5$; possible score range: -800 to 800).

In six studies, we show that consumers tend to overweight the impact of goal-consistent behaviors relative to goal-inconsistent behaviors. Furthermore, two studies suggest that this tendency is negatively associated with successful goal attainment. Because consumers believe that goal-consistent behaviors have a larger influence than objectively equivalent goal-inconsistent behaviors, they may believe that they are moving closer to their goals even when they are objectively not progressing. We hope that drawing attention to this bias provides a first step towards helping consumers accurately monitor their progress and, ultimately, improve their chances of reaching their goals.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Counterfeiting is a rampant worldwide phenomenon with substantial economic and societal consequences. Although the macro level consequences have been extensively studied, customer-level consequences of this phenomenon—the focus of this paper—are not well understood. Our research suggests that merely presenting products as counterfeits can contaminate them psychologically. This can result in poorer perceptions and lower actual efficacy. Briefly, the idea is that counterfeiting is a moral offense, affecting perceptions and efficacy. This is because moral offense causes a sense of moral disgust (Schnall et al., 2008), which like physical disgust follows sympathetic magic laws (Greene et al., 2001) of contagion and similarity (Frazer 1890/1959). Labeling a product as counterfeit can thus contaminate both that product and similar non-fake products. The results of three experiments support the predicted effect and its explanation.

The goal of Experiment 1 was to study our ideas in the field. In this experiment, 61 experienced golfers were presented with 2 identical putters (a golf club used to hit the ball into the hole in the final strokes) and were told that one of them was real and the other one a fake. They were then asked to determine, to the best of their ability, which putter was real and which a fake. Next, they were randomly placed in one of two experimental conditions: putt with the non-fake club first, or putt with the “fake” club first. Their goal in both conditions was to sink the ball in the hole, or get it as close as possible to the hole if they missed it. As predicted, participants played better with the non-fake club than with the “fake” one. Specifically, participants playing with the non-fake club sank the ball in the hole more than those who played with the “fake” club (14 times versus 7 times; t(59) = -5.89, p <.05), and brought it closer to the hole when failing to sink it (M=24 versus M=32; t(59) = 2.58, p<.01).

In Experiment 2, 42 participants were presented with two different Parker fountain pens, and were told that one of them was real and the other a fake. They were asked to use each pen to trace a line from the start of a maze to its end, and to avoid touching the contours. After completing the task with both pens, participants were asked to evaluate each pen. As predicted, across different measures, pens were rated less favorably when they were said to be fake than when they were said to be non-fake. Specifically, compared to the non-fake pen participants rated the “fake” as significantly less comfortable, of lower quality, and as less appealing. Furthermore, the results of the maze task suggested that the deleterious effects of believing that a product is fake may not limited to participants’ reported evaluations, and also affect efficacy. Participants who completed the task using the “fake” pens performed significantly worse than those who used the non-fake pens, touching the lines of the maze more frequently. This effect, in turn, was mediated by participants’ attitudes towards using the fake pen, as assessed in a procedure recommended by Zhao, Lynch, and Chen (2010).

In Experiment 3, we examined whether fake products negatively affected similar non-fake products. Eighty three participants were randomly allocated to one of two conditions. In the first condition, participants were presented with 2 different pairs of Chloe (a prestigious designer brand) sunglasses and were told that one of them was real and the other a fake. Participants then tried on the sunglasses, examined them, and compared them to another (third) pair of sunglasses that the experimenter presented. In the second condition participants followed same procedure except that they were told that both sunglasses were non-fake. Results show that participants who first saw a “fake” product rated the subsequent non-fake product lower than participants who first saw a non-fake product. Specifically, compared to participants who first had a non-fake pair of sunglasses, those who first had the “fake” pair reported that they saw significantly less well with the non-fake sunglasses, and rated them significantly lower on comfort, perceived quality and liking. Note that the lower ratings on the non-fake product when it was tested after the “fake” product versus when it was tested after a non-fake one conflicts with the prediction of an alternative account whereby differences in ratings are an artifact of participants' tendency to compare the second pair of sunglasses to the first.

Altogether, this paper illustrates harmful effects of counterfeiting on consumers. We show that merely presenting a product as a counterfeit can undermine perceptions and even lessen objective efficacy. Theoretically, this work contributes to emerging research streams on psychological contamination, marketing effects of disgust, and the placebo effects of marketing actions. Practically, our findings suggest that counterfeiting may be more damaging than previously believed, due to the effects we document, and in particular effects on non-fake versions of the product.

REFERENCES


Self-Congruity with Viral Messages: Investigating its Impact on Message Perception and Forwarding Intentions
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Viral messages have enabled films, pictures or other pieces of information to spread like wildfire beyond the control of any company or institution reaching thousands or even millions of users. One key question that arises is what motivates individuals to share viral messages? A few studies have already started to identify the impact of cognitive and social motivational factors or personality aspects of users on their forwarding behavior (e.g., Taylor, Strutton, and Thompson 2012; Ho and Dempsey 2010; Huang, Lin, and Lin 2009; Chiu et al. 2007). However, the mechanisms involved are still little understood (Ho and Dempsey 2010). Berger and Milkman (2012) emphasize the possible relevance of self-presentation motives, identity signaling or affiliation goals regarding the forwarding behavior of users, while focusing, in particular, on the different audiences and the different channels that can be used.

Based on the outlined research gap, the present study builds on research in areas connected with viral marketing: these include word of mouth (WOM) and advertising, both of which offer strong evidence that the self-concept delivers a motivational explanation for why individuals forward viral messages. In the context of WOM, research demonstrates that consumers are more inclined to provide WOM regarding self-relevant products, as these offer social benefits such as the opportunity to present the self (Chung and Darke 2006). In the field of advertising research, several studies demonstrate that the self-congruity of advertisement inducements are more effective than incongruent inducements and exert a stronger effect on consumers’ preferences and behavioral intentions (e.g., Chang 2005; Zinkhan and Hong 1991).

Transferring these results to the viral marketing context, congruity with a message, i.e., the degree to which a message fits with a person’s self-concept, is assumed to impact the sender’s intention, as the message is used to shape the image of the self. Since the action of forwarding viral messages necessarily involves other people, implying the visibility of the action, this study focuses on both social and ideal social self-congruity. Building on this, we develop a model to analyze the impact of self-congruity (social as well as ideal social self-congruity) on the viral message forwarding intentions of individuals by differentiating between global (Analysis 1) as well as two specific forms of forwarding intentions (narrowcasting and broadcasting; Analysis 2).

The model posits that social and ideal social self-congruity affect the intention to forward directly and indirectly though the attitude towards the viral message. Involvement with viral messages is added to the model as an additional predictor of the intention to forward. The reasoning for this is drawn from the literature on market mavens, which identifies the fact that some individuals are highly informed about preferred product categories, show high involvement in them, and are active providers of information about them (Slama and Williams 1990). By transferring this to the context of viral messages, we assume that individuals with a high involvement in viral messages (i.e., viral mavens) benefit from the general forwarding of viral messages. The model also constitutes the basis for Analysis 2. This analysis investigates the differences between narrowcasting and broadcasting. Building on Berger and Milkman (2012), narrowcasting describes the forwarding of messages to people who share a certain familiarity with the sender. With regard to the channel used, narrowcasting tends to take place via email, as this channel allows the sender to select the individual receivers of the message. Broadcasting a viral message implies that message forwarding is comparatively less controllable in the sense that the sender is less able to determine who receives the message. This also implies that messages stand a higher chance of being forwarded to people who belong to a wider circle of acquaintances or are only indirectly connected with the sender. This is often the case with posted messages on social network platforms.

In order to generate a representational set of viral messages, three experts in the area of marketing screen relevant sites for viral messages in the WWW and review the regular rankings or awards that are given for successful viral messages. Videos and images as well as branded and non-branded viral messages are used. The participants are randomly assigned to one of 12 viral messages. In total, a final data set of 412 participants is generated. To measure self-congruity (social and ideal social self-congruity), two different approaches are used which have each been widely applied in previous research and which demonstrate two possible impression formation routes: piecemeal and holistic processing (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. 2012).

The results of Analysis 1 demonstrate that social as well as ideal social self-congruity impact forwarding intentions significantly. Additionally, ideal social self-congruity has a significant indirect effect on forwarding intention via the attitude towards the message. This leads to ideal social self-congruity having a relatively greater overall impact compared to social self-congruity. The analysis of more detailed forwarding (Analysis 2) shows that message forwarding to a rather uncontrollable audience, i.e., forwarding via platforms such as Facebook or YouTube, is more strongly determined by the need for social consistency, and hence by social self-congruity, whereas message forwarding to a preselected and thus controllable group of people is more strongly determined by the need for social approval, and hence by ideal social self-congruity. Finally, involvement in messaging is also found to exert a significant impact on forwarding intentions. However, this effect is inferior compared to the self-congruity effects. This implies that for the so-called viral mavens the basic self-congruity effect is amplified by the general message involvement effect.

To sum up, the results of the present study add to the field of viral marketing by using the self-concept to explain the motivations that prompt individuals to forward viral messages. The results will be of interest to marketing managers, as they demonstrate the importance of considering the self-concept when designing viral messages so that they reflect the self-concept of the target audience. Further research should aim at investigating these effects using behavioral data. Additionally, a more detailed analysis of forwarding behavior with regard to different audiences should be conducted.
REFERENCES


When the Online Social Presence is Undesirable?
The Effects of Online Anthropomorphism, Need for Interaction and Social Exclusion on Consumers’ Privacy Concern

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

There is a long history of investing anthropomorphized products in marketing practice. Recently, this strategy has been widely adopted in the online service area. An increasing number of online shopping websites, forums and social networking sites are using anthropomorphized contents (e.g., including a client representative image or constructing a human-like character as the host), which is expected to generate enhanced customer attachment and brand experience. Due to the intangibility of service and the generally high perceived risk in the online environment, it seems that anthropomorphism is very relevant in the online service context. Given its wide application, our understanding about the effectiveness of this strategy is still limited. Whether and why consumers prefer anthropomorphized websites? In which conditions and for what kinds of consumers online anthropomorphism may backfire? This research aims to contribute to literature by answering these questions.

People have the tendency to attribute humanlike characteristics, intentions, and behavior to nonhuman objects (e.g., products and brands), which is referred as anthropomorphism (Aggarwal and McGill, 2007; Epley et al., 2007). This rule is also applied to the IT objects and Internet world (Moon, 2000). Anthropomorphism can take the form of employing social beliefs and humanlike perceptions in interactions with nonhuman entities, which goes beyond the simple use of human schema to describe observable characteristics. Previous studies suggest that anthropomorphism has a positive impact on people’s judgments and behavior on the anthropomorphized entities (e.g., showing empathy and favorable perceptions). In the context of risky bearing products (the slot machine and skin cancer), Kim and McGill (2011) suggest that the individual characteristic of perceived power makes a difference in the effect of anthropomorphism. Specifically, people with less power feel less control and perceive higher risk in face of anthropomorphized entities than those with high power.

Here we propose the individual feature of need for interaction (NFI) as another underexplored determinant of the impact of anthropomorphism and examine its effect in the context of online service. The presence of salespersons is more desirable for people with high NFI, while people with low NFI prefer self-service. Different from most previous studies focusing on the merits of anthropomorphism, this research investigate the effect of anthropomorphized shopping websites on people’s privacy concern. As many people are worried about e-marketers’ misuse of their personal information, the privacy concern has become a big barrier for e-business. As such, we propose that people with high NFI are more worried about their privacy when the shopping webpage is anthropomorphized than people with low NFI (Meuter et al., 2005). That is to say, people with high NFI want human/humanlike interaction during their shopping but at the same time anthropomorphism increases their concern for privacy. While NFI shows a lasting and stable interpersonal tendency, people’s social experience (social acceptance vs. social exclusion) can also change individual perceptions and attitude towards anthropomorphic sites. The experience of social exclusion motivates people to search for social support and reestablish interpersonal connection (Maner et al., 2007) and changes people’s consumption pattern of service (Mead et al., 2011). However, on the other hand, the previous experience of social exclusion may lead to a doubtful and conservative attitude on the new connection. As such, we propose a two-way interaction between social experience and anthropomorphism. Specifically, we propose people who experience social exclusion indicate more (vs. less) concern about their privacy on anthropomorphic websites.

One qualitative study and two experiments are conducted to examine the proposed hypotheses. Study 1, the qualitative study, employs open-ended survey to obtain primary understandings of online anthropomorphism and people’s assessment. Study 2 is a one-factor (anthropomorphism: high vs. low) between-subject experiment. Subjects are set in the scenario of hotel room booking on a hypothetical online site. NFI is measured and mean-split as another between-subject factor. Study 3 is a 2 (anthropomorphism: high vs. low) X 2 (social experience: exclusion vs. acceptance) between-subject designed experiment. Similarly, NFI is measured and mean-split as another between-subject factor. Different from study 1, another context (i.e., electronics retailing website) and manipulation method of anthropomorphism (i.e., humanlike robot image rather than human image) are employed.

For Study 2, after manipulation check shows satisfactory results, a MANOVA is ran with privacy concern as dependent variable, anthropomorphism and NFI as independent variable while familiarity with online shopping, Internet dependence and product involvement as covariance. The 2-way interaction is significant (F(1, 103) = 16.96, P < .001). Results indicate that people with high NFI show higher privacy concern than people with low NFI when the shopping webpage is anthropomorphized, while people with low NFI show higher privacy concern than people with high NFI when the shopping webpage is not anthropomorphized. Thus, it supports the moderating role of NFI. For Study 3, a ANOVA is ran with privacy concern as dependent variable, anthropomorphism and social experience as independent variable while affect, familiarity with online shopping, Internet dependence and product involvement as covariance. We found a significant two-way interaction between anthropomorphism and social experience (F(1, 177)=6.90, p<.01). In other words, social exclusion experience leads to enhanced privacy concern on anthropomorphized websites (vs. non-anthropomorphized websites), while social accepted experience leads to more favorable perceptions on anthropomorphized websites about privacy issues.

The findings provide theoretical implications for advancing our knowledge about anthropomorphism and managerial implications for facilitating managerial understanding on whether, when and how to use the strategy of online anthropomorphism.

REFERENCE:


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Marketers vary the haptic properties of foods to appeal to varying consumer palettes (IFST 2009). Holding actual nutritional content constant would consumers perceive the same food as higher or lower in calories based on haptic properties alone? We argue that because food-haptics directly impact mastication (i.e. chewing), they can also impact calorie estimation. Higher mastication (based on rougher versus smoother and harder versus softer foods) leads to lower calorie estimates, an effect we term the food-haptics perceived calorie-effect (FHCE).

Understanding how food-haptics influence calorie estimates is timely given rising obesity (Chandon and Wansink 2011) and practically relevant given that focusing on food-haptics is recognized as one of the “hottest new culinary trend[s]” (Forester 2007).

BACKGROUND

Haptic properties of foods are primarily perceived orally during mastication (Lawless and Heymann 2010). Mastication is the oral “sensory-motor activity aimed at the preparation of the food for swallowing” (Bosman et al. 2004, 202).

There are at least two theories which might explain how food-haptics will influence calorie estimates. An effort-indulgence theory would predict that higher mastication based on harder and rougher food haptics would lead to higher calorie estimates because hard (vs. soft) or rough-textured (vs. smooth-textured) foods require more muscle activity and longer chewing durations (Foster et al. 2006). Because effort is generally positively related to energy associations (de Wijk et al. 2011) hard or rough foods may be perceived as more calorific. Indulgence based theories support a similar prediction. These theories suggest that individuals spend more time interacting with indulgent foods, and that indulgence is positively correlated with calorie content (Bagchi and Block 2011). Thus, hard or rough foods which require greater oral processing time should be perceived as higher in calories.

An orosensory association theory would predict the opposite pattern of results. Orosensory properties of foods relate to sensations of “creaminess, fattiness and richness” (de Wilk and Prinz 2005). As an individual chews, food-haptics influence oral sensations of friction. Typically, high-calorie foods (e.g. butter, cheese, ice-cream) are soft or smooth and therefore generate less friction during mastication (de Wijk and Prinz 2005) compared to lower calorie foods (e.g. raw vegetables, crackers, cereals) which tend to be rougher and harder and generate more friction during mastication.

Consistent with associative learning theories (Van Osselaer and Alba 2000) we predict that repeated exposure to this pattern of mastication experience whereby unhealthier (healthier) food items tend to be smooth (rough) or soft (hard) results in learned associations between the mastication experience and the level of healthiness of the food. Thus, soft or smooth-textured foods (vs. hard or rough-textured foods) would be perceived as higher in calories.

We test these two competing theories next.

Study 1a: Participants sampled a hard or soft chocolate. Chocolates were identical except for hardness/softness. Consistent with the orosensory association theory, soft (vs. hard) chocolates were rated as higher in calories. Taste was similar across conditions, ruling out perceived taste as an alternative explanation (Raghunathan et al. 2006).

Study 1b: Study 1b was identical to 1a except that participants sampled a rough (vs. smooth) textured carrot. Again, consistent with orosensory association theory, smooth (vs. rough) textured carrots were rated as higher in calories.

Study 2: Mastication mediating the effect of food-haptics on calorie estimates is consistent with both the effort-indulgence and orosensory association theories but with different directionalities. The overall mastication effort, as reflected in the total number of chews, should mediate the effects of food-haptics on calorie estimation.

Participants sampled a soft or hard chocolate while research assistants unobtrusively recorded the total number of chews, based on jaw movements (Van Der Bilt et al. 2010). The results support the orosensory association theory and show mastication effort mediates the FHCE.

Study 3: Prior research shows that increasing the salience of a sensory cue through directing an individual’s attention to it increases the influence of the cue (Krishna 2006). Thus, if mastication is indeed driving the FHCE directing individuals’ attention to mastication should magnify this effect.

A 2 (food-haptics: hard vs. soft) x 2 (focus on mastication: absent vs. present) between-subjects experiment was conducted. Participants sampled a hard or soft chocolate and were instructed (vs. not instructed) to pay attention to their chewing.

As predicted, the results showed that when the focus on mastication was absent soft chocolates were perceived as higher in calories than hard chocolates, and this effect was amplified when participants focused on mastication.

Study 4: In Study 3 we consciously varied focus on mastication by instructing participants to focus on chewing. In Study 4 we unconsciously vary the focus on mastication through hunger state.

Prior research shows that individuals focus less on the calorie aspects of food (Sief et al. 2009) and eat faster when hungry (versus satiated) (Hill and McCutcheon 1984). Thus, high hunger should unconsciously reduce the role of mastication in calorie estimates attenuating the FHCE.

We conducted a 2 (food-haptics: hard vs. soft) x 2 (hunger level: low vs. high) between-subjects field experiment at a restaurant. Restaurant patrons were approached to sample a hard or soft cookie either right before (high hunger) or after (low hunger) their meal.

As predicted in the low hunger condition participants perceived the soft (vs. hard) cookie as higher in calories, however these effects got attenuated under high hunger.

CONCLUSION

Our experiments show that food-haptics influence mastication and ultimately calorie estimates.

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The Symbolic and Functional Dimensions of “Terroir” Products Among French Consumers

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Terroir products are considered as ‘refuge’ commodities and a reassuring alternative which represents values, authenticity, commitment, ethics and quality. The consumption of local food allows consumers to behave and consume according to their own values and beliefs (Cova and Cova 2004; Hetzel 2002). Although, the term of “terroir” is specific to the French language and has no equivalent in other languages, France is not the only country with territories (Genest 2001). The concept of “terroir product” is multidimensional and can be defined with respect to the identity of the territory associated with it (Bérard and Marchenay 2004; Sylvander 2004). In France, belonging to a territory must obey a national regulation respecting a precise specification of a given territory. In consumer and marketing research, studies focusing on terroir products from a consumer point-of-view are relatively rare. Almost studies focus primarily on the characteristics and the motivations of consumers that may explain their representations and their expectations related to terroir products and local consumption (Trognon, Lagrange and Janin 1999). Besides, most of consumer researchers used in their works the concept of local products rather than terroir products (Khan and Prior 2010; Megicks, Memery and Angell 2012; Mirosa and Lawson 2012; Stanton, Wiley and Wirth 2012). The objective of this research is then to explore the significance and the dimensions (symbolic and functional) of terroir products as well as the relationship between consumers and producers in the French context. The research follows an experiential and a symbolic approach in the consumption field (Arnould and Thompson 2005; Hetzel 1996; Filser 1996; Brown 1995; Holt 1995) which is based on the idea that the meanings of consumption items are socially constructed and are embedded within a consumption context where there are codes and cultural norms.

METHOD

The methodology used in this research is qualitative and based on comprehensive interviews (Kaufmann 1996) conducted face-to-face with a group of 30 French informants aged 25-70. The interviews took place in the city of Lyon between January and end of March 2011 and lasted 60 to 90 minutes. We used an interview guide divided in three parts: 1) food culture in the French context, 2) perception of terroir products, and 3) producer-consumer relationship. A content analysis method was used to analyze the data.

FINDINGS

The results show that French consumers distinguish between local products (locally produced) and terroir products (tied to the territory identity). For French consumers, terroir products are closely related to the identity and the culture of their area (the region of Rhône-Alpes). Local products, in contrast, are defined according to the perimeter of production which might be around 100 to 200 kilometers. The data analysis revealed four dimensions related to the perception and the definition of terroir products: 1) functional, 2) identity, 3) resistance and 4) emotional. Furthermore, the results also indicate a strong relationship between consumers and producers.

The functional dimension reflects tangible characteristics and attributes such as: quality, taste, traceability and health benefits. French consumers who do purchase terroir products share the idea of terroir products that have a better quality and taste compared to products in supermarkets. This benefit appears to be linked to the recent food crises (birth flu, mad cow and adulterated products such as oil in Spain, milk in China and alcohol in Russian) that have enhanced their beliefs and trust related to the local consumption of terroir products because of their traceability and their short supply circuit. The second dimension “identity” of terroir products is defined by our informants according to two levels: territorial level and national level. First, French consumers distinguish between terroir products which belong to the region of Rhône-Alpes and terroir products which are part of the national French food culture. In the first case, terroir products that are related to Rhône-Alpes culture are: cardoons, Quenelles (ground fish dumpling), praline tart and St Marcelin cheese. However, terroir products that reflect the French food culture and its identity, values and know-how and are well-known at both national and international levels are: macaroons, baguette and champagne or products representing different regions of France such as dried sausage from Auvergne, poultry from Bresse, snail from Bourgogne, etc.

The dimension of resistance is shown by the fact that the consumers interviewed grow and cook their own vegetables. They privilege the homemade as it allows them to control the quality of food and avoid buying food at the supermarket. In addition, our informants show their resistance by supporting the local producers and purchasing terroir products directly from the producers. For them, resistance is also related to the fact that they are politically and ideologically committed to the local economy and the importance of keeping jobs in the rural areas. The last dimension attributed by our informants to terroir products is the emotional part embedded within these products. According to them, terroir products and local food culture are often tied to childhood memories. They are considered as a heritage that should be maintained, protected and perpetuated through an intergenerational transmission in French families. Indeed, the French are particularly proud of their terroir products, especially since the UNESCO labialized in 2010 the French gastronomic meal as an intangible world heritage.

Regarding the relationship between consumers and producers, the results indicate that French consumers are very attached to their producers as they are faithful and loyal to the same producer for years. They even recommend him to their children and their friends. French consumers often use a possessive pronoun like “my gardener”, “my baker” and “my butcher” to express the strong link that binds them to their official producer.

The results of this research may contribute to a better understanding of the functional, symbolic and the socio-cultural aspects related to food consumption that might help consumer researchers to understand the tacit and the explicit dimensions of terroir products and food consumption within different cultures.

REFERENCES


Consumer Attributional and Emotional Responses to Transgressions: Who’s to Blame?
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Transgressions have been defined as violations of relational norms which can have a detrimental effect on a relationship (Aaker, Fournier and Brasel 2004). The effects of transgressions have been examined primarily in the context of consumer brand relationships (e.g., Aggarwal 2004) and service relationships (e.g., Jones, Dacin and Taylor 2011). Previous research has considered the impact on the dyadic relationship between the consumer and brand or between consumer, employee and service organization. However, there is increasing recognition of the complexity of marketing and value creation which acknowledges the relevance of a network of actors both within and outside the firm (Gummesson and Mele 2010). Research to date has not fully considered whether a consumer’s emotional response to a transgression may extend beyond the transgressor to multiple associated actors within and outside a firm and the circumstances which facilitate the transference of an emotional and attributional response. Emotions are the ‘mental state of readiness that arises from cognitive appraisal of events’ (Baggazi, Gopinath and Nyer 1999, p.184) and can have a range of effects on consumer behavior (Watson and Spence 2007). The current study addresses this gap by exploring transgressions committed by one actor, professional athletes, and the resulting consumer responses or attitudes toward the transgressor, as well as toward other associated actors, for example, the sport organization, the sporting body, the sponsors and the media. Further, the study contributes to theory by identifying the circumstances which influence whether consumers attribute blame or responsibility for the transgression to actors beyond the transgressor.

Professional sport was purposefully selected as the context as it is an archetypal socio-cultural phenomenon that offers the opportunity to examine experiential aspects of consumption and is characterized by strong involvement by its target audiences (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006). Professional sport organizations have been increasingly challenged by incidents relating to inappropriate and illegal off-field behavior perpetrated by athletes. These incidents, which include assault, drug use and gambling, attract media scrutiny and subsequently place pressure on public and stakeholder relations. Drawing on attribution theory and cognitive appraisal theory, we explore consumer cognitive and emotional responses to these athlete transgressions and examine how this response may extend beyond the transgressor to other actors.

Consumption in sport takes various forms: participation, spectating, interacting/discussing with others (pre, during or post event) and purchasing and displaying merchandise. Key actors include the governing body, teams, coaches, managers, athletes, sponsors, media and other consumers. The sport context has been effectively used to examine multiple types of consumption behavior, including consuming as experience, integration, classification and play (Holt 1995). These dimensions recognize that consumption encompasses not only interaction around the object of consumption but also interaction with others around the object.

A qualitative methodology was used given the exploratory nature of the research, using a combination of netnography and depth interviews. Online data was collected from multiple discussion forums, resulting in more than 7,845 comments pertaining to 18 athlete-related transgressions. These forums included sport-related platforms, as well as more general public forums. Netnography adapts traditional ethnographic research methods to the examination of online communities to provide insight into natural human behavior (Kozinets 2010). Collected data takes a naturalistic, contextual and accessible form (Jayanti 2010). Data was coded using the open, axial and selective coding approaches, as advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1998), and subsequently was used to develop an interview guide. Fifteen consumers were purposefully sampled for in-depth, semi-structured interviews on the basis of a balanced gender profile and level of sport involvement, to probe for further detail on attribution and response to the various actors in the sport network. Data was coded using a similar approach as with the netnographic data.

It has been suggested that negative or unexpected events can prompt attributional analysis (Folkes 1988; Hastie 1984). Our findings indicate that consumers experience a range of cognitive responses to various actors as a result of athlete transgressions. We determine that causal attributions are influenced by expectations of the athlete’s role (role model versus ordinary person), the type and severity of transgression, the perceived impact or effect, past history (athlete and team) and locus of control. Consumers adopt various behaviors in processing these transgressions, including extensive information search and validation of response through discussions with other interested parties. Evaluation of a transgression’s severity was based on whether it violated rules of law, social norms or a more personal moral stance.

Attributions of blame were consistently placed on the transgressor, however this response was often tempered by empathy in relation to an athlete’s age, upbringing or personal struggle (e.g., addiction). In many instances, blame was extended to the team management, such as in cases of multiple transgressions by one athlete or incidents involving multiple athletes. Propensity to extend responsibility to the organization was also determined by the organization’s response to the incident as well as their perceived effort to train or educate athletes appropriately. In some cases, the role of the governing sport body, and even the sport culture, were seen as enablers of these incidents. The media, and particularly the increasing ubiquity of social media, was also held to account, not for the transgression itself, but for unnecessarily escalating trivial incidents. Negative spill-over effects did not appear to transfer to sponsors, however, consumers were supportive of those companies which terminated sponsorships in response to a severe transgression.

Transgressions have the ability to engender strong negative emotional responses such as anger, disgust and resentment; but there was also evidence of empathy as well as indifference. These emotions are primarily targeted at the athlete, but there was some transference, particularly of negative emotions, to other actors such as the team and its management, the governing body and the culture of the sport and finally the media.

Our research contributes to theory by exploring how consumers evaluate transgressions and their emotional responses. Further, we demonstrate that consumer attributions and emotions can transfer to multiple actors beyond the transgressor, and provide insight into the factors which contribute to the extension of attributions of blame.
REFERENCES
Does Oxytocin Increase Impulse Buying?

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Oxytocin (OT) is a nonapeptide hormone secreted from the posterior pituitary gland which not only has important peripheral actions such as lactation and uterine contraction, but is also the paramount social hormone in lower mammals as well as more recently shown in man (see Ebstein et al. (2012) and Meyer-Lindenberg et al. (2011) for a review). Substantial research suggests that oxytocin considerably promotes trust towards strangers (Kosfeld et al., 2005; Zak et al., 2004). In the study by Kosfeld et al. (2005), one group of subjects (investor) is asked to invest any amount of money between zero and the endowment provided by the experimenter to an anonymous trustee. Each invested dollar is tripled by the experimenter. The trustee can choose but is not obligated to send back positive amount to the investor. Due to the one-shot nature of this game, the risk of investment is high. In comparison to the placebo, the group who were intranasal-administered oxytocin on average invests 17% more.

The effectiveness of oxytocin on human trust then spawns large attentions from both the academic and practice side. Several pharmaceutical companies start to market the oxytocin products in the situation which requires persuasion such as dating and selling. For instance of the pharmaceutical company Trust Enhancer™ selling liquid oxytocin, they believe that spraying oxytocin on salesman’s cloth will gain more trustworthiness and compliance from the potential customer they approach. These anecdotal observations prompt an important question: Is oxytocin really effective in persuading customers to buy products? Or put it another way, does oxytocin lead consumers to be more compliant to the marketing mixes and hence end up with more unplanned buying? This question intrigues us to examine the role of oxytocin in impulse buying, which is highly influenced by trustworthiness towards salesman and reliability of the promotion.

Towards revealing the role of oxytocin in impulse buying, we use two complementary strategies, a peripheral biomarker approach viz., measurement of plasma OT levels, and a molecular genetic approach. We offer the interpretation that plasma OT level as an indicator for neuropeptide ‘tone’, reflecting the chronic activity level of long-term oxytocinergic activity both peripherally and centrally. We hypothesize that higher plasma OT would index higher level of trustworthiness towards marketing mixes and hence induce more impulse buying. To further investigate the molecular mechanisms underlying the role of OT in impulse buying, we also examined association between this behavior and single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) across the oxytocin receptor (OXTR) gene. Variants across OXTR have been linked to a number of social behavior (reviewed by Ebstein et al. (2012); Young and Wang (2004)). OT affects its target tissues by initially binding to the oxytocin receptor in the neurotransmission process. Hence variants across the oxytocin gene region may affect OT binding and the subsequent downstream actions of this neurohormone.

In study 1, we recruited 1,158 (50.43% females) Han Chinese undergraduate students at a public university to participate in several waves of studies. Subjects donated 10 to 20 cc of blood for analysis including plasma oxytocin and DNA extraction, several days following the administration of the questionnaires. In Study 1a, we administered the impulse buying scale (IBS) (Rook & Fisher, 1995); in Study 1b, we administered similar measures-compulsive buying scale (Ridgway et al, 2008) and Spendthrifts-Tightwads (ST-TW) scale (Rick et al, 2008) to check the robustness of our findings in Study 1a; In Study 2, we further asked subjects’ yearly actual expenditure on conspicuous goods. In the last study, we examined the association between oxytocin gene and impulse buying scores.

As predicted in our hypothesis, plasma OT level has a significant positive effect on IBS in Study 1a (p= .023) for pooled sample with both male and female participants after controlling for demographics. A significant interaction effect between logged plasma OT level and gender (p < .001) directs our attention towards analyzing the data separately for males and females. We found that the positive relationship between plasma level and IBS is mainly driven by female sample (p <.05). Plasma OT has no effect on IBS in male sample. Consistent results are found in Study 1b, which confirmed our main hypothesis by using compulsive buying score and ST-TW. Study 2 extends our finding to actual spending for fashion products. A significantly positive effect of plasma OT on the total expenditure of clothes and shoes in female sample is observed (p = <.05). In the last study, we find a significant effect of oxytocin gene on OT for males(p < .02) and a significant interaction effect with plasma OT (p <.0001).

The contribution of the present work is twofold. First, we extend researchers’ understanding of OT’s role in consumer buying behavior. We show OT indeed leads women to buy more unplanned products, which is important for marketers. Second, in the nascent field of neuromarketing, some investigators are now dipping into the wider toolbox of neuroscience and looking at consumer behavior from a broader biological perspective, such as neuroimaging (Plasmann et al., 2012), behavioral genetics (Simonson and Sela, 2011) and endocrinology (Durante et al., 2011). The current study contributes to this broader perspective and introduces a new biomarker and neurogenetic strategy in neuromarketing research by focusing on an important phenomenon in consumer behavior, impulse buying.

REFERENCE


Humanized products in TV ads: How anthropomorphism can elicit emotions, enhance attitudes, and affect purchase likelihood

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

“Look at me, touch me, caress me …” says Giulietta. Giulietta’s desire is not unusual in a human relationship. But Giulietta is not a woman: She is an Alfa Romeo car, and this is a TV commercial – a typical example of a growing trend in advertising to humanize objects in order to evoke positive attitudes. But do consumers really perceive objects as human beings? And does this advertising strategy really lead to more effective advertising?

The propensity to attribute human characteristics to the non-human is known as “anthropomorphism” (Guthrie 1993, 62). In some research, the term is used to describe the visual appearance of objects (e.g. Brown 2011; Nowak and Rauh 2008). In order to differentiate between product presentation and the evaluative tendencies of viewers, in this paper we follow Delbaere et al. (2011) in distinguishing between humanizing as an advertising technique and the process of anthropomorphism that it triggers.

Some researchers concentrate on attitudinal effects (Aggarwal and McGill 2007), others focus on the crucial role of emotions elicited by the human-like appearance of diverse objects, including robots (Riek et al. 2009; Zhang et al. 2010), computer interface agents (Wang et al. 2007) and cars (Landwehr et al. 2011). As far as we are aware, Delbaere et al. (2011) are the only researchers to date who have looked at the relevance of humanized products in advertising. Their investigation, which focuses solely on print advertising, shows that such personification leads to stronger affective responses and attributions of brand personality. In our study, by contrast, we investigate TV commercials, whose moving images make them more “vivid” than “static” print ads. This, we argue, allows them to perfect the technique of humanizing products and evoke more intense emotions. Moreover, Delbaere et al. (2011) look exclusively at the role of loneliness as a factor influencing anthropomorphism. By contrast, we make an additional contribution by controlling for the other psychological determinants of anthropomorphism proposed by Epley et al. (2007), namely the need for cognition, the need for closure, the desire for control, social disconnection, and the desire for attachment. Our first hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 1: A human-like product presentation will lead to a positive attitude toward the ad () if it is mediated by positive emotions.

Miesler et al. (2010) demonstrate that the front view of a car elicits more positive emotions and a greater willingness to pay than the side view, but only when controlling for the personal tendency to anthropomorphize. Furthermore, Chandler and Schwarz (2010) find that consumers who anthropomorphize their vehicles are less willing to replace them. Caporael (1986) assumes that the judgment “this object is like me” induces high affect, accompanied by anthropomorphic behavior. We therefore hypothesize that the effect assumed in H1 is evoked by an inner process of anthropomorphism, triggered by product presentation:

Hypothesis 2: Initiated anthropomorphism leads to positive emotions that are accompanied by positive attitudes toward the ad and the brand () and which affect purchase likelihood.

We also analyze whether this is true for all subjects or only for those with specific psychological factors.

METHOD

We tested our two hypotheses in an online survey (n = 131). Subjects watched one of two TV commercials and then evaluated them. Via a pretest, we confirmed that the two commercials differed significantly from each other (p < .001) with regard to the human-likeness of the product. In the experimental condition, the commercial showed a series of everyday objects with implied faces expressing different emotions. The final object was the front view of an Audi A4, likely to be seen as a face due to the activation of a human face-schema by the preceding objects. In the control condition, only side views were shown, as they evoke less anthropomorphism (Miesler et al. 2010).

RESULTS

To test H1, we conducted a mediation analysis following the bootstrapping approach of Preacher and Hayes (2004) using the PROCESS tool (Hayes 2012). We investigated the supposed role of emotions mediating the effect of human-like product presentation on . The analysis revealed a significant relationship between the human-likeness, computed as a dummy variable, and (b = .5401, p < .05), showing a more favorable attitude toward the “humanized” commercial. This effect was mediated by positive emotions (b = .5023, LLCI = .1383, ULCI = .8974), indicated by the absence of zero in the confidence interval. As the direct effect was not significant when controlling for emotions (b = .0378, p > .10), an indirect-only mediation by emotions was confirmed (Zhao et al. 2010).

Only the experimental commercial triggered anthropomorphism; we therefore investigated H2 with this group only (n = 63). Structural equation modeling using SMARTPLS 2.0 (Ringle et al. 2005) revealed that anthropomorphism leads to positive emotions (b = .2261, p < .05), which positively influence (b = .7727, p < .01). This in turn causes a positive (b = .5674, p < .01), which results in a higher purchase likelihood (b = .6322, p < .01, = .3997). The Fornell Larcker criterion confirms discriminant validity. We also controlled for the above-mentioned psychological determinants (NFC, etc.), but found no effect on the propensity to anthropomorphize.

DISCUSSION

The experiment provides support for our hypotheses. A product presentation causing anthropomorphism can be very effective due to the elicitation of positive emotions and its impact on purchase behavior. The psychological factors proposed by Epley et al. (2007) appear to be of little relevance, so this advertising strategy can be used to reach a broad audience. We chose a commercial featuring indirect product humanizing, as this is less likely to be considered ridiculous by viewers than more obvious personifications – a speaking razor, say. Further research could look at situations in which a prod-
uct personification is exaggerated and becomes absurd. We tested the role of anthropomorphism with respect to a technical product, as we wished to extend previous research. However, it would also be worth investigating this advertising technique with respect to food products, as here emotional bonding could have both negative (e.g. obesity) and positive consequences (e.g. healthier nutrition).

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Using vignettes to elicit family consumption stories
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A number of consumer researchers have suggested that narrative approaches constitute a valuable contribution to the range of methods available for interpreting talk, text and visual material in qualitative consumer research (Croft, 2006; Elliot and Davies, 2006; Hopkinson and Hogarth-Scott, 2001; Hopkinson and Hogg, 2006; Levy, 1981; Shankar, Elliott and Goulding, 2001; Sherry, 1984; Thompson, 1997). Stories related to consumption practices and experiences may be used by consumers to interpret and make sense of the world, which is why the exchange and use of these can inform us of a broad range of consumption related phenomena. For instance, consumers’ construction of identities around loved consumption possessions and activities (Ahuvia, 2005), young people’s environmentalism (Auto and Heinonen, 2004) and consumer risk-taking through motorcycling (Haigh and Justine, 2005) are some of the themes, which have recently been investigated by narrative approaches.

This contribution proposes the use of vignettes in a qualitative research design as a method, which purposefully seeks to elicit and (co-)construct consumer stories about consumption related experiences. Vignettes are short stories about one or more persons, a situation or an event described by selected criteria, which the researcher believes are important in choice or evaluation situations (Barter and Renold, 1999; Jergeby, 1999). Although vignettes may be applied for different purposes, the vignette technique is suggested as a useful method for the generation of family consumption stories in the qualitative in-depth or focus group interview.

Family stories and consumer research

In fields such as communication (Kellas, 2005; Yerby, Buerkel-Rothfuss and Bochner, 1998) and psychology (Bruner, 1990; Miller, Wiley, Fung and Liang, 1997), the significance of family stories has been acknowledged for some time. Within these areas, family stories have been ascribed with many functions; stories are used to represent family history, to teach family values, to create and sustain family identity and to bond family members (Bruner, 1990; Langellier, 2002).

Even though narrative approaches appear at regular intervals in consumer research, the use of such approaches to this field has been quite limited so far, although a variety of approaches has been taken. Levy (1985), for instance, used dreams and story-telling as a projective technique to elicit people’s perspectives of brands and the characteristics of the persons using them. In a later study Levy (2006) states that the term ‘story’ has many synonyms that hold different implications ranging from truth to lies, fact to fiction, rumour to news and amusement to lies, and that different variants of the concept, for instance history, account, statement, anecdote, tale, myth, gossip, etc. include the way people express themselves by telling and exchanging stories, and, according to Levy, justifies the exchange of stories as a marketing activity. The exchange and consumption of stories has many functions for consumers. Another variant is represented by an oral history method which has been used for instance by Elliott and Davies (2006) to trace how brand consciousness develops in consumers by letting consumers recount their experiences with brands in a historical perspective.

Also, some application of narrative methodologies to family consumption research can be found. For instance, Levy (1981) showed how family relationships, food preferences and values, among other things, are projected through ‘little myths’ in family stories about food consumption. Also, Wallendorf and Arnold (1991) found that telling family stories in the context of the annual celebration of Thanksgiving Day serves the purpose of bonding of family members.

Within consumer research, insight into the nature and functions of family stories would appear to be relevant for a range of consumption related issues – not least regarding questions of how consumer related practices may be transmitted from one generation to another.

Combining a narrative approach with the use of vignettes

All though stories can be used at many different levels in a research project, it seems that in consumer research, narrative approaches have mainly been applied as interpretive methods in the data analysis stage of a research project. This means that interviews may not necessarily be particularly designed or apt to provoke consumer storytelling. Sometimes, however, such (consumption) stories are purposely elicited, e.g., when the researcher asks for an account of consumers’ life histories (Ahuvia, 2005). Alternatively, the consumption related questions of interest may be explored by applying a ‘critical incident’ technique of elicitation (Dahl, Honea and Manchanda, 2003). Rather than asking for accounts of experiences or stories within a broader life history context, vignettes can be used for eliciting more focused accounts of consumption experiences. For instance, this vignette was used to study sustainable consumption practices in families:

William, the 12-year-old son, is taking a shower after having been out for a run. When 15 minutes has passed John, his father, considers whether to ask the boy to finish the shower to save using more hot water.

As may be seen, every-day consumption related situations, such as product choices, family member conflicts and social influence processes may be depicted in more or less detail in vignettes. Subsequently, during in-depth or focus group interviews, these descriptions are presented to consumers, who are then invited to respond to the proposed situations. The technique makes it possible to explore ‘mundane,’ low involvement consumption practices, which often may be difficult to study by more conventional methods, be they qualitative or quantitative.

Using vignettes to study pro-environmental socialisation practices in families

As already indicated, family consumption stories may help to yield insight into consumer socialisation processes. The empirical illustration of the use of vignettes to stimulate the recollection and construction of family stories draws on data from two studies that aimed at obtaining insight into family consumption with respect to family interaction and consumer socialisation in the environmental domain. The focus was broadly on socialisation influences within and between generations, that is, between spouses and as well as between parents and children. Both studies involved in-depth interviews with one or several family members in their private homes. In one study thirty couples, who all had at least one child aged 6 to16, were interviewed both separately and together, while in the second study five family interviews were conducted, with children aged 12-16 as participants. The following section gives examples of important themes of consumer socialisation practices with respect to pro-
environmental consumption. The data was analysed with specific focus on the function of the stories (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996), that is, with a focus on how stories are used and produced by participants for explicating their positions in relation to the topic of interest.

Transmission of family and cultural values

The family can be perceived as a micro culture (Bruner, 1990), in which individual as well as cultural values are negotiated. Across families, the importance of transmitting culturally and socially desired ‘environmentalist’ values from parents to children was often highlighted by participants of the studies. However, many other cultural discourses were drawn on. Among prominent family and culturally prioritized values and virtues to be passed on was ‘health,’ e.g., prioritising healthy eating vis-à-vis organic food choices, and ‘wise-with-the-money,’ e.g., refusing to pay more than necessary for products, which implied rejecting to buy organically grown, more expensive products. At the same time, reservations against accepting resources (natural and economic) used by their children when taking showers or ‘squandering’ electricity in private bedrooms.

Parental roles and identities

Consumer socialisation processes appear in contexts, in which parental and gender roles are distributed according to traditional or more modern conventions and rules. This not only influences which parent may be guiding, teaching or be a role model for the younger generation in terms of passing on certain household practices, but also how these influences are exerted and perceived. For instance, most parents would individually claim to intervene in the ‘hot shower-vignette’ illustrated above. However, when parents discussed this issue in joint interviews, it turned out that different priorities held by each partner, as well as the intra-family distribution of gender roles, made one partner – in case of the ‘hot shower-vignette’ most often the mother – more likely to be present, aware and, consequently, the one to react in such situations.

This distribution was also evident in relation to adherence to the principles of sustainability as this would very much depend on personal responsibility for a particular household area. This was exemplified by the following excerpt from a female participant who was responding to a vignette depicting a possible dilemma between tidying the house in an expedient way on the one side, and on the other, letting used glass jars enter into a recycling scheme:

I would definitely throw those jars in the bin, because to me it means more to have a place which is tidy and neat. Rather than having to look at those jars for a week, until my husband got around to throwing them out. Sometimes, when we’re left with used beer bottles, and they don’t exactly fit into the beer box or they just look a mess, then I sometimes throw them in the waste bin. I wouldn’t even contemplate hanging on to old jars like that, I never would. They would simply end up in the bin (…) I’m the kind of person who when I finally get myself going and start to tidy up, then all of it has to go … then I can’t bloody wait. My husband is more like … he arranges stuff systematically and puts the newspapers there, and the batteries must be handled properly. If I were stuck with a used battery, I would say that … I would most likely throw it in bin. But we don’t, because my husband puts them into bags and gets rid of them at the supermarket. I don’t know whether I’m lazy of nature, but I like it to be tidy. I know it’s wrong, but, having said that, I’m quite fine with it.

Female, aged 36, individual interview

Family cohesion versus family conflicts

Families tend to emphasise family harmony and the avoidance of conflicts when questioned about everyday consumption practices. Perhaps not surprisingly, this was very evident when couples discussed environmental issues: disagreements, differences of preferences and priorities tended to be smoothed away in interviews. Larger conflicts seemed indicative of more fundamental differences, which may not necessarily have been related to the consumption issues being researched. However, consumption related conflicts that involved children were much more freely accounted of. Sharing such situations in interviews gives parents an opportunity to express their intention to raise responsible and ‘good’ citizens. In interviews this was evident, for instance when parents referred to their attempts to limit the resources (natural and economic) used by their children when taking showers or ‘squandering’ electricity in private bedrooms.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although narrative approaches are increasingly being used by consumer researchers their application is still rather limited in family consumption research. The present paper advocates the use of vignettes as a potentially useful avenue of gaining access to rather mundane, and seemingly trivial, consumption experiences in families. The empirical illustration of the method shows that by using vignettes and a narrative approach in concert, the researcher may be given an opportunity to explore family members’ perceptions of the processes by which consumption practices are negotiated, established or, alternatively, abandoned.

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Imagine you were to use the new washing machine you just buy and you need more information on how to use it properly, are you more likely to use the written manual enclosed in the machine package or to learn how to do it through the Internet? Should the information and explanation appear in the same way in the two media? More broadly, this paper focuses on consumers’ e-learning process and the extent to which its perceived quality is influenced by a series of environmental factors. Research remains largely unexplored in this area. The e-learning literature focuses more on school (teachers-students) or professional (employers-employees) contexts than on consumer settings (Bernardin, 2005). Moreover, extant studies have drawn on pedagogy (how to educate children) and have neglected the basic principles of andragogy (how to train adults) that may depart from pedagogical theories.

A recent study by Monnot (2010), as to the way consumers learn to use a product, makes a distinction between three consumer profiles: 1) the “autonomous consumers” trying to solve problems on their own, 2) the “assisted consumers”, who look for help from another person or by using support material provided by the company, and 3) the “delegating consumers” who get round the problem by delegating the task to a third person. Other studies have investigated a series of antecedents and consequences of consumer learning. For Lakshmanan and Krishnan (2010, 2011), step-by-step instructions, as they usually appear in manuals, negatively affect learning. Similarly, in a context where products tend to increase in complexity and the consumer suffers from a certain “fatigue” regarding the number and complexity of product features (Fang and Xu, 2011), studies paradoxically show that manuals are only partially read, flown over or not read at all (Eriiksdottir and Catrambone, 2011; Lee and Lehto, 2013; Monnot, 2010). Furthermore, previous research suggests that learning improves product knowledge, attitudes, intention to use or purchase, trust, commitment, loyalty and impacts switching costs (ADC, 2012; Aubert, 2007, 2010; Batkoska and Koseska, 2012; Eel and Sou-Suh, 2005; Hennig-Thurau, 2000; Humeau-Feenstra, 2010; Jones & al., 2003; Lakshmanan and Krishnan, 2010, 2011; Robra-Bissantz and Götzelt, 2005).

This research focuses on online consumer learning or “customer focused e-learning” (Aldrich, 2000, Barron, 2000; Montandon and Zentriegen, 2003; Robra-Bissantz and Götzelt, 2005). Several studies have been concentrating on the antecedents of e-Learning satisfaction and on e-Learning outcomes. Tele-presence, media-richness and interactivity prove to be the major antecedents of consumer learning as well as of e-Learning satisfaction (Eel, Sou-Suh, 2005; Sun & al., 2008). The more an e-Learning course is interactive, the more it will be effective (Eel, Sou-Suh, 2005). Preferences concerning the source of information in the e-learning process can vary. This study considers two sources of information: companies (BtoC) and other consumers (Peer to Peer).

Online manuals and instructions developed by companies generally target adult consumers, which has potential implications on the learning process. However, general learning theories are often based on pedagogical premises, which are thought for children (Zhang & al., 2006). In reaction, Bernardin (2005) and Humeau-Feenstra (2010) suggest to develop specific ways to train adults. The concept of andragogy, which is the theory of adult learning (Taylor, Kroth, 2009) has been introduced by Knowles (1992). Andragogy differs from pedagogy according to six principles: self-concept, experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, internal motivation and need to know (Knowles, 1992 in Chan, 2010).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An exploratory qualitative study has been carried out in order to address the following research questions:

1. What are the e-learning objectives and techniques used by companies/brands that offer a range of online courses?
2. How do consumers perceive the quality of these e-learning courses?

We analysed the content of 81 business-to-consumer (B2C) online courses. The sample represents 47 contextualized courses (showing the product in its actual usage context; e.g. hair styling lessons) vs. 34 decontextualized courses (focusing on the only presentation of the product itself; e.g. how to install a TV set) from 23 service providers and 56 product brands. In addition, we conducted nine semi-structured interviews with adult consumers aged 20 to 54, who were confronted to four types of online courses chosen among the first study sample (contextualized vs. decontextualized and (non-) interactive B2C vs. P2P). Thematic and lexical analyses have been carried out on the data material and the trustworthiness (i.e., validity and reliability) of the results presented below is enhanced by theory and method triangulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

B2C e-Learning objectives

Our data show that brands offering e-Learning courses may pursue a series of objectives. Some brands try to promote product bundling by presenting a range of products that are used together for a specific learning objective (e.g. in the make-up lessons proposed by Yves Rocher, the advertised products are sold at the end of the presentation); other brands try to reduce or remove consumption obstacles, which is often the case in the medical field (e.g. Aspirin). More broadly, objectives of the analyzed e-learning courses refer to sales, positioning, communication, optimization of the physical point of sale, relationship marketing, entertainment, online diffusion of manuals, source of income and legal imperatives. However, informants often seem to only perceive the advertising objective of those courses (Colette, nurse: “For me, it’s more like advertising […] It’s more for drawing attention than for explaining how to do it”). They are generally suspicious about B2C e-Learning initiatives and perceive them as not adapted to their needs. Therefore, consumers often prefer P2P learning courses taken from discussion forums, professional or personal blogs or websites and video sharing platforms, as the peers’ goal appears as sharing an experience rather than selling a product. Finally, informants seem to prefer contextualized courses, often referring to a repeated activity, over decontextualized courses related to a specific problem solving situation (e.g. installing or repairing a product).
PERCEPTION OF E-LEARNING COURSES

The analyzed online courses use a combination of different media, such as text, photographs, videos, animations, etc. Informants seem to be entertained by interactive courses but rely more on the content of the course than on the way it is presented. This is especially true for P2P courses. The frequently poor quality of the videos is neglected in favor of the added value of testimonials, cues, or avoids brought by peers. Moreover, they prefer P2P courses for reasons of trust and identification with the “instructor” (“So, obviously you can really see how it is done step by step. And I can say, well, obviously, if she managed to do it, even though she’s not a hairdresser, I can do it, too.” Nayelle, student). Quality criteria principally focus on depth of information, avoidance of technical language, freedom of choice in the products used, etc. and are related to andragogical principles. According to most informants, P2P learning courses often meet these criteria, which is not always the case of B2C courses. The perceived quality of P2P courses appears to be even higher when they are presented in their context. A P2P contextualized course is likely to increase consumers’ curiosity and personal interest, which makes learning more effective.

In conclusion, this exploratory study indicates that the perceived quality of online courses varies according to two dimensions: the contextualized vs. decontextualized presentation of the product and the source of information (P2P vs. B2C). In addition to a well-structured and media-rich online course, trust and identification with the source of information appear to be important factors when developing e-Learning courses. More broadly, B2C or P2P e-Learning can be used as a strategic tool to extend uses of the product or to reach a new target, regarding the three levers of innovation: new technologies, new usages and new targets.

REFERENCES


Which Card to Pull? The Psychology of Credit Card Expense Management
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

According to the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston (2010) US consumers have 609.8 million credit cards and the average American has no less than 3.5 credit cards. The Quarterly Credit Card Debt in the United States in the second quarter of 2012 totaled 799.5 billion dollars. The debt has increased by $9,236,274,600 in comparison to the debt in the first quarter of 2012. The average credit card debt per household with credit card debt is $15,956.

Apparently, Americans, like others, have a real difficulty balancing their credit accounts and restraining their expenses in the most efficient/economical way. In light of this, the understanding regarding the ways people manage their multiple credit cards is important. It is relevant not only to consumer researchers and policy makers seeking to nudge financial decision making in positive directions but to banks and other credit card providers who manage risk by assessing how fast their loans will be repaid.

This paper explores behavioral patterns underlying credit card expense management. From a purely rational perspective, it is expected that consumers will always use the credit card with the lowest interest rate. Using an incentive-compatible game, we provide strong evidence that this is not always the case. Specifically, in a series of 5 experiments we found that participants tend to balance credit card expenses equally; that is, to continuously prefer one of their credit cards having the lowest accumulated debt (in all the different experiments, all the credit cards were identical except for size and interest rate of the debt). There were no commissions or other limitations of any type on the credit cards.

We argue that mental accounting (Thaler, 1980), which helps people monitor their financial activities and regulate their consumption (Read, Loewenstein, and Kalyanaraman, 1999), and several psychological mechanisms can help explain the reasons for the tendency to balance credit card expenses, the consumer preference for choosing which card to use and how to divide their expenses among multiple cards.

In Experiment 1 we found that in a condition without different interest rates consumers exhibit strong tendencies to continuously prefer the credit cards with the lowest accumulated debts and that this tendency to balance credit card expenses occurs not only between purchases that are made at different times, but also between products that are purchased at the same shopping event.

When different interest rates are added (Experiment 2) we found that: (1) In line with the research hypothesis straying from normative principles, most expenses (65%) were not made using the credit card with the lowest interest rate; (2) The tendency to balance expenses among credit cards remained intact, and overcame documented tendencies from the domains of debts and losses; (3) This phenomenon remained robust even when participants are required to use credit cards with zero previous debt. We found that the tendency to balance credit card expenses was also present when there were only 2 credit cards in use (Experiment 3), which indicates that our findings in the previous experiments were not merely the outcome of a complex decision among 6 credit cards. We then found that the phenomenon is quite robust to an imposed interference that prevents participants from fully employing the described balancing strategy (Experiment 4). Finally, we found that the tendency to balance expenses over credit cards can affect purchase decisions (Experiment 5), and that products whose prices show a better fit with the balancing strategy are preferred over products whose prices show less fit with the balancing strategy.

These results suggest that the behavioral patterns of many consumers in the domain of credit card expenses are more in line with previous findings in the domain of asset allocation (1/n heuristic), rather than with documented psychological motives in the domains of debts and losses, such as diversity aversion or debt account aversion. In addition, our results indicate that for many consumers, perception of debts associated with credit cards differs considerably from their perceptions concerning debts that are more explicitly primed as debts, such as bank loans.

REFERENCES


Consumer Experiences Eating a Raw Food Diet
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) research is fundamentally concerned with the cultural meanings, sociohistoric influences, and social dynamics that shape consumer experiences and identities in everyday life (Fournier, 1998; Holt, 1997, 1998; Thompson, Locander and Polio, 1990; Wallendorf and Arnould, 1991: Arnould and Thompson, 2005). Accordingly, CCT researchers study how consumers consume (Holt, 1995) across a myriad of social spaces (e.g. the home, office, the Web, leisure enclaves, tourist sites etc), frequently making use of multiple data sources (Arnould and Price, 1993; Belk et al., 2003; Mick and Fournier, 1998; Moore and Lutz, 2000). Importantly, CCT conceptualizes culture as the very fabric of experience, meaning, and action (Geertz, 1983). In consumer culture people do not define themselves according to sociological constructs but in terms of the activities, objects, and relationships that gives their lives meaning (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995). These activities substantiate their place in the social world, facilitate meaningful social relationships amongst family, friends and social networks, and make judgments about shared values and interests (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995; McCracken, 1989). Food and eating practices are central to creating good health and incorporate notions of the body, self-control, health, consumption, and the construction of identity (Lupton, 1996).

According to Fischler (1988:279), the act of eating is “both banal and fraught with potentially irreversible consequences”. The process of incorporation is inextricably linked to subjectivity; it is the source of great anxiety and risk (cited by Lupton, 1996:17). Therefore, Consumers may attempt to control the ‘process of incorporation’ by adopting a particular diet (Raw Food Diet). It has been argued by many, that food is central to our sense of identity (Caplan, 1997) - “Because we are omnivores, incorporation is an act laden with meaning” (Fischler, 1988:277). According to Fischler (1988) the principle of incorporation is the action of sending food between the world and the self, between outside and inside our body. “We become what we eat” (Caplan, 1997:9). Food habits and preferences are “central practices of the self, directed at self-care via the continuing nourishment of the body with foods that are culturally deemed appropriate, constituting a source of pleasure and acting symbolically as commodities to present a persona to oneself and others” (Lupton, 1996:15).

Food, Health & Risk Society
The Standardised American Diet (or Western Diet), is a diet dominant in highly processed/fast foods, refined grains and high fat foods. (SAD reference made in Food Matters DVD and books by Michael Pollan, John Robbins, Marian Nestle) Western diets are now nutritionally unbalanced with too much fat, sugar and salt and not enough fibre (Cannon, 1993). The consumption of this diet is said to be linked with chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer (“diseases of civilisation”) which are increasingly prevalent in western cultures (Cordain et al, 2005; Lindeberg et al, 2003 & Lindeberg, 2010). For example, obesity has reached epidemic proportions (Gibney et al, 2004), putting consumers’ health and longevity at risk. Campbell (2006:23) states that “eating the right way not only prevents disease but also generates health and a sense of well-being, both physically and mentally”. Campbell, author of The China Study claims that many diseases afflicted by western societies can be largely prevented by eating a plant-based diet (good nutrition). Consumer experiences of eating a raw/live food diet

In an attempt to manage food risk, there are a growing number of consumers turning to a Live Food Diet. The Live Food Diet is a plant based raw food diet and is a new emerging eating pattern which in recent years has gained consumer and media interest. Live/Living Food discourses in the media (dedicated websites and published books on the subject), research scientists (such as Dr. Howell, Dr. Brekham, Francis Pottenger and Dr. Budwig) and among consumers (growing online and physical communities) brings the ideology of the Live Food Diet to our attention as an effective way to address many of our society’s western diet/SAD-related diseases (cancer, obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease). Therefore the Raw/Live Food diet was chosen and six story/narrative interviews were collected to capture the experiences and journey of consumers eating this diet and following this lifestyle. I, the researcher participated in a 7 day raw food retreat and documented my own experience eating this diet and to learn more about living this lifestyle. Metaphorical Thematical analysis of the data was conducted and revealed the following dominant themes;

• Sick/Remission Society- the broken self
• Food as medicine- the dominant discourse
• The transitioning selves (the different stages of the self), mapping the journey of the self and changing identity
• Embodiment- the revealing body, de-layering body and the healing body
• The religious experience- confession, penance, prayer, for givenness

Many consumers living in remission society (recovering from any illness, disease or addiction and/or long term illnesses such as diabetes) feel like misfits within society which hinges on the emotions of the failure of the self. This prompts a need to manage cope, thus seeking out solutions and alternative consumption practices (the raw food diet). Arthur Frank (1995) presents the role of the ‘wounded storyteller’ in a postmodern society (my participants & I) as needing to turn their/our illness into a story, an experience, to give a voice for the body. This brings us on a journey of healing, a changing mindset, letting go of the old, embracing the new and the transformation of identity. This new identity gives power and control and renewed purpose for consumers in a remission society and requires alternative consumption practices and lifestyle choices. This dichotomy within society is becoming more prevalent and warrants further research. The methodological approach taken was very appropriate given the context of my research. My role as a researcher and participant added a depth of understanding and a responsibility to the participants of my study.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Imagine a consumer who habitually eats Pizza for lunch but was traveling over the last couple of weeks and did not have a chance to consume her regular pizza meal. How this experience will affect her longing and liking for this food over time? More generally, how does non-consumption period affect preference?

We propose that non-consumption may increase or decrease longing and preference, depending on the presence of salient alternatives at the point of making these judgments. In the absence of salient alternatives, feelings of missing out and preference increase over non-consumption periods, whereas in the presence of salient alternatives, such feelings and preference decrease with non-consumption. We call this the Missing-out Model.

We suggest that, rather than retrieving these feelings and evaluations from memory, consumers construe them based on the information accessible at the moment of judgments. Specifically, consumers rely on two inputs to judge their feelings and preference: how long they did not consume an item (long vs. short time) and whether they have identified alternative ways of satisfying the need, that is, whether there are salient substitutable items, including products, activities and social interactions. Alternatives are substitutes that fulfill a similar need, desire or goal. Thus, when there is salient alternatives in mind, consumers infer they have identified other ways of satisfying their needs, and the focal means becomes less important. Thus, they would express weaker feelings of missing out and preference. However, if there is no alternative salient in mind, consumers infer from longer non-consumption periods that they cannot satisfy the unattended need and they experience stronger feelings of missing out and greater preference. Three studies find support for the Missing-out Model in evaluations of foods, hobbies and social interactions over non-consumption periods and as a function of whether some alternatives were made salient at the point of judgments.

The first study tested Jewish participants' evaluation of leavened foods over the seven days of Passover, when Jewish tradition prohibits consumption of such foods. We predicted that long and preference for food containing flour will increase from day 2 to day 5, unless participants are prompted to consider substitutes and, in which case, longing and preference for leavened foods will decrease over time. Consistent with our prediction, the Kosher participants (those who follow such rules during Passover week) expressed weaker sense of longing and lower liking for the flour foods (bread, flour cake, and potato dish) on day 5 than day 2 when they answer the same missing and liking questions for the substitutes (Matzah, flourless cake, and potato dish) before the main measures. Alternatively, they expressed stronger sense of longing and greater liking for the flour foods on day 5 than day 2 when they only answer longing and liking questions for the flour foods, without being prompted to think about the substitutes. However, results from those who did not keep Kosher did not show any change over time, no matter the participants were prompted to think about the substitutes or not.

The second study tested whether perceived duration of non-consumption, rather than actual non-consumption, is sufficient to produce the missing-out effect, leading further support for our construction of missing-out model. In this study, we manipulated the perceived length of the non-consumption period and the salience of alternative across three consumption domains: food items (Study 2a: Pizza), activities (Study 2b: hobbies) and social interactions (Study 2c: friends). In Study 2a, Participants first rated whether at times they have pizza for lunch or dinner. Next, participants in the high-substitute-salience listed three other foods they would often consider for lunch or dinner. Those in the low-substitute-salience condition were not asked to answer this question. All participants then moved to the next question, which required everyone to list when the last time they had pizza for lunch or dinner was. Then, they were asked to color the length of non-consumption on a scale anchored with now (on the right end) and a time in the past (on the left end). We provided two different left anchors (i.e., 365 days vs. 7 days; between participants). Those who saw a longer anchor would have to color a smaller percentage of the total scale thus felt the non-consumption period was shorter than those who saw a shorter anchor. Finally, all participants reported how much they missed having Pizza and how much they liked Pizza. Study 2b and 2c adopted similar perceptual manipulation of non-consumption periods and salience of substitutes. In all three contexts, participants expressed stronger sense of miss (longing) and greater preference for the focal options (i.e., Pizza, hobbies, and friends) over long (vs. short) lengths of non-consumption period when the substitutes were not made salient to them. The reverse pattern was true when the substitutes were made salient.

Finally, in order to further support the role of substitutable alternatives in determining the direction of the relationship between non-consumption and preference, study 3 manipulated the breadth of the goal and thus, whether some alternatives could be considered substitutes or not. Participants were primed with either a goal of experiencing different cultures or a goal of experiencing Japanese culture. They were then asked to list ethnic foods they wanted to have and were asked how much they liked Japanese food. Thus, other ethnic foods (were made salient in mind) were substitutes for Japanese food when participants were primed with experiencing different cultures but were not substitutes when they were primed with experiencing Japanese culture. Consistent with our prediction, when primed with a goal of experiencing Japanese culture (no salient alternative), perceived long (vs. short) period of non-consumption led to increased preference for Japanese food; whereas when primed with a goal of experiencing different cultures (alternative was salient as Japanese food was just one of many ways to fulfill this goal), perceived long (vs. short) period of non-consumption led to decreased preference for Japanese food.

Overall, these studies provide support for our model, attesting that whether non-consumption increases or decreases longing and preference is a matter of salient substitutes.
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This exploratory, qualitative study draws on in-depth interviews and written subjective personal introspections, focuses specifically on how Hollister customers feel about the Hollister store experience.

Hollister Co. (HCO) has established itself as the quintessential American clothing brand, associated with surfing culture and beautiful teenagers. The brand offers laid back, Southern California (SoCal) surfer style clothing in the teen retail sector, and currently achieves international sales in excess of $1.5 billion annually. Since 2008 the parent company has progressively pushed the brand globally, and there has been rapid expansion, particularly in the UK (Ward, 2008).

As a background to the study, three key literatures are briefly reviewed: on branding, servicescapes and sensory marketing. Building on the early insights of Holbrook and Hirschman on experiential consumption (1981; 1982), branding increasingly relies on symbolic associations and lifestyle impressions (see, for example, Holt, 2004; Sherry, 1998; Gobe, 2010). Above all, brands now strive to build satisfying experiences that mirror human relationships (Fournier, 1998; Miller, 2006). This involves creating excitement, connectedness and community (Sheane, 2012), and giving brands energy, visibility and meaning to their target market (Aaker, 1996). Group membership, peer group acceptance and sexual attractiveness are identified as key issues for young consumers (Harwood, 1999).

Much has been written about servicescapes and their importance for creating memorable consumer experiences. There has also been a recognition of the value of ‘themed flagship brand stores’ (Kozinets et al 2002), which provide a memorable and engaging brand encounter, and use tangible and intangible elements to create stimulating brand experiences (see, for example, Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Bitner, 1992; Kozinets, Sherry, DeBerry-Spence (2002); Gilboa and Rafaeli, 2003; Kearney et al 2007). Music, lighting, design, props, colour schemes, and olfactory and tactile cues appeal to consumers’ five senses as they enter these retail spaces.

Sensory marketing draws attention to the significance of the human senses in creating a ‘supreme sensory experience of a brand’, according to Hulten, Broweus and Van Dijk (2009, p. vii). Oddly enough, these authors make no reference to sensory appeal, a key element in many sectors, not least fashion (Pettinger, 2004). Consumers evaluate brands according to the match between brands and their own body image perceptions, and the body signifies membership to particular subcultures (Schroeder and Salzer-Mörling (2006: 157). Body awareness and comparison with others is particularly intense for teenage consumers (Festinger, 1954), and indeed Harwood (1999) identified that teenagers buy for three main reasons: to show individualism, to attract the opposite sex, and for acceptance by their desired peer group.

One cannot argue with the old adage that sex sells products (see, for example, Driessen, 2005; Dahl et al. 2009), but Hollister, shamelessly, one might argue, uses an intense form of sensual marketing with sex appeal at its core, by employing aesthetically pleasing female and male shop floor staff (‘models’) and male ‘lifeguards’. This ‘walking self-marketing’ branding strategy is one of the most visible examples of aesthetic labour in retailing. Shop floor employees are carefully groomed to fit the brand aesthetic of embodying the SoCal lifestyle, in order to encourage customers to buy into the brand.

METHODOLOGY

The study drew on 25 written subjective personal introspections and in-depth interviews in order to explore consumers’ experience of visiting a Hollister store. SPI, pioneered by Holbrook (1986) is a form of autoethnography (Holbrook, 2005), which ideally provides insights into an individual’s reflections, thoughts, mental images, feelings, sensations and behaviours (Gould (1995). To strengthen and complement this method, and as recommended by Holbrook, we also conducted in-depth interviews with participants. All of the data focused on one particular Hollister store in the UK, which in terms of tangible and intangible cues typifies all Hollister stores worldwide. The research was conducted over a six month period and a total of twenty five SPIs and in-depth interviews were analysed.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A number of key findings emerged from the data, which illustrate the complexity of the Hollister experience and the pitfalls of engaging in full-scale sensory assaults, and four key responses were identified: Seduction, Intimidation, Nostalgia and Exasperation.

In terms of positive responses, the state of Seduction was characterised as an Alice Through the Looking Glass experience of stepping through the glass into another, more alluring world. The dim lighting and beautiful props immediately created a dream-like, enchanted atmosphere. The profusion of aesthetically pleasing staff increased the sense of being carried away on a fantasy-fuelled tide of abandonment, and of belonging to the exclusive, sexy, SoCal beach club of beautiful people. The styling of the Hollister stores is romantic and glamorous, with dark wood panelling, potted palms, exotic wallpapers, crystal chandeliers, antique armchairs, and retro-styled posters of gorgeous ‘dudes’ and ‘Bettys’. Nostalgia, real or imagined, is thus encouraged, and some participants loved the amorous musings the store invited.

However, other participants found the Hollister experience to be one of Intimidation, feeling as if they had entered an alien, elitist environment in which they didn’t belong. The perceived air of luxury and exclusivity was experienced as intimidating, and this was compounded by the ‘hauteur’ of staff. Other consumers’ sense of intimidation was based on more tangible elements: very loud music, dark, rabbit-warren-like rooms, poor visibility due to the low level lighting, and concern that they would walk into other people in the semi-darkness.

Finally, a number of participants felt Exasperation. This is like no other retail environment, and consumers who didn’t ‘see the beauty within’, as one enamoured participant put it, were infuriated with the dark, disorientating interior; little or no customer service or interaction with staff; the impossibility of seeing colours, sizes and labels; and the nightclub volume of music, which left them feeling dizzy, disoriented, temporarily deafened, and gasping for air and daylight.

To conclude, Hollister creates an environment that its audience either loves or hates: once consumers step ‘through the looking glass’ they either ‘suspend their disbelief’ and allow themselves to succumb to its romantic enchantments, or they remain detached and regard the Hollister experience as a dystopian servicescape nightmare of over-sexed fakery, manipulation and impracticality.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Brand extensions are recognized as an effective strategy to leverage the extant equity of existing brands. Corporations regularly use this strategy to maximize the acceptance of their new products based on the view that parent brand associations influence brand extension effectiveness. While brand extensions remain a pervasive activity, the feedback effects of brand extension activity on the parent brand are less well understood (Gürhan-Canli 2003). While most corporations launch products that share a high degree of fit with the parent brand and feature positive extension information that is congruent with the parent brand (Keller and Aaker 1992), leveraging a brand’s equity by launching extension products that might have a low-fit with parent brand features may give marketers additional opportunities to capitalize on their parent brand. Research has shown that high (vs. low) fit extensions favorably impact extension evaluations and the parent brand (Ahlulwalia and Gürhan-Canli 2000). While the findings for high-fit extensions are consistent with observations in the market place, the unfavorable evaluations of low-fit extensions are less defensible. For instance, there are successful extensions that may be viewed as having lower fit with the parent brand. For example, Virgin Airlines and Virgin Records share very few common product characteristics, but are equally well accepted by consumers as extensions of the parent Virgin brand and do not impact the parent brand adversely. Globalization also endorses the importance of understanding the effectiveness of low-fit extensions. For example, most corporations originating in Asian countries like Japan (Dai Nippon, Mitsubishi, etc.) use the same parent brand name across unrelated product categories, yet have wide acceptance (Douglas and Craig 2005). Brand feedback research offers limited guidance in understanding when low-fit extensions will lead to favorable feedback effects. In addition, in real settings, companies always provide positive information even about low-fit extensions. Thus, it is not clear why positively valenced product information would lead to unfavorable feedback effects. In this research, we aim to answer these questions by considering consumers’ context-dependence (the extent that target objects are integrated with their respective contexts) and the nature of extension information provided (benefit vs. attribute) as critical determinants of the feedback effects of brand extensions on parent brands. Specifically, our research identifies conditions when low-fit extensions lead to favorable versus unfavorable feedback effects. In two completed studies, we suggest and find that for context-independent consumers, who think in terms of attribute-related information, the type of extension information does not dampen the effects of extension fit on parent brand evaluations. In contrast, for context-dependent consumers, providing attribute-related extension information leads to a reliance on extension fit while judging brands, leading to unfavorable feedback effects for low-fit extensions, but providing benefit information decreases the impact of extension fit on parent brand evaluations. Thus, these results identify the unique condition when positively valenced extension information may lead to dilution of parent brand evaluations.

The goal of study 1 was to establish that context-independence leads to a focus on attribute-related information alone, whereas the information provided serves as the context when people are context-dependent. In the 2 (context-dependence/independence) x 2 (information: benefits/attribute) between-subjects design, participants were first administered the context-dependence prime (Kühnen and Oyserman 2002), followed by an ostensibly unrelated section in which they were exposed to some brand information (presented as three positively valenced statements related to the product’s benefits or attributes; Maheswaran and Sternthal 1990) as part of a market research exercise for evaluating copy material for print advertisements. After seeing the ad copy, respondents were asked to recall if they had seen 12 statements (six attribute and six benefit-related statements), three of which they had seen before in the ad copy. Respondents’ recall of the statements confirmed that context-dependents recalled more benefit statements correctly when they saw benefit-based information, but recalled more attribute statements correctly when they saw attribute-based information. In contrast, context-independents recalled more attribute (vs. benefit) based information, regardless of the kind of information they had seen in the ad copy. These findings support our position that consumers’ context-dependence determines the type of information that they focus on. Under conditions of context-dependence, the type of information forms the context, while context-independents focus only on the object and hence, recall more attributes regardless of the type of information provided. (see Table 1)

In study 2, we extended this finding by examining the impact of focusing on attribute versus benefits on the impact of extension fit on parent brand evaluations. In a 2 (context-dependence vs. independence) x 2 (fit: high/low) x 2 (information: benefits/attribute) between-subjects design, respondents were first primed to be context-dependent/independent using print ads that encouraged a field or object focus (based on van Baaren et al. 2004). Respondents then read a brief description of an existing brand (Johnson & Johnson), evaluated the brand, and learned that the brand would be launching an extension. The extension had either high-fit (hair conditioner) or low-fit (painkiller) with the parent brand, and the extension information was either benefits-related or attribute-related. Pretests confirmed the validity of the fit and information-type manipulations. Respondents evaluated the parent brand after learning about the brand extension. Results indicated that as expected, for context-dependents, feedback effects were significantly different for the high and low fit extensions when they had read the attribute-based extension information, but not when they had read the benefit-based information. In contrast, for context-independents, regardless of the type of extension information, feedback effects were significantly different for the high and low-fit extensions. (see Table 2)

In the current research, we establish conditions under which low-fit extensions have limited adverse effects on parent brand evaluations. We find that providing benefit information may serve to dampen the otherwise detrimental effects of low-fit extensions, especially when consumers are context-dependent. In a planned study 3, we will test the hypotheses with Eastern and Western consumers who are chronically context-dependent and independent respectively. Thus, our research extends the current understanding of how brand extensions impact the parent brand and implicates the nature of extension information and consumers’ context dependence as important determinants of brand extension activity effectiveness.

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Tribalism in Turbulent Times: Liminality as motivator for tribal membership.
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
The tribal group in this study tends to particularly attract members whose lives are in a state of flux, or in a ‘liminal’ state. Goulding, Shankar and Elliot (2002) found that membership of a subculture is a way of seeking liberation from society while also countering feelings of alienation, validating identity, and finding solidarity with the like-minded. While the group is diverse, the contemplative nature or even “restorative power” (Willis, 2007) of knitting seems to create a “shared flow” (Belk, Wallendorf, Sherry, 1989) leading to “... the abolition of difference and the creation of a sense of communion” (O Connor, 1994) or communitas (Turner, 1979).

METHODOLOGY:
This study uses an ethnographic approach, (Stewart 1998) with researchers undertaking participant observation, interviewing and nethnography to obtain a longitudinal look at the ‘tribe’ being studied. The study has been conducted over three years at multiple sites, including international knitters’ gatherings (KnitCamp), various Stitch ‘n’ Bitch groups and on Ravelry.com. This paper focuses on a local Stitch ‘n’ Bitch group; the lead author has attended the regular weekly meeting of the knitting circle, as well as social events organized for the members.

Data analysis was carried out using an iterative constant comparative method as in Spiggle (1994).

FIELD SITE
The make-up of the local Stitch n Bitch group does not reflect the social demographics of the city, though other groups are more representative.

Though the group includes upper middle class to working class women, housewives, clerical workers, artists, students and unemployed, all the women are aged between 25 and 35.

Many members of the group are ‘ex-pats’, and in particular, ex-pat spouses, without work permits, who find themselves adrift from their old identities. Over the course of the study, two members have completed their doctoral studies, and two more are currently engaged in PhDs. While there have been no weddings over the course of the study, there have been three engagements, and two marriages and one long term relationship have broken down. There have also been seven children born to six group members over the past three years. While there have been instances that lend credence to the idea of a ‘nesting’ instinct, most of these women joined the group while ‘trying’ rather than while pregnant.

FINDINGS
For the ‘ex pat’ women, many lament the loss of their old ‘selves’. Having left behind their families, friends and, in many cases, careers, they face the daunting task of crafting a new identity. Some members openly state that they needed support and companionship and joined the group for this:

“I joined Stitch n Bitch because my husband said, okay 2 years here, you need friends.” MM

“My prime goal for getting involved in both SnB and [Roller] Derby was to have female companionship.” LE

One of the women, whose long-term relationship broke down during the study, similarly stated;

“I joined SnB when I was going through a tough time and it helped me come out of my depression... Its great to know that there is always someone to listen if you need a bitch or general moan or if you have other problems there is someone there I trust to voice my worries with.” MK

In contrast, other members were drawn to the group by a love of knitting and found the idea of an all female group “intimidating” (NMG) and expected it to be “bitchy”. (LLOS)

However, these fears were largely allayed. As in Prigoda and McKenzie’s (2007) study of the knitting circle as learning environment, most found that information transfer was secondary to the group’s function as a “women’s support group.”

“[Female companionship] is not something I knew that I wanted or needed but now that I have it I wouldn’t be without it.” (NMG)

“It reminded me of the “balls out” (is there a female equivalent to this expression?) conversations I used to have with my friends in Seattle before Edwin & I started moving all over the place. There’s no medicine in the world like getting to laugh with other women. And that’s what, at its best, SnB provides -- good medicine.” (LLOS)

“I’ve always been one of the guys, but I kind of get those shows now. Like sisterhood and all that.” (Contemporaneous notes by first author)

This reflects findings by Schofield-Tomschin and Littrell (2001) who found that the shared activity in the context of a textile guild created an “immediate sisterhood” through which the women received validation for their craft and identities. Green (1998) theorises that sharing leisure with other women is an “empowering source of identity and personal growth.”

The group is described variously as “empathetic”, “empowering”, “intimate” (EOK), “nurturing” (LLOS), “a support network” (LOM) and a “positive, mentoring environment” (EG)

This safe space provides a time for the reflection (Turner, 1987) typical of liminality, but also a sense of community to assist the transition.

However, pregnancy, perhaps the ultimate liminal ‘initiation’ for a young woman, has so far proved to be a division the group cannot simply ‘stitch over’. The group has become somewhat polarised into two camps, described by some of the childless members as the ‘breeders’ and ‘non-breeders’. As in Lisle (1999), “those of us without children usually expect a painful loss when a sister or a close friend announces that she is going to have a baby.”

There is a resentment of the rites and rituals associated with this liminality, “I can’t believe I have to knit more baby crap” [To another ‘non-breeder’ on being shown an ultrasound] and even of the attention afforded the mother-to-be, “You’d think she was the first person ever to have a baby.”
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CONCLUSION

The ‘shared flow’ brought about by experiences of liminality initially created a sense of communitas among group members.

As this study concludes, the largest issue facing the group is whether it can survive the ‘incorporation’ (Turner, 1987) of new identities. It remains to be seen if this ‘shared flow’ can be reestablished.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Despite its relevance in both consumer behavior and marketing literature (Belk, 1988; Escalas and Bettman 2005; Franke and Schreier 2008), the interaction between customization models and brands in customer identity communication remains largely unexplored. This issue is relevant as customization models permit the customer to manipulate product elements (e.g., colors, pictures) that pertain to the domain of brand identity (Keller 1993).

In this paper, we identify two archetypes of product customization based on the degrees of freedom given to the customer in the design process: Combination-based Customization (CbC), which is based on selecting a combination of modules (e.g., shape and materials) provided by the company, and Integration-based Customization (IbC), which is based on including into the product signs and symbols (e.g., pictures and text) provided by the customer.

We propose that CbC allows the adaptation of product elements to express customer preference and style (Franke, Schreier, and Kaiser 2010), whereas IbC enables the customer to generate a set of signs to convey personal symbols, and thus to create a self brand (Wind and Rangaswamy 2001). Moreover, we argue that while CbC leverages on elements (e.g., graphic patterns and colors) that may subtly or implicitly convey customer personality and values (Berger and Ward 2010; Han, Nunes, and Drèze 2010), IbC uses the immediateness of pictures and texts to explicitly communicate self-identity (Berger and Heath 2007; Scott 1994).

Focusing on the case of a mass brand, that is, a brand whose identity is well-known to customers, we predict that, in presence of a mass brand, CbC generates better customer responses than IbC. Indeed, CbC and a mass brand, operating at different levels of communication, implicit and explicit respectively, complement each other, or at least do not compete with each other, in identity communication. Differently, IbC (i.e., self brand) and a mass brand, operating at the same, explicit level of identity communication, may compete for transferring customer identity. In absence of a mass brand, IbC generates better customer responses than CbC. Indeed, IbC is characterized by a higher potential to communicate explicitly customer identity than CbC and, thus, should better satisfy individuals eager to transfer their identity when the brand is absent.

We also identify two boundary conditions of the competition effect between IbC (i.e., self brand) and a mass brand. Under high levels of congruence between the self and the mass brand, it is likely that IbC conveys symbols consistent with the brand itself, thus eliminating the advantage of CbC over IbC for branded products. Moreover, compared to a more functional brand, a creative mass brand operating at different levels of communication-based customization, IbC uses the immediateness of pictures and texts to explicitly communicate self-identity by 3 (brand: functional vs. creative vs. absent) between-subjects design. The brands were Adidas (functional) and Diesel (creative).

ANOVA on attitude revealed that, for Adidas t-shirts, CbC received higher scores than IbC (Attitude_CbC_Adidas = 5.50; Attitude_IbC_Adidas = 4.20; F(1,118) = 14.10, p < .001), whereas, for unbranded t-shirts, IbC received higher scores than CbC (Attitude_IbC_Unbranded = 5.69; F(1,101) = 15.20, p < .001). The same pattern holds for purchase intention and willingness to pay (WtP). Study 1 also showed that, for branded products, appreciation for CbC is (partially) mediated by preference fit and the “I designed it myself” effect, but not by identity communication potential. Differently, for unbranded products, appreciation for IbC is mainly mediated by identity communication potential and preference fit. Finally, moderated regressions showed that the advantage of CbC over IbC for branded products disappears if the brand is perceived to be highly congruent with the self. In study 2, more concerning t-shirt, we adopted a 2 (customization model: CbC vs. IbC) by 3 (brand: functional vs. creative vs. absent) between-subjects design. The brands were Adidas (functional) and Diesel (creative). ANOVA on attitude revealed that, for Adidas t-shirts, CbC received higher scores than IbC (Attitude_CbC_Adidas = 5.50; Attitude_IbC_Adidas = 4.20; F(1,118) = 14.10, p < .001), whereas, for unbranded t-shirts, IbC received higher scores than CbC (Attitude_IbC_Unbranded = 5.69; F(1,101) = 15.20, p < .001). The same pattern holds for purchase intention and WtP.

In study 3, concerning trolley bag and including a both CbC&IbC condition, we adopted a 3 (customization model: CbC vs. IbC vs. CbC&IbC) by 2 (brand: present vs. absent) between-subjects design. The brand was Samsonite. ANOVA on attitude revealed that, for Samsonite trolley bags, CbC received higher scores than IbC and CbC&IbC (Attitude_CbC_Samsonite = 5.41; Attitude_IbC_Samsonite = 4.69; Attitude_CbC&IbC_Samsonite = 4.45; F(2,122) = 5.07, p < .01; t_CbC vs IbC(122) = 2.34, p < .05; t_CbC vs CbC&IbC(122) = 3.03, p < .01; t_IbC vs CbC&IbC(122) = .78, ns). Therefore, competition effect between personal symbols and brands exists irrespective of the additional chance to combine product modules. For unbranded trolley bags, IbC and CbC&IbC received higher scores than CbC, while IbC and CbC&IbC received similar scores (Attitude_IbC_Unbranded = 5.49; Attitude_CbC&IbC_Unbranded = 5.45; F(2,122) = 3.27, p < .05; t_IbC vs CbC&IbC(122) = -2.20, p < .05; t_CbC vs CbC&IbC(122) = -2.32, p < .05; t_IbC vs CbC&IbC(122) = -1.18, ns). Therefore, in absence of potential symbol competition, we did not observe better reactions to CbC&IbC than IbC. The same pattern holds for purchase intention and WtP. Further analysis will be conducted on the content of IbC. We contribute to the marketing literature by analyzing the relation between customization models and brands, which may result in an unforeseen competition in companies’ marketing mix: That regarding customer personal symbols and brands.

REFERENCE LIST

Escalas and Bettman 2005
“I Feel Like They’re Going to Think I’m Boring”: Stereotype Threats and the Experiences of Non-Drinking Students

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EXTRADDED ABSTRACT

High levels of alcohol consumption are a major concern to governments across Europe and the US. Alcohol plays an important facilitative role in young people’s attempts to create social identities (Griffin et al, 2009) and is viewed by many as an essential aspect of young people’s ability to ‘perform sociability’ (Abel and Plumridge 2004: 492) playing a particularly central role in the social lives of many students (Gill, 2002; Gofton, 1990; Webb et al., 1996). Recent data suggests growing numbers of young people do not drink, or drink very little (Smith and Foxcroft, 2009; Measham and Østergaard, 2009; Measham, 2008) and increasing numbers of studies seek to understand the experiences of non-drinkers (Cherrier and Gurrieri, 2012; Conroy and DeVisser, 2012; Kinney and Kinney 2013; Nairn et al 2006; Piacentini and Banister 2009; 2012).

Notably for this study, prior work describes the negative labeling or stereotyping felt by non-drinkers (Piacentini et al, 2012). The awareness and fear of potential negative stereotyping is known as a stereotype threat, the “situational predicament caused by the awareness that one might be treated differently because of a negative stereotype about one’s group” (Lee et al, 2011: 343). For stereotype threats to be experienced, the person needs only be aware of the potential to be negatively labelled (Steele and Aronson, 1995). People fear others’ judgement of them on the basis of stereotypical views of non-drinkers and efforts are made to reduce this stereotype threat being activated or applied, including avoiding social situations that could emphasise the negative stereotypes (Adkins and Ozanne, 2005; Piacentini and Banister, 2009). The consumer domain lacks understanding of the mechanisms and conditions under which (potentially) stereotyped consumers operate and act in relation to non-stereotyped consumers (Lee et al, 2011). In this study we address this gap by exploring: the experiences and evidence of stereotyping among non-drinking students; their interpretations of stereotyping; and some of the causes and consequences of perceived threat of stereotyping.

METHODS

Nineteen undergraduate students participated in interviews which varied in length from 45 minutes to two hours. An agreed approximate interview schedule was compiled, but our aim was to have an informed conversation with participants, accepting that their varied experiences would lead to diverse discussions.

FINDINGS

In contrast to Kinney and Kinney (2013) who focus on the experience and management of stigma by non-drinkers, we set out to understand the causes and consequences of the threat of stereotyping amongst non-drinking undergraduate students. While we do not find notable evidence of extreme attitudes and behaviours towards non-drinkers that constitute stigmatisation (as reported in Kinney and Kinney 2013), the fear of stereotyping – and particularly of being negatively judged - is common across respondents, regardless of the nature of their experiences. Specifically, respondents cite the fear of being considered boring, a burden, immature, strange or simply not liked because of their decision to abstain from drinking.

“...I do find it harder to meet people because I don’t drink. I find that, probably, I have less confidence because I always feel like people are going to judge me for it ... And I feel like they’re going to think I’m boring.” (Louise)

This perceived threat of stereotyping is evident across the sample, and remains a prominent factor even in the face of experiential evidence to the contrary. For example, non-drinkers often indicated that, despite their initial concerns, drinkers they know do not judge or stereotype them. Yet respondents maintain that they feel threatened by other drinkers, which is as expected from Lee et al (2012).

“...I just thought what if everyone’s drunk and they’re like ... what if they start being kind of rude; or, you know... Not my friends but other people.” (Ameena)

In sustaining this position, friends are deemed as special with different attitudes towards non-drinkers than the majority of the student population, although there is often little experiential evidence to support this.

“...My closer friend groups actually adjusted stuff for me. So for example, they’ll have drinks and they, like last time that we played the [drinking] games, they made me have like raw black coffee without sugar which I really hate, they know that I hate that... so they actually... modified the situation... I find it really unusual. I don’t think a lot of people would do that.” (Khatun)

Given the perceived threat of stereotyping does not appear to be entirely (or even primarily) linked to actual experience, the question of what causes or heightens this sense of threat is of great importance. In this respect, we find that the perceived threat of stereotyping appears to dissipate with greater self-confidence, security and a clearer sense of self-identity in a wider context. Factors that facilitate these traits (like growing maturity and established friendship groups) are likely to reduce the fear of stereotyping, whilst those that hinder their development (like moving away from family and friends, beginning a new degree course, etc.) are likely to enhance the perceived threat.

DISCUSSION

Considering their apparent fear of negative stereotyping, there are a number of paths which our participants select in order to deal with, and prevent the actioning of, this perceived threat. These have commonalities with strategies adopted by non-drinkers articulated elsewhere (e.g. Kinney and Kinney 2013; Nairn et al. 2006; Piacentini and Banister 2009) but are taken here in response to the perceived threat of stereotyping rather than direct experience.

The consequences of this perceived threat include attempts by non-drinkers to exclude themselves from drinking contexts and social engagement with drinkers (a preventative measure); concealment of their non-drinking (a limitation strategy); and finally overt self-confidence, a more positively positioned strategy. This last strategy serves to promote non-drinking as a viable option for those with a strong character, countering the threat of negative stereotyping (and in the process often stereotyping drinkers as weaker characters, less
in control). The implications of the findings for research and policy in this area will be discussed in the full paper.

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Life events might change consumers’ selves and consumption patterns (e.g., Andreasen 1984; Mathur, Lee, and Moschis 2006). Contemporary literature views transition to motherhood as a particularly salient life event (Davies et al. 2010b), especially for first-time mothers (Katz-Wise, Priess, and Hyde 2010). Women perceive this transition as a period of struggle due to uncertainty but also joyfulness (Davies et al. 2010a). Transition to motherhood includes self-vulnerability, ambiguity, and self-conflicts (Davies et al. 2010b; Thompson 1996), but also adds a new role and new meaning to women’s lives (Fischer and Gainer 1993). Consumer research on transition to motherhood focuses on the commercial representation of the mother-consumer (Cook 2011), pre-transitional consumption (Fischer and Gainer 1993), and attachment of symbolic meanings to consumption objects that aid or aggravate transition (Thomsen and Sørensen 2006).

Whereas literature on transition to motherhood has investigated consumption practices in different social-cultural contexts (e.g., Houston 1999), women’s individual life situations found less consideration. Literature on life course, life events, and life themes provides insights into individual life contexts. The life course is defined as age-graded trajectories (e.g., work/family pathways) including role transitions that individuals pass (Elder 1985). This perspective assumes that behavioural continuity or changes depend on adoption and timing of social roles (Elder, Kirkpatrick Johnson, and Crosonoe 2003). Life themes motivate human experiences (Mick and Buhl 1992) and are deeply embedded in personal history and individuals’ self-concepts (Fournier 1998). Thus, life course/themes and the timing of transitions might influence self-changes in transition to motherhood. We consider the life course/themes of first-time mothers to understand self-changes and related positive experiences in transition to motherhood.

The domain of luxury experience provides an appropriate context for analyzing first-time mothers’ self-changes in their transition to motherhood as luxury experiences are deeply connected to consumers’ self-understanding (Bauer, von Wallpach, and Hemetsberger 2011). The present study focuses on meaningful objects or moments consumers might experience as luxury during transition. Contributing to previous literature on the widely held belief of products/brands as supporters of the self (e.g. Belk 1988; Kleine, Kleine III, and Allen 1995), this study shows how luxury experiences help women to narratively construct motherhood and enable an ultimately positive transition to motherhood.

**METHODOLOGY**

We purposefully selected first-time mothers from a European cultural setting that comprised a variety of age groups (age range 16 to 38 years), different educational/occupational backgrounds, and income classes (Ritchie and Lewis 2003) to capture different life contexts and social role standards regarding motherhood. The ultimate sample comprised 26 women with three distinct life courses: (1) unexpected motherhood, (2) traditionally planned, and (3) career-child-career type motherhood.

The study’s overall approach is phenomenological and focuses on women’s lived experiences (Merleau-Ponty 1962; Thompson 1997) and narratives (Polkinghorne 1988, p. 1). Data analysis involved an iterative inductive categorization process and constant comparative method (Charmaz 2008; Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep 2006).
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It’s Not Always Either/Or:
The Simultaneous Effects of Assimilation and Contrast

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Most judgments consumers make are part of a sequence. Whether test driving cars, evaluating courses on a menu, speed-dating, or completing a customer satisfaction survey, it is difficult to imagine how the results from one evaluation would not affect the next. The literature in marketing is replete with examples of how the context in which a target is embedded can have a significant impact on people’s judgment of that target (Dato-on and Dahlstrom 2003; Stapel and Winkielman 1998). The two context effects that have been most reliably demonstrated in psychology and marketing are assimilation and contrast. Assimilation (contrast) refers to a positive (negative) relationship between the value people place on the contextual stimuli surrounding a target and the value they place on that target itself (Martin, Seta, and Crelia 1990; Sherman et al. 1978).

This research focuses on those occasions in which multiple items are evaluated in sequence, such that evaluations made earlier within the sequence serve as context for evaluations that occur later. We show how a single evaluation, made within the sequence, can simultaneously be affected by both assimilation and contrast effects. To do so, we apply a Bayesian modeling technique to eight years of data from a national beer brewing competition in which hundreds of well-trained judges evaluated thousands of flights of beers. Our model uncovers how evaluations (judges’ scores) within the sequence are influenced by contrast effects to the scores awarded to immediate predecessors (i.e. the beer judged right before) and to extreme scores (e.g. the best beer sampled as of yet), while being simultaneously influenced by assimilation to the score assigned to the beer that came first within each sequence. We follow up this research with an experimental work looking at sequential evaluation of jokes and enjoyment therein, in which we assess the moderating influences on context effects such as an extreme stimulus in the first position and expertise of the evaluators.

In previous work, many factors have been shown to be responsible for determining whether assimilation or contrast effects occur. For example, if the evaluation of the target is at a more automatic or spontaneous level, assimilation is assumed to occur, while if the evaluation is in a more deliberative mode where cognitive resources are both available and expendable, contrast effects are more likely (Martin 1986; Myers-Levy and Tybout 1997; Bickart 1993). The general conclusion is that assimilation is the “default” outcome in contextual influence and that the natural tendency is for people to assimilate, while contrast is the outcome of a more effortful process in high-involvement situations. In this stream of research, like many others involving assimilation and contrast, it is presumed that only one type of context effect can occur; individuals cannot possess both high and low levels of cognitive resources simultaneously. Similarly, individuals must evaluate a single experience either under conditions of high or low involvement. Unlike many earlier studies that include constraints designed intentionally to allow one effect or the other to occur, we focus on a common type of event where both effects could occur simultaneously; we look at evaluations made in sequence of individual hedonic experiences.

Our work follows in a recent stream of research which has focused on characterizing context effects specifically in sequences of hedonic experiences (i.e., holistic evaluation of multi-sensory experiential consumption experiences), where the results have been mixed. Using hypothetical scenarios, Raghunathan and Irwin (2001) document contrast effects in respondents’ evaluations of descriptions of vacation spots and cars when there is a domain match, but assimilation effects in cases of a domain mismatch. This is consistent with work by Sherif and Hovland (1961) that found if the target and context are perceived to be similar (domain match), contrast effects are enhanced, while if they are perceived to be dissimilar (domain mismatch), assimilation effects are more likely to occur. Conversely, Novemsky and Ratner (2003) find that although individuals tasting jelly beans expected and predicted contrast effects, evaluations provided at the time of the actual experience provide no evidence of contrast effects. And yet Zellner and colleagues find contrast effects not only in the retrospective evaluation of gourmet versus ordinary coffee, as well as specialty versus regular beers (Zellner, Kern, and Parker 2002), but also in sequential tasting experiences of two fruit juices of differing dilutions (Zellner et al. 2003).

What has been consistent with respect to all of the aforementioned studies and much of the previous work on assimilation and contrast is that it is taken for granted that one or the other effect will occur and that characteristics of the judge or of the context, such as cognitive resources and feature overlap (Meyers-Levy and Sternthal 1993), domain match (Raghunathan and Irwin 2001), product knowledge (Bickart 1993), or context set range (Lynch, Chakravarti, and Mitra 1991) will dictate which one is observed. Yet we propose there are many times when assimilation and contrast influence the evaluation of a single target simultaneously. To demonstrate this, we explore sequences of evaluations where these factors (e.g. resource availability, feature overlap, domain match, etc.) do not vary systematically from one evaluation task to another. While different factors can lead more or less to one effect or the other, our results show how the absence of deliberate variations in these factors can result in both assimilation and contrast occurring simultaneously.

A hierarchical Bayesian estimation of the beer data and the jokes datasets reveals that adjacent items and extremes create contrast effects for items evaluated subsequently, while the first item evaluated creates assimilation effects, which simultaneously impact the evaluation of later target items. Our model is also able to separate simultaneous assimilation and contrast effects at the individual evaluation level as well as show that context effects occur over the course of a sequence and are not limited to a stimulus and its immediate predecessor. We also find that an extreme positive or negative context in the first position and the level of expertise of the evaluators moderate the extent of context effects.

REFERENCES


Reluctance to Hedge Desired Outcomes
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Hedging is a strategy used in financial markets, whereby one can offset the risk of loss from one investment by making a contrary or opposing companion investment. This research examined whether people adopt a similar strategy with regard to their emotions: do people and engage in emotional hedging when desired outcomes are uncertain? In other words, do people offset the risk of experiencing negative affect if a desired outcome does not occur by incurring a gain if an opposing outcome is realized instead? In two samples of Americans before the 2012 US Presidential Election and in one study of National Football League Fans in Pittsburgh, I tested whether people are readily willing to engage in emotional hedging.

Shortly before the 2012 US Presidential Election, participants in two samples indicated their preference between and attitudes toward Mitt Romney and Barack Obama. Participants then were asked to pick, using a Becker-DeGroot-Marschack procedure, between pairs of cash amounts corresponding to the victory of each candidate. Participants would (hypothetically) receive the amount indicated if the candidate they chose won. The amounts varied from $0 to $100 for each candidate in increments of $10, such that for each candidate there was an amount that picking him resulted in having no chance of earning any money if he won and picking his opponent would result in earning $100 if the opponent won (e.g., “$100 payment if Obama wins OR $100 payment if Romney wins”, “$90 payment if Obama wins OR $100 payment if Romney wins”….”$0 payment if Obama wins OR $100 payment if Romney wins”, and vice versa).

Interestingly, 29% of sample 1 (N = 97) and 31% of sample 2 (N = 101) indicated that they would prefer to elect to receive nothing (i.e., $0) if their preferred candidate won rather than receive $100 if his opponent won. In other words, approximately 30% of the sample was completely unwilling to emotionally hedge the election, even when it was financially rational to do so.

Testing emotional hedging in a different domain, pedestrians in a convenience sample (N = 101) before the 2010 NFL season were stopped in Pittsburgh and completed a similar survey in the domain of National Football League football. Participants indicated the extent to which they were fans of the Pittsburgh Steelers and the team that they would oppose in the season opener, the Atlanta Falcons. They were then informed that the Las Vegas bookmakers estimated the most likely outcome of the game is that the Steelers were favored to win by 1 point.

Participants then were asked to pick, using a Becker-DeGroot-Marschack procedure, between pairs of cash amounts corresponding to the victory of each team. The amounts varied from $0 to $20 for each candidate in increments of $1, such that for each team there was an amount that picking him resulted in having no chance of earning any money if their team won and picking its opponent would result in earning $20 if the opponent won (e.g., “$20 payment if Steelers win OR $20 payment if Falcons win”, “$19 payment if Steelers win OR $20 payment if Falcons win”….”$0 payment if Steelers win OR $20 payment if Falcons win”, and vice versa). Then participants indicated the extent to which they were a fan of two other teams and made similar choices between those two other teams, the Green Bay Packers and Philadelphia Eagles. The game offered the same odds of victory: the Eagles were favored by 1 point.

Whereas 45% of the sample indicated that they would prefer to receive $0 if the team that they were a fan of won than $20 if their opponent won, only 25% of the sample indicated that they would prefer to receive $0 if the matched control (with regards to likelihood of winning) won rather than the team they were opposing. Participants appeared to be reluctant to engage in emotional hedging—to profit if a desired outcome was not achieved—even when it is financially rational to do so.

To test why people might be reluctant to hedge, in a fourth study, I gave participants (N = 263) some information about a “lifelong fan of the Pittsburgh Steelers who sometimes bets on NFL football games” and told them that he was planning to watch the Steelers-Falcons game from Study 3. In a between-subjects design, some participants were simply told that “Jim” would watch the game (controls). Others were told that he thought the Steelers would win (win-belief) or lose (lose-belief). Other participants were told that he thought the Steelers would win and bet on them to win or thought that the Steelers would lose and bet on them to lose. All participants then rated the extent to which Jim was morally praiseworthy or blameworthy, how much they liked or disliked Jim, the extent to which he believed the Steelers would win and the extent to desired the Steelers to win. Finally, they rated the extent to which he was a fan.

Most interesting, participants did not differentiate at all between beliefs and desires. If participants received no information about Jim, were told that he thought the Steelers would win, or that he also bet on the Steelers to win, participants all rated Jim as both believing the Steelers would win and desiring them to win. If Jim, however, believed or both believed and bet that the Steelers would lose, participants not only rated Jim as believing that the Steelers would lose but also rated that Jim desired the Steelers to lose. In other words, expressing any doubt that one’s team might not win led to the inference that one did not want one’s team to win.

In short, the results suggest that a substantial number of people are unwilling to engage in emotional hedging against desired outcomes. One possible reason people may be reluctant to engage in emotional hedging is because expressing any doubt that a favored outcome will not occur may be taken as evidence that one does not desire it to occur.
Consuming Green, Living Green? The Moderating Effect of Identity Relevance on the Licensing Effect
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Environmental sustainability and eco-friendly consumption have become important policy issues. An apparent threat to efforts aimed at the promotion of sustainable consumption is the licensing effect which proposes that buying sustainable products may subsequently license people to perform unsustainable behaviors. Such an effect would imply that the positive effects of consuming sustainably in one context are cancelled out by unsustainable behaviors in subsequent contexts. This paper investigates whether such licensing effects emerge within the sustainability domain, when they are especially likely, and what their boundary conditions are.

Research has shown that when people just behaved in a moral way they subsequently are more likely to permit themselves an immoral behavior. By performing the first moral act people establish so-called moral credentials which free (i.e., license) them to behave immorally in subsequent situations (Monin & Miller, 2001). For example, consumers are more likely to opt for vice products rather than virtue products after committing themselves to community service (Khan & Dhar, 2006) and people are more likely to steal and lie after purchasing eco-friendly products (Mazar & Zhong, 2010). Based on this we suggest that when people consume sustainably they build up moral credentials permitting them later on to behave unsustainably. We propose however that within the sustainability domain this licensing effect will be moderated by whether people have a sustainable self-view. When people value sustainability and see themselves as a sustainable person, they are more likely to make continuous sustainable decisions (Cornelissen, Dewitte, Warlop, & Yzerbyt, 2007; Verplanken & Holland, 2002). Therefore, we expect that the licensing effect will mainly occur among people who view themselves as a non-sustainable person.

To test our hypotheses we conducted four studies. First, Study 1 shows that behaving sustainably establishes moral credentials and makes people feel morally better than performing a neutral act. Specifically, students who imagined recycling waste perceived themselves as morally better than students in a control condition. Study 2 and 3 show that consuming sustainable goods provides people with a license to behave unsustainably on subsequent occasions and that this is mainly the case for people who view themselves as a non-sustainable person. Study 2 shows that participants who imagined buying organic (versus conventional) sneakers subsequently reported lower intentions to behave sustainably. Importantly, this effect was significantly stronger for participants viewing themselves as non-sustainable. Study 3 replicated and extended these findings. Participants who had just performed a task in which they purchased organic (versus conventional) fashion in an online store were subsequently more likely to approve of unsustainable consumer behavior. Again, this effect was stronger for participants who did not view themselves as a sustainable person. Furthermore, Study 3 examined whether the extent to which the organic clothing was labeled as “sustainable” affected the magnitude of the licensing effect (as research suggests that the licensing effect may be proportional; Jordan, Mullen, & Murnighan, 2011). We did not find evidence for this: whether the organic nature of the clothing was strongly emphasized or just briefly mentioned did not impact the magnitude of the licensing effect. Perhaps more importantly, Study 3 also demonstrated that an obtained license can be traded in only once. That is, we find a licensing effect on the first task measuring approval of sustainable consumer behavior, but not on the second task measuring sustainable intentions. In the fourth and final study we wanted to replicate our earlier finding that a license can be traded in only once. Furthermore, Study 4 investigated whether people with a sustainable self-view do not show a licensing effect after performing a sustainable act. On the one hand, people with a sustainable self-view might not perceive themselves as having obtained a license by behaving in a sustainable manner. On the other, people with a sustainable self-view might be reluctant to trade in the license. Under the first hypothesis, people with a sustainable self-view should not display licensing effects in any moral domain (you cannot trade in a license if you haven’t earned one). Under the second hypothesis, people with a sustainable self-view should not display licensing effects if the second behavior also falls within the sustainable domain. They might, however, display licensing effects in other moral domains, such as the purchase of (vice versus virtue) products (Khan & Dhar, 2006). Our results are consistent with the second hypothesis: participants were more likely to choose the vice product after doing environmental community service than after reading about environmental community service, regardless of participant’s sustainable self-view. It thus appears to be the case that people with a sustainable self-view do obtain a license by engaging in sustainable acts, however, they are unwilling to trade it in when it concerns sustainable behavior. Lastly, we replicated our earlier finding that an obtained license cannot be traded in limitless. Whereas we find a licensing effect on the first task, we no longer find an effect on the second task.

In sum, we have consistently demonstrated that consuming sustainable products may have a negative impact on subsequent sustainable actions, but only for people who see themselves as non-sustainable. Luckily, these findings are short-lived. Our results show that an obtained license may not be traded in limitless. Furthermore we show that people with a sustainable self-view do obtain a license when consuming eco-friendly but that they are unwilling to trade it in when it concerns sustainability, however, they are willing to trade it in when it concerns other immoral behaviors. An interesting implication of our finding is that people may be more likely to persist in their sustainable consumption behavior if it is made explicit to them that performing sustainable behaviors signifies that they are a sustainable person. In this way, people may come to see themselves as a sustainable person and start to act upon it (Cornelissen et al., 2007).

REFERENCES


Capturing or Changing the Way We (Never) Were? How Taking Pictures Affects Experiences and Memories of Experiences

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

People have always had the need to remind themselves of positive experiences in their lives, for example by writing diaries, or keeping mementos such as ticket stubs. However, much more frequent documentations people create in life are pictures. Prior literature has not devoted much thought to the effect picture taking has on people’s experiences or memories, maybe due to the fact that until very recently pictures were taken sparsely and predominantly in very special settings (e.g. graduation, weddings, etc.) where other factors may have been more important. However, with the diffusion of cheap, easy to use, and highly portable digital camera technologies, consumers have the ability to take pictures in almost every situation in their lives and picture taking and pictures taken are becoming far more important. Hence an important question to understand is how taking pictures will affect peoples’ experiences of major and minor events in their lives and how consumers will remember these events as a function of having access to photos. In particular we are interested in whether evaluations of an event are affected immediately following an experience as well as in the medium to long term. We also examine whether constraints on taking or keeping pictures alters how an episode is experienced as well as remembered.

How will taking pictures affect consumers’ experience? On the one hand, taking pictures may somewhat remove people from their experiences. Being behind a camera may distance oneself from the event and may shift one’s perspective from a participant to an observer. Subsequently, those taking pictures and particularly those taking many pictures may experience an event less intensely and at the same time may feel more anxious that they are missing out on something which may dampen retrospective evaluations and memories of an event. On the other hand, taking pictures may in fact draw people into the event and may engage them more, particularly for experiences that are somewhat boring to begin with. In that case, taking pictures may draw attention to aspects of the experience that would otherwise have gone unnoticed, heightening felt intensity and memories of the experience.

We currently have interesting findings from a field study and several laboratory experiments that, to the best of our knowledge, are the first to examine the role of picture taking on the evaluation and memories of experiences. In the experiments we were able to control the number of pictures taken during an experience and can thus examine the effects of picture taking on evaluations of the experience. These findings are supplemented by a field study which allows us to test effects of picture taking on memories of the event in the long run but where we do not control the number of pictures taken.

We developed a unique computer interface that allows respondents to “experience” an event (e.g. a sightseeing bus tour) in the lab by watching a first-hand video of the event, while being able to take pictures of the event by clicking the mouse. Participants experienced a sequence of four different bus tours of major cities (Paris, London, New York, and Hollywood) for a total of 12 minutes. During the tours, participants were asked to take pictures like they would in normal life. In order to manipulate the number of pictures taken during the experience, something we are not able to control in a field study, participants were told that they a) could not take more than 40 pictures (n=66), b) could not take more than 120 pictures (n=69), or c) that they should take at least 120 pictures (n=79). Participants took on average 28, 50, and 164 pictures respectively. After experiencing all bus tours, participants evaluated their experience, reviewed the pictures they took, and selected and evaluated their favorite picture. Interestingly, those who were told to capture at least 120 pictures compared to those that were subject to a photo budget felt to a greater extent that they were part of the experience, while at the same time also feeling they were missing out on the experience. In addition, those capturing at least 120 pictures felt the set of picture they took better reflected their experience, but they liked their favorite picture less than those who were subject to a constraint. This study suggests that taking many pictures can have both positive and negative effects on how an event is experienced. Further, taking many more photos may not lead to individual photos that are more liked, to the contrary, it may lead to photos that consumers may like less.

In order to examine how taking pictures affects evaluations of complex real life experiences, we conducted a field study with students going on a week-long excursion abroad as part of their International Business and Economics classes. Participants visited one of nine different cities and participated voluntarily in exchange for the chance of winning a $100 Amazon gift certificate. Immediately following their return we asked all participants to evaluate their excursion experience and, for a subset of participants, obtained a larger or smaller number of pictures (30 vs. 10) they took during the trip. We initially asked respondents to evaluate the set of pictures they provided as well as to select and evaluate their favorite picture of that set. We later surveyed participants at two additional times (one and eight months after they returned) to capture changes in evaluations and memories of the experience. We find that in the long run, their own pictures helped participants relive their experience more than when participants saw pictures that were taken by somebody else on the same trip. Also, pictures that featured people as opposed to scenery were better at allowing participants to relive their experience. However, participants who saw their 30 pictures reported being less able to relive their experience via pictures compared to those who saw their 10 pictures.

In summary these studies and others in progress are the first to examine the positive and negative effects that taking pictures may have on experiences and memories of the events people document.
Bryanboy: My biggest fear is to end up being that miserable, unhappy, bitter old queen who, at first glance, seem to have it all… Every time I look at very successful people in the news, I always, always feel inferior because I haven’t achieved anything significant in this world.

Comment: This was incredibly honest, and I’m glad you posted it. I feel the same way about myself sometimes when I come to your blog, so I was very surprised to see that you feel the same way about people you admire.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In this blog post, a famous fashion blogger Bryanboy (www.bryanboy.com) opens up about his own fears, vulnerabilities, and inferior feelings. His audience, in turn, appears to empathize and resonate with Bryanboy’s revealing statements. In other words, through intimate self-disclosures, Bryanboy could relate to and connect with his audience at a very personal level, sharing emotions, exchanging slice of life stories, and even searching for life meanings together. Sharing of intimate personal information (e.g., one’s own self-concepts, emotions, vulnerabilities, secrets, and inferior feelings) functions as an effective communication strategy which strengthens the relationship between a communicator and audience. However, will this communication strategy always be effective as shown in Bryanboy’s case?

The objective of this research is to provide into online word-of-mouth (WOM) strategies through the development of a conceptual framework that explains how online communicators (particularly bloggers) share intimate personal stories in their WOM messages and how such act of intimate story sharing is perceived and processed by their audiences in different types of relationships. Conceptually, this research focuses on the influence of an intimate self-disclosure (i.e., sharing of a deeper level of personal information that may potentially involve risk and a feeling of vulnerability) on the communicator’s ability to persuade others in the context of online communication between people who never met face-to-face.

Despite the frequent sharing of personal stories on social media, its impact on persuasion is not well understood as past research has been disproportionately focused on positive impact a communicator’s sharing of private personal stories can potentially have on audience. The extant literature on self-disclosure, relationships, persuasion, and word-of-mouth communication provides evidence that sharing secrets may be perceived as inappropriate or as too much information, thus mitigating the persuasiveness of a message.

To reconcile this gap, we propose that the effect of sharing secrets on the persuasive impact of a message is moderated by the nature of the relationship between the communicator and the audience. Specifically, we examine two types of relationships (Clark and Mills 1979, 1993): communal (i.e., communicators in this relationship feel responsible for audiences’ welfare and thus feel obligated to respond positively to the needs of consumers) and exchange (i.e., communicators in this relationship concerned about the benefit they receive in exchange for what they give).

The key intuition of this thesis is that audiences may resist or yield to a communicator’s sharing of secrets differently based on communication norms that are expected to guide their relationships with a communicator. Norms are, by definition, guiding principles, rules that people use to determine what would be the right way to behave in given situations (Gibbs 1981; Heide and John 1992; Thibaut and Kelley 1959), in this case, in given relationship types. Indeed, marketing researchers have provided evidence that consumers use norms of interpersonal relationships as a guide in their evaluation of a brand (Aggarwal 2004), in brand information processing (Aggarwal and Law 2005), in their attitude toward loss (Aggarwal 2006), and in their responses to service failures (Wan, Hui, and Wyer Jr. 2011). Thus, we hypothesize that, depending on types of relationships (i.e., communal versus exchange) audiences are in, their expected norms of communication may be different (Clark and Mills 1979, 1993) as well as their attitudes toward a communicator’s sharing of intimate stories.

Across two studies, we test how a blogger’s sharing of intimate stories (e.g., secrets) influence the likelihood that audience will follow the blogger’s subsequent product recommendation. Study 1 (n=265) tests competing hypotheses on sharing secrets to determine whether a communicator’s act of sharing secrets can be perceived as either positive or negative in different relationships (communal vs. exchange). The study begins by asking participants to read one short paragraph which asked them to imagine as having either a communal or exchange-oriented. In the next section, participants read additional blog post on Chris’ blog, “livinghealthy.com”. In this post, we manipulated the level of secret sharing, which is either low or high.

As predicted, the interaction between relationship types and secret sharing on persuasion intent was significant (F(1, 264) = 9.147, p<0.05). Specifically, in a communal relationship, Chris’ sharing of highly intimate secrets (vs. low secret sharing) increased the persuasiveness of a communicator (M low secret =4.187 vs. M high secret = 4.702). In an exchange relationship, however, Chris’ highly intimate secret sharing (vs. low secret sharing) significantly lowered the persuasiveness of a communicator (M low secret =4.662 vs. M high secret = 4.184).

Study 2 identifies boundary conditions under which a communicator’s sharing of secrets backfires in communal relationship. Although study 1 suggests that secret sharing increases persuasion in...
communal relationship, study 2 hypothesizes that a blogger’s secret sharing can also lower the persuasiveness of the message if shared secrets are too private to the level that they violate the norms of communal relationship. In study 2, all participants are manipulated to expect communal relationship with a fitness blogger, Chris and then to read an additional blog post where three levels of secret sharing are manipulated (low, high, and very high). Between low and high secret sharing condition, we observe the similar pattern (M low secret = 4.375 vs. M high secret = 5.069, p<0.05) shown in study 1. However, when secret sharing became highly private, it significantly lowered the persuasiveness of WOM (M high secret = 5.069 vs. M very high secret = 3.947, p<0.05).

Thus, it can be concluded that expected relationship norm plays a critical role (as a moderator) in determining how consumers perceive and process an online communicator’s sharing of intimate personal stories. In communal relationship, uninvited sharing of intimate personal stories increases persuasion while, in exchange relationship, it lowers the persuasiveness of WOM. Interestingly however, even in communal relationship, sharing of highly secretive personal stories, which can be considered as inappropriate, can significantly lower the persuasiveness of a communicator’s subsequent WOM.
Socially Conscious Consumer Behaviour:  
The Role of Ethical Self-identity in the Use of Mental Accounting

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT:

More and more consumers are reporting a shift toward socially and environmentally conscious purchasing behaviours (Freestone & McGoldrick, 2008), and in many cases it is a salient buying criterion (Memery, Megicks, & Williams, 2005). This study examines socially responsible consumption through the lens of ethical self-identity, priming, and mental accounting.

Self-identity is important because self-perceptions can shape people’s behaviour (Aquino, Reed, Felps, Freeman, & Lin, 2009). It should not be surprising that consumers judge who they are by their decisions, but the reverse is also true -- these identities can also be important in influencing their environmental choices.

Importantly, judgments of self-identity can sometimes be influenced very easily. Priming has been shown to impact consumers’ intentions and behaviors in a multitude of studies. Priming is expected to impact consumer behavior here such that positively priming environmentalism will increase environmental intentions. In this study, priming is used to illuminate one possible process through which consumers choose or reject socially conscious consumer behaviour.

How does this happen? Mental accounting is an approach that has been used to explain how consumers account for their purchase decisions (Heath & Soll, 1996), and can be seen as a substitute for the standard economic theory of the consumer where consumers maximize the utility of their decisions (Thaler, 1985). The goal of individuals with high levels of dispositional environmental self-identity (ESI) may be to keep track of behaviors to maximize these socially conscious behaviors. More mental accounting is expected to occur in individuals high in ESI because keeping mental track of their socially conscious consumer behaviors allows them to reinforce their existing self-identity.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is to evaluate the effects of financial deprivation. The results from a longitudinal study on a student sample suggest that financial privation both inhibits spending and motivates a particular compensatory mechanism: financially deprived consumers try to promptly restore their financial situation by taking more financially risky decisions.

Only a limited number of papers in marketing have taken into consideration so far the role of the consumer’s economic situation, real or perceived. This research axis appears to be critical in our western economies, which are challenged by a long-lasting crisis, and therefore where the probability to feel financially deprived or at least unsatisfied has been considerably growing in the last years. This unpleasant psychological state is rooted in the perception of a lack of financial resources when compared to the state of comparable others and to their own state earlier in time (Sharma and Alter 2012).

The objective of this paper is to reinforce the still limited knowledge about perceived financial deprivation - as opposed to objective deprivation (Easterling 1995) - and more precisely about its possible paradoxical effect(s) on consumer consumption. Our general assumption is that a consumer that feels deprived might be inhibited, and therefore may consume less, following Karlsson et al. (2004). But feeling deprived can also lead to mitigate this by trying to access faster to means that would improve the objective economic situation, among others by risky financial decisions, even when a potential loss is clearly communicated.

METHOD

72 graduate students were surveyed in 3 waves during one month. Financial deprivation was measured with Sharma and Alter’s scale (2012) in an online survey (α=.76). The second wave (10 days after) was an experiment where subjects had to split a virtual amount of money between two types of saving decision: one safe saving option with a low return (2.5%), and a more risky option with a return between -10% and +15%, with an expected value of 2.5%. Respondents knew beforehand the distribution probability. The percentage allocated on the risky option measures the risk taking tendency (M=44% ; SD=21%). Economic anxiety was also measured in this second wave (5 items, α=.91). During the third wave, 7 days after wave 2, we measured the tendency to save on daily purchases (α=.83).

MAJOR FINDINGS

The model was estimated via a path-modeling approach. The model fit is good and explains 21% of the tendency to save on daily purchases and 17% of financial risk taking. The total effect of financial deprivation on the tendency to save is significant (Beta = 0.297; p=0.026). The indirect (mediating) effect of financial deprivation on economic anxiety is also significant (Beta = 0.147 ; p=0.008). The direct effect financial deprivation is non-significant, suggesting an “only indirect” mediation (Zhao, Lynch et Chen, 2010). Finally, the effect of financial deprivation on risk taking is significant (Beta = 0.305, p = 0.019).

DISCUSSION

Financial deprivation is an unpleasant state. This research puts in highlights two mechanisms to mitigate this state and consequently try to improve the financial well-being. The fact that they coexist is paradoxical. Reducing expenses, introducing more strict controls on consumption allows to save purchasing power for hedonic goods or services. This effort offers safe returns. But financial risk taking seems to go in the opposite direction of these continuous limitations, by an uncertain quest of monetary gains. This might suggest that the mechanics of budget arbitration between product categories is a worst case approach that does not solve the main problem of the economic situation. Deeply unsatisfied, the consumer will be searching for a fast and strong improvement, presumably accessed through financial risk taking.

This research is exploratory only and must be replicated on a larger and more representative sample of consumers. Students are more prone to feel deprived, because they are socially exposed to comparable others, and because many of them can be also in a difficult economic situation. The longitudinal design allows to lower the risk of erroneous correlations but doesn’t guarantee causal relationships. It could be therefore interesting to manipulated financial deprivation in an experiment setting.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT
In general, consumers are considered to be risk averse. Nevertheless, consumers often take risk to come to a desired state, for instance in purchasing a good. Purchase risk can be thought of as consisting of physical, financial, social, psychological, performance, and overall risk, all potentially inhibitory to purchase behavior (Jacob and Kaplan 1972; Kaplan, Szybillo, and Jacoby 1974). Yet, consumers overcome these inhibitory forces to purchase on a daily basis. Is it possible to manipulate consumers’ level of desired or acceptable risk by changes in the environment?

The theory of risk compensation predicts that driving consumers to an option with low risk will create counteractive behavior in subsequently choosing one with higher risk. The occurrence of risk compensation has been shown with ABS, helmet-wearing cyclists, seatbelts, etc. (e.g. Johnson, Jurik, Kreb, & Rose, 1978; Rodgers, 1996), and in the existence of “remedies” for risk (Bolton, Cohen et al. 2006). Still, some of this research has been criticized as lacking theoretical backup, being based on aggregate methods and not demonstrating psychological process evidence (Dulisse 1997).

We base ourselves on a self-view maintenance account (Gao, Wheeler, & Shiv, 2009) to investigate whether consumers will seek out risk to compensate a previous experience in which they were pushed into an uncomfortable situation of manifest safety. This allows us to predict that risk compensation should depend on one’s self-view related to risk, which we approximate by regulatory focus. Additionally based on this account, we predict that its effects should not be specific to the domain where it was triggered, but on the contrary can have effects in unrelated domains.

Study 1
The first study was aimed at finding initial support for the notion of risk compensation. As an important part of the literature about these effects deals with car driver behavior, we opted for an experimental design related to this subject. We expected that participants that are put in a safe car, drive more aggressively. Participants were put in a driving simulator, and drove the car for 10 minutes along an indicated route with simulated normal traffic. The safety manipulation consisted of having participants (n=49) either drive a small or a large car, an implicit manipulation of safety. Also, a questionnaire was administered after the driving session, gauging for chronic differences in regulatory focus (prevention and promotion focus) (Higgins, 1997).

Analysis revealed a significant main effect of the safe car on driving intensity (t(47)=2.20, p<.05) where the big, safe car leads to a higher driving intensity (M=2.69, SE=.068) than the small car (M=2.47, SE=.078). We also found a significant interaction between car type and promotion focus on driving intensity (F(1,46)=4.14, p<.05) where only participants low in promotion focus seemed to be sensitive to the effect of car type. Participants high in promotion focus seem to drive with high intensity, no matter what car type. We found a mirroring directional interaction effect between car type and prevention focus (F(1,46)=3.64, p=.063): only participants that scored low on promotion focus seemed to be affected by car type, whereas people high in prevention focus seemed to drive cautiously, no matter what car they thought they were driving.

These results imply that promotion and prevention focus can impose boundary conditions on the previously found effect, and support an explanation of these effects in terms of risk regulation according to risk compensation, as hypothesized.

Study 2
If greater safety would lead to compensatory behavior by taking more risk, in principle it should not matter whether this risk is associated with the initial safety cue. In this study we test whether a safety prime in one domain (cars) can lead to more risky behavior in an unrelated other domain (financial risk taking). For this study, we used a subtle prime of safety by having participants evaluate one of two car ads. Features of the car were briefly mentioned, and participants were asked to express their evaluation about the car in the ad on several dimensions, amongst which safety. The manipulation consisted of the fact that, although from the same brand, one of the cars was very bulky and safe, whereas the other was famous for having failed some government issued safety test.

As a dependent measure, we used an approximation of financial risk taking, which consisted of the Balloon Analog Risk Task (BART; Lejuez et al., 2002), where participants receive 5ct for every time they push the pump that blows up a balloon, but lose all of their money on a specific balloon if it pops.

A mediation analysis conducted according to recommendations by Preacher and Hayes (2004) revealed an indirect effect of car type on financial risk taking as measured by the BART task, mediated by the perception of safety of the car that participants had evaluated. A bootstrapped estimate of the indirect effect showed significance within a 95% confidence interval that did not include 0 (M = .41, SE = .18, LL = .11, UL = .85). Importantly, no similar results could be found for other model differentiating features that were subject to the participants’ evaluation like price, quality or performance. We therefore conclude that it was indeed the manipulation of safety, that caused risk seeking behavior in another, unrelated domain, i.e. financial risk.

DISCUSSION
In these studies, we provide evidence for the existence of risk compensation in consumer decisions, additionally providing process evidence for these effects. Additionally, the results of study 2 indicate the potential broad applicability of these effects, as they spill over to unrelated domains until the motivation for self-verification is satisfied. Our theoretical contribution is adding to the understanding of risk compensation in terms of its situational and dispositional drivers, the latter being necessary to establish its place in the realm of relevant consumer effects.

Potential uses could be in guiding consumers towards choices that, although perceived as more risky, might also be more fit to consumers’ needs, like the new and (allegedly) improved option, or the unknown and cheaper option. Further research can elaborate on this.

REFERENCES


Vicarious Control: Exposure to Mastery and Perceived Self-Efficacy
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Sometimes we are exposed to other people performing difficult activities with high levels of mastery. In such situations, the performer has perfect control over the activity, and every element of the execution flows naturally and apparently effortlessly. We hypothesize and test in a series of experiments that observing masterful performances of others at difficult activities will increase one’s perceptions of self-efficacy at those same activities.

In general, people are not accurate at predicting their own ability and are susceptible to systematic errors at this type of task (Billeter et al., 2011). Projection biases (Loewenstein et al., 2003), self-enhancement motives (DeNisi & Shaw, 1977), or excessive focus on one’s own vs. others’ abilities (Kruger & Dunning, 1999) may keep people from forming accurate predictions. The lack of accuracy at evaluating personal skills and at predicting individual performance suggests that contextual information, such as the performance of a third person, may affect people’s predictions. Indeed, observing the performances of others is a source of information used to judge self-efficacy, that is, one’s perceived ability to perform an activity (Bandura, 1977; Gist & Mitchell, 1993). Research on contrast effect would predict that exposure to an expert mastering an activity negatively affects one’s perceived ability to successfully perform the same activity, because the expert’s superior ability becomes a new standard of comparison against which prior ability becomes a new standard of comparison against which personal ability is compared (Herr et al., 1983; Sherif & Hovland, 1961). Therefore, one’s ability will be judged as lower than if it were assessed without being exposed to the high mastery of the expert. In addition, research on social comparisons would expect that exposure to high mastery makes other people’s ability more salient, thus reducing the focus on one’s own ability that is typical for many self-assessments (Kruger, 1999). Such increased salience of others’ ability could mitigate the better-than-average effect (i.e., the tendency to judge ourselves as better than others at easily achievable tasks) or exacerbate the worse-than-average effect (i.e., the tendency to judge ourselves as worse than others at difficult activities), thus resulting in diminished self-assessments.

However, we posit that exposure to an expert mastering an activity may have a positive effect on one’s perceived ability to perform that activity. By definition, mastery involves high control over the activity performed (White, 1959; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Kubovy, 1999). The high level of control exhibited by the performer confers an apparent ease to the activity, which may be interpreted as actual ease (Song & Schwarz, 2008). More in general, seeing others perform challenging activities without adverse consequences can generate expectations in observers that they too will improve if they intensify and persist in their efforts (Bandura & Barab, 1973). These findings have been attributed to the powerful motivational effects of individuals’ need for control (deCharms, 1968; Rotter, 1966). Research has shown that a sense of competence and mastery over one’s own environment leads to perception of personal control (Bandura, 1989; White, 1959), and that individuals tend to seek control (Brehm, 1966), even in trivial or illusory forms (Langer, 1975).

We hypothesize that observing a performance conducted with high mastery allows to vicariously satisfy one’s need for control. The exertion of control apparent in the high mastery performance may transfer to the observers, and trigger the belief that they would also be able to exert that same level of control on the activity. As a consequence, such vicarious control would raise observers’ expectations on their own ability to perform the activity, resulting in inflated assessments. We also hypothesize that this effect will be stronger for individuals that are more similar to the expert performer being observed, because such similarity would increase the personal relevance of vicariously derived information (Kazdin, 1974; Schunk, 1989).

Study 1 shows that exposure to the masterful performance of a fairly complex yoga pose positively affects participants’ assessment of their own ability to perform the same pose. Participants exposed to the masterful performance reported higher ability to perform the pose than participants just exposed to the instructions and a picture of the pose. Study 2 manipulates the level of mastery of the performance of the same yoga pose (high vs. low) and measures its effects on participants’ predicted ability to perform the same pose. We also measured to what extent participants felt in control while watching the performance, and, as a potentially alternative mediator, the perceived difficulty of the pose. Participants exposed to the high-mastery performance evaluated themselves as more likely to be able to perform the yoga pose than participants exposed to the low-mastery performance. In addition, perceived control mediated the effect of exposure to mastery on predicted ability, but the perceived difficulty of the pose did not.

Study 3 tests whether the dissimilarity between the observed expert and the self prevents the occurrence of the effect of exposure to mastery. Participants were first asked whether they watched the London 2012 100m men Olympic final (i.e., a highly masterful sport performance). Then, they indicated in how many seconds they thought they could run 100m, our measure of predicted ability. Finally, as a measure of their similarity to the Olympic athletes, participants reported their level of fitness. A significant interaction between exposure to mastery and level of fitness revealed that the effect of exposure to mastery was significant for high-fitness participants but not for low-fitness participants, signaling that the similarity between the performer and the observer moderates the effect of exposure to mastery on perceived self-efficacy.

Our results demonstrate that exposure to mastery results in enhanced self-efficacy, as individuals exposed to a highly masterful performance overestimate their own ability to perform the same activity. This effect appears to be due to the experience of a form of vicarious control while observing the masterful performance. Supporting the proposed explanation, this effect is moderated by the similarity between the individual and the actor. These results provide initial evidence on the conditions under which exposure to expert performance may enhance intentions to perform activities or purchase products that require skills and practice in order to be appropriately used (Thompson et al., 2005; Murray & Haubl, 2007; Burson, 2007).

REFERENCES


How Participation in Different Stages of Self-Production Influence Consumers’ Evaluation of, and Relationship with, Self-Made Products
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Self-production, the active engagement in the creation of end products by consumers, increases the amount of money one is willing to pay for the product (Franke et al. 2010; Norton 2009), evaluation of the product (Troye and Supphellen 2012), and the felt psychological ownership towards the product (Pierce et al. 2003). However, we do not know whether consumers’ participation at various stages of the production process differentially influence the consumer’s assessment of, and relationship with, the self-made product.

Production consists of input specification (design), realization (physical production), and consumption of outcome according to service systems perspective (Lengnick-Hall 1996; Van Raaij and Pruyn 1998). During the input specification stage, the characteristics of the product or service (e.g. physical layout, design, quality) are decided on. During the realization stage, the physical creation and execution of the product or service takes place. Consumers’ participation in the production may primarily take place during the input specification stage (such as while designing a bag on a website or the kitchen layout for a new home) or realization stage (such as when cooking using a dinner kit or assembling furniture using step-by-step instructions). Yet again, consumers may be engaged in both stages, designing and physically producing the product, such as while knitting one’s own design. This research explores how engagement of consumers at different stages of the production process influences the consumer’s evaluation of, and relationship with, the self-made products.

Theoretical Background
Literature on person-object relationship (Belk 1988; Pierce et al. 2003) indicates that creating or producing a product results in powerful associations between the self and the product. However, this stream does not focus on various aspects through which a consumer may relate to a self-made product. To conceptualize how a consumer may relate to a product, we adopt the concepts of identification (perception of oneness with the target) and attachment (emotional response to the target) from social-identity theory (Tajfel 1978; Turner 1985; Hogg and Vaughan 2002). We define identification with the product as the degree of similarity between one’s own current identity or self-image and the product’s identity or image. It captures how well the product represents the self-image. We define attachment to the product as the emotional component of the person-object relationship, representing the emotional bond and the warm feelings that one feels for the object. We explore how engagement at different production stages affects these two dimensions of person-object relationship, and how the two dimensions function to shape product evaluations.

Participation during the input specification versus realization stages
When consumers become involved in the production process of a product during the realization stage, a sense of familiarity with the product emerges from experiencing the physical production process. As the person becomes more familiar with the object, the connection between the individual and the target becomes stronger, and the more attached one starts to feel (Pierce et al 2003). As a result, being physically engaged during the realization stage may result in emotional attachment to the product. However, building a product without participating in the input specification stage is likely to limit the expression of self-identity through the product and hamper identification with the product. Hence, although participation in the realization stage may enhance attachment to the product, it is unlikely to affect identification with the product.

Findings on self-design (Franke et al. 2010; Moreau and Herd 2010) indicate that designing a product results in economic value for consumers, where the additional value does not merely arise from functional value (i.e., better fit between the consumer’s underlying preferences and the product attributes). We propose that participating in the production process during the input specification stage changes the symbolic meaning of the product since the maker imbeds his choices, tastes, free will, and ideas into the product in this stage. The product starts to reflect self-identity and gains symbolic meaning. Hence, identification with the product increases. Products that are linked to an identity tend to be loved by their owners (Ahuvia 2005; Kleine et al. 1995). Therefore, we expect that identification with the product increases attachment to the product.

Study 1: Engagement of consumers during the realization stage
Study 1 examines how physically making a standardized product following step-by-step instructions shapes the evaluation of the final product and the relationship between products and consumers. The study, a three-group (level of engagement during the realization stage: none, low, high) between-subjects design, involves making a picture frame from cardboard. We hypothesize and find that higher levels of engagement during the realization stage enhances evaluation of the product ($F(2, 72)=12.21, p<.001$) through attachment to the product ($F(2, 72)=9.98, p<.001$). As expected, identification with the product does not depend on the level of physical engagement in the production process ($F(2, 72)=2.09, p=.13$).

Study 2: Engagement during the input specification stage
Study 2 looks at how increasing levels of engagement (none, low, high) during the input specification stage affects product evaluation, as well as identification with, and attachment to, the product. The study involves participants designing an insert for a travel coffee mug. As expected, higher levels of intellectual investment enhance identification with the product ($F(2, 100)=29.87, p<.001$), which in turn increase attachment to the product ($F(2, 100)=23.02, p<.001$). Bootstrapping results indicated that identification with, and attachment to, the product enhance product evaluation.

Study 3: Engagement in both the input specification and realization stages
From a managerial standpoint, the question remains as to whether a firm should invest into enabling its consumers to engage in both stages of production process. Therefore, Study 3, a 2 (level of engagement during input specification stage: low vs. high) x 2 (level of engagement during realization stage: low vs. high) between-group design, tests the interactive effects of engagement in the input
specification and realization stages. The participants designed and physically made a music CD with its case. Bootstrapping analyses replicate findings from Studies 1 and 2, providing convergent evidence that the input specification and realization stages of production differentially affect how consumers relate to products. Furthermore, participating in both stages does not create value for consumers over and above the main effects created by participation in the production in only one stage. Consistent with what others (Franke et al. 2010) have suggested, the marginal effect of engagement during the production diminishes as the level of contribution increases. There may be a saturation point beyond which higher contributions may be perceived as a cost rather than a value.

Our research contributes to the literature on self-production, co-production, and do-it-yourself products by identifying psychological and social processes underlying consumer responses. We examine the different stages of self-production and identify two different downstream aspects of self-production: identification and attachment. In line with other researchers, we show that fit between preferences and the self-made product cannot fully explain why self-made products are evaluated more highly than off-the-shelf products. Even when participants participate only during the realization stage, physically making standardized products, the evaluation of self-made products are more favorable than off-the-shelf products.

REFERENCES

Country-of-origin Can Modify Actual Product Performance
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Country-of-origin research has received much attention in the consumer behavior literature. Hong and Wyer claimed that different countries generate different quality expectations for different kind of products. For example, the quality image of Germany in the automotive market is high, while Mexico and South Korea have a poor image in the same market. Country of origin may impact the quality and reliability perceptions of the product (e.g., Peterson and Alain, 1995; Lim, Darley and summers, 1994.) Country of origin serves as a signal for product quality (e.g., Erickson, Johansson and Chao, 1984) and may influence product evaluation (Han, 1989; Hong and Wyer 1989, Johansson, 1989.) Erickson et al. (1984) found that country image affects beliefs about tangible product attributes, which in turn impacts overall evaluation. Research has shown that country of origin serves as a signal for performance (e.g., Erickson, Johansson and Chao, 1984) and generates expectations regarding product performance (Han, 1989; Hong and Wyer 1989, Johansson, 1989). For example, Hong and Wyer (1989) found that when consumers have access to information about a product’s country of origin, their expectations and beliefs concerning the product performance are modified. Okechuku and Onyemah (1999) even showed that under certain conditions country of origin was significantly more important than price and other product attributes such as reliability and safety, to establishing product perception.

Hence country-of-origin influences the expectations and subjective assessments of product’s efficacy. However, these various studies as well as common sense do not suggest that objective product efficacy should also be affected by country-of-origin. The efficacy of a product should be a function of how the product is designed and produced. However, in this research we show that the country-of-origin of products can also influence rather than merely reflect objective efficacy.

For this purpose we used a method applied successfully in our previous work on placebo effects of brand names (Amar, Ariely, Bar-Hillel, Carmon and Ofir, 2010), but with a different type of marketing action (marketing information concerning the product’s country-of-origin.) In particular, across three experiments, each conducted in carefully controlled conditions, we show that information concerning the product’s country-of-origin can boost the performance of those who use the product.

In the first experiment, participants repeatedly held the same titanium framed eyeglasses indicating either a high reputable country-of-origin or no reputable country-of-origin in one hand, then held one of several paperweights, each weighing slightly less or slightly more than the glasses with no cue to its weight in the other hand, and then judged which was heavier—the eyeglasses or the paperweight. Several features of the experimental design made it difficult to lie, thus reducing the likelihood of demand effects. As predicted, the results showed that participants underestimated the true weight of the highly reputable country-of-origin frame more frequently and overestimated its weight less frequently, suggesting that the glasses seemed lighter when they had the highly reputable country-of-origin label.

In the second experiment, all participants faced a glaring light and were asked to read printed words as accurately and as quickly as they could, and received compensation proportional to their performance. As predicted, those wearing sunglasses with a highly reputable country-of-origin label were able to read more quickly and with fewer errors than those wearing sunglasses with a less reputable country-of-origin which in fact were otherwise identical. Note that there are two ways that a participant who believes he or she is wearing quality sunglasses might perform better, to fulfill the expectation caused by the reputable country-of-origin. One is to try harder. This could account for the smaller number of errors, but not for the faster rate. Since both were recorded, willful effort could be ruled out. The other is to contract the pupil more, thus cutting out more glare. However the experimenters were instructed to make sure that participants did not do this. More importantly, inasmuch as the pupil is under voluntary control, putting one’s faith in one’s sunglasses should lead to the opposite behavior; namely the expectation that the pupil does not need to be contracted so much when wearing effective sunglasses.

In the last experiment, all participants wore the same pair of earmuffs said to reduce noise while assisting in hearing conversations, bearing either a highly reputable country-of-origin or a much less reputable country-of-origin label. They then were exposed to a recording of an announcer reading a list of 62 unrelated words, read against the background of a very loud and noisy construction site and were asked to identify the words as they heard them. As predicted, participants whose earmuffs bore the more reputable country-of-origin label identified more words correctly and fewer words incorrectly than those whose earmuffs carried the no reputable country-of-origin. Note that in this task it is not clear what motivated participants could do in order to improve performance over a less motivated participant.

Overall we show that in addition to altering expectations and subjective assessments of product efficacy, country-of-origin labeling can also influence subjective efficacy in a manner that is difficult to attribute to self-motivation. These results have significant managerial and public policy implications. Firms need to know that production in developing countries indeed costs more but may also damage product efficacy via the low country-of-origin reputation effect. Analogously, our findings suggest that the healing power of medication produced in developing countries may be weaker than the healing power of the same drug produced in Western countries.

In light of the rapid development of over-the-counter drug (OTC) sales managerial and public policy makers should consider seriously the effect of country-of-origin.

REFERENCE

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Choosing in the Dark: Effects of Ambient Light on Consumer Choices
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
When choosing between virtue and vice products, would consumers’ choices be influenced by the ambient light intensity (bright vs. dim)? We focus mostly on choices between healthy (virtue) and unhealthy (vice) food items. However, we also test the robustness of our findings in a non-food context. Understanding how ambient light influences consumers’ choices is practically relevant since in most retail contexts managers can control ambient lighting. Given the rates of obesity worldwide (Chandon and Wansink 2011), choosing between healthy/virtues and unhealthy/vice has important implications for managers/regulators and consumers. In spite of the conceptual and practical implications, we know of no study that examines how ambient light intensity impacts consumer choice.

BACKGROUND
Building on prior research streams, two alternative hypotheses can be proposed. First, research in the domain of sensory compensation would suggest that deficiency or weakness in one sensory modality gets compensated for with increased acuity in other sensory modalities (Hoover et al. 2012). Based on this literature stream, we propose that dim ambient light reduces visual capabilities and leads other sensory modalities to become more sensitive and alert. If this holds, a consumer is more likely to choose the virtue/healthy item when the ambient light is dim (vs. bright).

Research in the domains of sleep behavior and disinhibition will predict an opposite pattern of results. Specifically, consumers might be more mentally alert and less sleepy in bright (vs. dim) light, because among other physiological changes, bright light suppresses melatonin, which is the primary controller of circadian (day/night) sleep bio-rhythms (Lowden et al. 2004). Thus, consumers would be less mentally alert in dimly (vs. brightly) lit environments, and therefore less likely to rely on cognitive effortful processing when choosing between virtue and vice products. Second, consumer decision-making would more disinhibited in dim (vs. bright) ambient light since dark/dim lights give people a sense of illusory anonymity and encourage moral transgressions (Zhong et al. 2010). Thus, theories related to both mental alertness and disinhibition would predict greater preference for vices/unhealthy foods when the ambient light is dim (vs. bright).

Study 1a
Study 1A was a between-subjects experiment with two manipulated conditions (ambient light: bright vs. dim). Participants sat at a table with, a mixed fruit cup (healthy/virtue) and a cheesecake (unhealthy/vice), and indicated their preference between the two options. Mental alertness and disinhibition were also measured (Gilberg et al. 1994; Stunkard and Messick 1985).

As predicted, in dim (bright) ambient light a greater proportion of participants chose the unhealthy (healthy) option. Process measures show mediation by mental alertness but not by disinhibition.

Study 1b
Study 1B extended these findings to a non-food domain. The procedure and experiment design were similar to Study 1A except that participants were asked to allocate $1,000 worth of windfall money to fun (e.g. vice) or necessary (e.g. virtue) activities (e.g. Biswas et al. 2011).

Consistent with our prediction, participants allocated a larger proportion of the budget to fun (necessary) activities in dim (bright) lighting.

Study 2
Study 2 directly examined which of the two alternative underlying processes (mental alertness vs. disinhibition) might be more dominant by examining the moderating effects of hunger. Hunger affects mental alertness and disinhibition in different ways. High (vs. low) hunger leads to sensory arousal (Radel and Clement-Guillotin 2012) and enhances mental alertness. Hence, if diminished mental alertness led to increased choice for the unhealthy/vice in dim lighting, enhancing mental alertness through high hunger, should enhance choice of the healthy food option in dim lighting (no such effects expected with bright light where alertness is already high).

In contrast, high hunger enhances disinhibition because visceral factors diminish consumers’ ability to exhibit self-control (Loewenstein 1996). So, if disinhibition led consumers to choose the unhealthy/vice to a greater extent under dim light, then enhancing disinhibition through high hunger should further enhance preference for the unhealthy/vice with bright light (but not for dim light, where disinhibition is already high). Hence, an alternative prediction would be that under low hunger the effects found in Study 1A will persist, but under high (vs. low) hunger, there will be greater preference for the unhealthy/vice in bright (but not dim) ambient light.

Study 2 was a field experiment at a restaurant, with a 2 (ambient light: bright vs. dim) X 2 (hunger: low vs. high) between-subjects design. Participants were asked to choose between a fruit salad (healthy/virtue) and chocolate cake (unhealthy/vice) right before (high hunger) or right after (low hunger) their meal.

Consistent with the mental-alertness account under high (vs. low) hunger there was enhanced choice for the healthy/virtue in dim lighting.

Study 3
In Study 3, we gain additional process evidence by directly manipulating mental-alertness through the use of high (vs. neutral) alertness ambient scents (Spangenberg et al. 1996).

If ambient light influences consumers’ choices via mental alertness, then adding a high-alerting ambient scent to a dimly lit environment should enhance preference for the healthy option; in bright lighting, mental alertness is already high irrespective of the ambient scent.

Study 3 was a 2 (ambient light: bright vs. dim) x 2 (ambient scent: high vs. neutral alertness) between-subjects experiment. The procedure and stimuli were identical to Study 1A except that in the high (neutral) alertness condition a lemon (lavender) scent was diffused throughout the laboratory where the study took place.

The results showed that in dim lighting participants were more likely to choose the healthy/virtue in the presence of a high (vs. neutral) alerting ambient scent. However, in bright lighting there was no difference in choice of the healthy/virtue option based on ambient scent.

Study 4
While the previous studies had forced choice scenarios, in Study 4 we varied the ambient light intensity at a restaurant and un-
obtrusively observed customer ordering of healthy (vs. unhealthy) food items from the regular menu. We found that the proportion of healthy (vs. unhealthy) items sold varies with light intensity with the greatest proportion of healthy (unhealthy) items sold in the brightest (dimmest) lighting.

**CONCLUSION**

Our experiments show that dim (vs. bright) ambient light enhances choice for vice products.

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The Things You Own Come with Free Blinkers: The Construal Level of Possessions
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction
Ownership of products and its transactions has recently been highlighted as one of the core topics unique to consumer research (MacInnis & Folkes, 2010). While extensive research has reported on effects of ownership – e.g. the endowment effect (Thaler, 1980), the mere ownership effect (Beggan, 1992) – much of this literature takes a transactional perspective where ownership is acquired or lost in a “legal”, objective way. This approach has banned the difficult to measure psychological state of ownership to a ‘black box’ between its antecedents and consequences. Only recently, consumer literature has begun to look at psychological ownership as a distinct phenomenon (Morewedge, Shu, Gilbert, & Wilson, 2009; Peck & Shu, 2009). The perspective of psychological ownership allows to think about ownership as a continuum (contrary to legal ownership) and also permits a distinction between an affective and an ownership component in the study of ownership transactions (Shu & Peck, 2011).

However, this understanding is far from complete, and it is here that we aim for a contribution, by relating cognitive psychological ownership to the well-established concepts of psychological distance and Construal Level Theory (CLT) (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Many authors discussed the importance of “an association” between a person and objects in the genesis and perception of ownership (Beggan & Brown, 1994; Friedman, 2008). Here we test the hypothesis that the “(strength of) association” underlying psychological ownership can be seen as psychological closeness, with effects as predicted by CLT.

Ownership and construal level
Two studies aimed at testing whether owners think about objects in a more concrete way, a prediction based on CLT that should hold if owned objects indeed are psychologically closer than non-owned ones.

Study 1a used scenario’s (Waksleak, Trope, Liberman, & Alony, 2006) to find that, when asking participants to classify objects in groups, professional movers made fewer categories (M = 1.97, SE = .059) than the owners of the objects to move (M = 2.15, SE = .063; t(85) = 2.07, p < .05). The same difference was observed between insurance brokers (M = 1.98, SE = .059) and the owners of objects (M = 2.17, SE = .065; t(85) = 2.12, p < .05).

Study 1.b. omitted the third person perspective present in Study 1.a., showing an interaction effect (F(1,71)=10.14; p<.005) indicating that participants were quicker to detect a detail-change between two near-identical pictures of a cup they were asked to imagine was theirs, relative to non-owners (t(71) = 2.18, p < .05). The opposite was true for global, contextual changes (t(71) = -2.35, p < .05). Ownership leads to a more narrowly focused attention on the possession, which is in line with what can be predicted from CLT literature.

Construal level and ownership
Mirroring the previous studies, we also tested whether a concrete mindset would instigate effects that are usually the result of ownership manipulations.

In study 2.a., a cup was shown and participants were asked to list reasons either why or how a cup can be used. We then gauged participants’ perceived ownership and valuation of this cup, finding an indirect effect where perceived ownership functioned as a mediator between the manipulation and valuation (M = .30, SE = .16, LL95% = .050, UL95% = .63).

Study 2.b. again used a manipulation of psychological distance, i.e. physical distance (Fujita, Henderson, Eng, Trope, & Liberman, 2006), where by means of perspective in a picture, an object (in this case a parker pen in an ad) is represented as close or far. Again, we found that manipulating psychological distance is related to ownership, as we found an indirect effect of this manipulation on valuation of this pen, mediated by perceived ownership (M = .62, SE = .32, LL95% = .095, UL95% = 1.37). In this study, we also find results indicating that owned objects are more included in the self, as measured by a modified version of the IOS-scale (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992).

Construal level and the endowment effect
Study 3 related the previous findings to literature (Carmon & Ariely, 2000) indicating that the endowment effect might be explained by the fact that owners focus closely on the (positive) attributes of the good. Buyers focus more on the money they stand to lose, and have to overcome the distance related to the hypothetically owning the good to evaluate it, which would put them in a state of higher mental construal. We investigate whether typical endowment studies might be explained in terms of changes in construal level (CL); participants were asked to evaluate an owned [non-owned] flat and list all places of significance in it (could be rooms or parts of rooms). This measure was used to assess the level of detail participants used in their thinking as a proxy for their construal level.

Results showed an indirect effect of the ownership manipulation on valuation of the apartment, mediated by the number of places mentioned (M = 9641.63, SE = 5119.59, LL99% = 1676.18, UL99% = 22224.50). Actually, the same is true when we replace valuation with a scale of perceived ownership (Peck & Shu, 2009) (M = .16, SE = .10, LL95% = .0013, UL95% = .39).

DISCUSSION
In several studies, we show that ownership is associated with lower levels of construal, and that ownership is related to psychological distance. This is an important theoretical step that allows us to reconcile much of the literature related to ownership. Low construal level as a result of psychological ownership explains the endowment effect (study 3), and can explain negative effects of ownership and materialism, like lack of empathy with others (Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002), temporal shortsightedness (Richins, 2011) and others. It also provides a more explicit interpretation of current definitions of ownership in terms of an association (Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2003), of the extended self (Belk, 1988), and of self-enhancement accounts of ownership effects (Cunningham, Turk, Macdonald, & Neil Macrae, 2008; Gawronski, Bodenhausen, & Becker, 2007).

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In highly competitive marketplaces, consumers are confronted with an ever-increasing number of similar product offerings. This especially holds true for most of the supermarket items because manufacturers, as well as retailers who offer private labels often follow an imitation strategy, thereby enhancing perceived similarity between different products. This perceived similarity can result in various dysfunctional consequences for the consumers: It can hamper decision making, lowering satisfaction or evoke feelings of stress (e.g., Dhar 1997). Although product similarity has received considerable attention in past research (e.g., Mitchell, Walsh, and Yamin 2005), this concept has not yet been linked to stress and coping theory. Therefore, we investigate if perceived product similarity evokes feelings of stress in terms of threat and challenge emotions and we analyse which coping strategies consumers use.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

Perceived product similarity is defined as “the consumer’s self-rated propensity to see products within the same category as similar” (Walsh and Mitchell 2005, 143). It represents one dimension of the consumer confusion construct, that—according to previous research—can evoke unpleasant emotions, e.g., anger (Mitchell, Walsh, and Yamin 2005)—a so-called stress emotion (Lazarus 1999).

With regard to the concepts of stress and coping, Lazarus’ theory (Lazarus and Folkman 1984) is drawn on. Central to this theory is the concept of cognitive appraisal, whereby primary and secondary appraisal can be distinguished. While the former focuses on the relevance to one’s well-being, the latter relates to the evaluation of coping options. In line with theory, the following is hypothesised:

Hypothesis 1: Perceived product similarity is further appraised as being relevant or irrelevant and as taxing/exceeding the individual’s resources/ability to cope or as not taxing/exceeding the individual’s resources/ability to cope.

Stress theory states that cognitive appraisals mediate the relationship between the initial perception of an event and short-term consequences—like stress emotions (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). Further, it is postulated that appraisals evoke specific emotions: Threat emotions occur when the demands are evaluated as taxing/exceeding the resources/ability to cope. Challenge emotions are evoked when the individual feels in control over the person-environment-relationship. Therefore, it can be assumed that if cognitive appraisals are negative (e.g., coping efforts are appraised to be high), this will have a positive effect on threat emotions and a negative impact on challenge emotions. The hypotheses state:

Hypothesis 2a: Cognitive appraisals mediate the relationship between perceived product similarity and feelings of stress in terms of threat emotions.

Hypothesis 2b: Cognitive appraisals mediate the relationship between perceived product similarity and feelings of stress in terms of challenge emotions.

Hypothesis 3a: If cognitive appraisals are negative, this will be positively related to threat emotions.

Hypothesis 3b: If cognitive appraisals are negative, this will be negatively related to challenge emotions.

With respect to coping, problem-focused and emotion-focused coping can be distinguished. Which coping strategy is used depends on the emotions that are evoked (Folkman and Lazarus 1988). In previous studies threat emotions were linked to emotion-focused coping strategies (Lazarus and Folkman 1984), whereas challenge emotions were related to problem-focused ones (Duhachek and Iacobucci 2005). The following is hypothesised:

Hypothesis 4a: When consumers experience threat emotions, they will be more likely to employ emotion-focused coping strategies.

Hypothesis 4b: When consumers experience challenge emotions, they will be more likely to employ problem-focused coping strategies.

METHODOLOGY

To investigate if perceived product similarity evokes stress emotions and to analyse which coping strategies are employed, two pre-tests with 60 participants and a main study with 240 respondents were conducted. One of the pre-tests served to test the applicability of the coping inventory which was largely based on Duhachek’s (2005). Perceived product similarity was measured with four items (e.g., Walsh et al. 2010). Cognitive appraisals were measured with eight items (e.g., Peacock and Wong 1990). Threat and challenge emotions were each measured with three items (Folkman and Lazarus 1985).

FINDINGS

With respect to the coping construct, hierarchical factor analysis revealed that the factors “Expressive Support Seeking” and “Cognitive Disengagement” form one dimension of the construct which is labeled “Emotion-Focused Coping”. The factors “Action”, “Positive Thinking”, and “Rational Thinking” represent the second dimension and can be labeled “Problem-Focused Coping”.

To examine the relationships among the constructs, Partial Least Squares was applied. The results are shown in table 1. H1 is supported: The path coefficient was significant. The coefficient for the path from cognitive appraisals to threat emotions was also significant and in the predicted direction. Therefore, H3a can be supported. The supposed negative influence of appraisals on challenge emotions (H3b) has to be rejected: The proposed direction was not confirmed. H4a and H4b are supported: Threatened consumers used emotion-focused coping strategies more often, whereas challenged consumers were more likely to employ problem-focused strategies. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), two additional models were developed.
DISCUSSION

The results show that consumers were more likely to experience negative threat emotions when faced with similar product offerings. As negative emotional states can decrease consumer satisfaction with the store, retailers should evaluate if a reduction in assortment size would have a negative impact on sales and earnings. The study further reveals that consumers predominantly engaged in emotion-focused coping when they felt threatened. Aside from seeking emotional support, they employed the coping strategy “cognitive disengagement”. The latter strategy can be critical for retailers as it includes reactions like postponing the purchase decision which can result in a decrease in sales and earnings and can lower the competitiveness. Further, consumers sought informational support when they felt threatened. As this strategy includes that salespersons are asked for advice, understaffing or semi-skilled staff that cannot adequately answer the requests could foster stress emotions. Another interesting finding is that consumers bought just any product when they felt threatened—a coping strategy that is critical with respect to brand management.

REFERENCES


The Role of Learning in Consumer Value Co-Creation Activities
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

It is widely acknowledged in contemporary marketing literature that consumers play an active role in the creation of their own value (Vargo and Lusch, 2008; Grönroos, 2011) and often need to acquire new knowledge and skills to develop capabilities and resources to draw upon during value-creating activities (Payne et al., 2008). Prior research has evaluated the effectiveness of firms’ efforts to educate customers (Dellande et al. 2004; Zhao et al. 2008), but there is little research that adopts a consumer-centric perspective and recognizes them to be in control of their own learning. Theories of Self-Directed Learning (SDL) (Knowles, 1975) are suggested to offer useful frameworks for conceptualizing consumer learning for value creation and, indeed, for understanding learning as a resource integration activity in its own right (Hibbert et al., 2012). SDL assumes that individuals identify their own learning needs, formulate goals, obtain resources, implement and regulate learning strategies and evaluate outcomes, although it acknowledges that other parties may support learning in various ways (Knowles, 1975; Merriam et al., 2007; Garrison, 1997). It also emphasizes the context-specific nature of learning (Tough, 1971). SDL has been applied in an array of contexts (e.g., distance learning, healthcare) but there is, as yet, no empirical research that examines consumers’ learning for value creation as a SDL process. The purpose of this research is to explore consumer learning processes in a context of consumer value creation, examining the learning motives and strategies that characterize individuals’ efforts to acquire new knowledge and skills. The findings will offer insights to firms and other parties that seek to support consumer learning. Below we outline a two-stage empirical study that sought to distinguish consumers in terms of their learning orientation and to characterize their learning strategies, present the findings and briefly set out the conclusions of this exploratory study.

METHOD

A mixed method study was conducted with members of an online Do-It-Yourself (DIY) community. In the first stage of the research 248 participants completed an online survey measuring motivational aspects of goals (performance and learning), self-efficacy (confidence in their learning) and their emotional reaction (positive and negative) towards learning DIY knowledge and skills. Scales were adapted from existing measures used in the SDL literature (e.g. Dweck, 1986; Valle et al., 2003; Bandura, 1997) and responses measured on a 7-point Likert scale. The second stage involved 26 in-depth interviews with a purposive sample of survey respondents.

RESULTS: STAGE 1

Exploratory Factor Analysis grouped the items into the expected constructs. All multi-item scales demonstrated reliability with Cronbach Alpha values ranging from .748 to .961. A non-hierarchical k-means cluster analysis using the mean values for each construct as seed points was conducted to examine whether there were distinct groups of consumers in terms of their DIY learning orientations. A three cluster solution best grouped the data differentiating between surface learners (SL), emotional learners (EL) and assertive learners (AL) (Table 1).

ANOVA combined with Scheffe post-hoc tests revealed significant differences between these groups. Assertive Learners (AL) scored the highest in terms of being motivated by learning and performance goals, and their positive emotional response to learning, followed by Emotional Learners (EL), with Surface Learners (SL) scoring the lowest across these constructs. EL experience more frustration and a stronger negative emotional response to learning than the other two groups, while AL have more confidence in their learning of DIY skills than EL and SL.

RESULTS: STAGE 2

Thematic analysis of in-depth telephone interviews drawn from survey respondents of each group revealed that learning in a DIY context follows a dynamic process and that there was considerable interaction between elements of the learning process. Unlike other SDL contexts (e.g. distance learning) in which individuals often learn for the gratification of developing their knowledge, consumers in the three groups who engage in DIY are motivated predominantly by performance goals. Learning goals are developed in response to performance goals as consumers assess their own abilities and recognize deficiencies in their own resources that impact on their ability to undertake tasks inherent to their project.

The domain specific knowledge and the acquisition and use of available learning resources (e.g. advice from service providers, social networks, technology) contribute to achieving learning goals and shape and support the learning process. Consumer value is realized through the acquisition of resources that help the customer to participate in learning environments to achieve their performance goals. Consumers use these resources to develop learning strategies and to set learning goals before embarking on the project. This is aided before participation by assessing the skills required to complete the task, or during participation in response to a (un)foreseen learning requirement. AL show an intrinsic interest in learning DIY, using their confidence and overall experience of the DIY environment to set, monitor, adapt and evaluate challenging performance and importantly to them, learning goals. In doing so they draw on relevant and available resources to supplement their own knowledge, skills and experience. Similarly EL participate not only for performance reasons, but also to learn new skills. They too set, monitor, adapt and evaluate their learning, importantly using resources to help support their high emotional (positive and negative) involvement in the learning process. SL on the other hand prefer to plan and utilize resources to help with their learning goals by reproducing, rehearsing and memorizing learning content made available to them (see also Bandura, 1977). For SL performance goals (e.g. financial) are the key motivation for participation.

CONCLUSION

This research complements the body of literature that has examined firms’ efforts to educate consumers (Dellande et al., 2004; Zhao et al., 2008) by adopting a consumer-centric perspective on learning for co-creation. The findings reveal key differences in groups of learners both in their motivations for participation and in their acquisition of resources to support their learning process. Further work is required that examines the additional learning processes of consumers as they seek to develop their resources in learning environments to create value. This can aid service providers in developing sup-
port and environments that can help facilitate this learning process through value co-creation activities.

REFERENCES
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The role of consumption in negotiating identities and social relationships has been explored by many studies grounded in consumer culture theory (Arnould and Thompson 2005). A small subset of these studies has focused on life crises provoked by serious illness, impending death, or bereavement (Adelman 1992; Pavia 1993; Mason and Pavia 1998; Pavia and Mason 2004; Gentry et al. 1995; Kates 2001). Such events add particular urgency and poignancy to the exigency to leave behind a durable personal identity for family and friends, and possessions may be used strategically by those who are dying to “preserve identities over time and communicate their importance to survivors” (Unruh 1983, p. 343; Gentry et al. 1995). The identities in question are not monochromatic; they may comport implicit understandings of family values together with personal and family histories (Heisley et al. 1993; Curasi et al. 1994). Precisely because they will outlive the bequeathers, these goods embody the possibility and promise of post-mortem agency, of continuing bonds, in the lives those left behind (Klass et al. 1996). The meaning of these goods is meant for others - special and significant others.

Such disposition practices by those facing advanced age, illness or acute personal risk appear quintessentially relational and anticipatory may be interpreted as strategic actions undertaken in the face of impending death to facilitate and modulate future personal interactions with those left behind (Unruh 1983; Exley 1999). Seeking to leave such intellectual, spiritual, material or physical traces may also help those who are dying to deal with the grief associated with the loss of self (Viorst 1986; Gentry et al. 1995).

In this paper, we analyse popular media representations of dying people’s consumption practices as an extension of their duty of care towards their family. Many scholars have highlighted the role of popular literature in illuminating experiential and symbolic aspects of consumption (Friedman 1985; Belk 1987; Brown 2005; Holbrook, Bell, and Grayson 1989). Indeed, popular literature was the catalyst for this paper, since we noted that various novels, memoirs, news reports and even advertisements seemed to suggest that dying people were not simply disposing of possessions, but also using – and even acquiring - particular goods and services in order to communicate with and comfort their family beyond the grave. Our analysis of these popular cultural texts was complemented by personal interviews undertaken with six members of staff in UK and Irish hospices. In these interviews, we explored the range of material practices involved in forging continuing bonds by those who are dying, the rationale they provide for these, and the contribution of such practices to their sense-making and emotional well-being.

We suggest that popular culture tends to represent these anticipatory consumption practices as benign and beneficial for all concerned; bereaved people are comforted by consumer goods gifted “beyond the grave” that serve as helpful interventions and expressions of undying love, while those who are dying find in these consumption practices a sense of purpose and ongoing agency directed towards caring for those they will leave behind. In the international best-selling novel (and subsequent film), PS I love you (Aherne, 2007), for example, a young widow receives a series of letters and cards prepared in secret by her husband as he was dying from cancer. The book details how his advice and instructions (including what to buy, how to dress, and where to holiday) aid her recovery and help him face death and physical separation “His mind was kept occupied as he mapped out his plan to remain with Holly even when he was gone. He was also fulfilling a promise he had made to her years ago.” (Aherne 2007; p462)

It is not only in fiction that those facing terminal illness expend some of their final, limited energy forging and facilitating continuing bonds, not least through consumer goods. Thus, anticipatory consumption appears to form part of the repertoire of strategic actions used by those who are dying, contributing to their post-death identities and relationships (Unruh 1983; Exley 1999). For example, various newspaper articles featured terminally ill mothers buying cards to be given to their young children as they grew up, married, and became parents themselves, and Ruth Picardie’s (1998) cancer memoir describes buying memory boxes for the letters and photographs she planned to leave her infant twins. Such material legacies serve more than a memorialisation agenda. These consumers do not wish just to be remembered after their demise; they want to be listened to, to be involved, to continue to look after those who matter to them now. The goods in question need not be treasured family memorabilia; they are not intended simply as souvenirs encouraging the continuity of family lore and tradition. Their primary purpose is to signal an on-going post-mortem ‘duty of care’ to support and guide those left behind.

We suggest that these popular cultural texts constitute contemporary ars moriendi, revising the social scripts for dying in a culture where death is often private, sequestered, and unmentionable (Walter et al. 1994). Our interviews with hospice workers suggest that many terminally ill patients, particularly when they have young children, devote considerable energy to such anticipatory, consolatory consumption. While many patients find comfort in such practices, not everyone has the time, energy or inclination to engage in them and not all bereaved family members find them helpful. Furthermore, media representations seem to shade from description to prescription:

"... it's something that's been promoted in the general media as something that people should be doing, and really putting responsibility onto people who are dying. You know: 'If you don't do this you've missed or you're letting somebody down'...". (Nuala, occupational therapist, Irish hospice)

The concept of the ‘good death’ as a nomological social construction is well documented in the thanatological literature (Bell and Schilling 1993, Bradley 1999, Howarth 2007). This paper examines whether a ‘good death’ now appears to require the deceased person to have signalled, through material disposition, a desire to play a continuing supportive role in the lives of significant others.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Are brands associated with mostly negative information perceived as superior to unrecognized brands? Prior research has demonstrated an adverse effect of negative information on consumers’ product evaluation, arguing against the lay belief that “all publicity is good publicity” (Basuroy et al. 2003). For example, evaluation of McDonald’s was less positive when study participants were told about the rumor that McDonald’s used worms in their hamburgers (Tybout et al. 1981). Recent findings, however, suggest that negative information may have different effects on known versus unknown products. For example, Berger and his colleagues showed that negative publicity about a product may increase purchase likelihood and sales of unknown products by increasing product awareness, arguably, because people remember that they heard something about the product, but forget the valence of the information (Berger et al. 2010). But what if people remember the negative information about the product? Could negative knowledge about a brand in consumers’ memory be more beneficial for a product than lack of knowledge?

We address this question in the domain of inferences about quality and explore the relationship between product quality perceptions and brand knowledge in memory. Our hypothesis is that branded products associated with mostly negative information will tend to be perceived as of higher quality than products by unrecognized brands. We base this hypothesis on the idea that different types of brand information, which are available in the environment and can be used as cues for inferring quality, are often correlated in natural settings (Goldstein & Gigerenzer 2002). As a result, simple cues, such as how many times one has seen or heard of a brand, can predict product quality as accurately as more complex pieces of information, such as what one knows about that brand. For example, if higher-quality brands generate a higher number of remarks about them in the media than lower quality brands do, consumers may learn that their knowledge about the valence of remarks is not necessary for making accurate decisions, and that the number of overall mentions is sufficient for inferring product quality. That is, perceived frequency of mentions in the environment, which is a pre-requisite for deeper knowledge, such as information valence, may be a robust single predictor of quality.

In pursuit of externally valid and robust findings, we investigate these links in five product domains: refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, walking shoes, headphones and, business schools. In our studies, three randomly ordered tasks were performed by each participant. In one of the tasks, participants were asked about the information in memory about each brand: whether or not they have seen or heard of it (recognition), how frequently they had seen or heard about it (recognition), how often they had seen or heard about it (recognition), how frequently they had seen or heard about it (recognition). Consequently, and in line with our findings regarding study participants’ inferences, unknown brands may benefit from negative knowledge as long as it raises awareness about them, even if consumers remember that information. Of course, it is better for a brand, if people have positive knowledge about it, but the fact that recognized brands with predominantly poor quality reputation are still inferred to be of higher quality than unrecognized ones is consistent with lay theory that “better the devil you know than the devil you do not know”.

REFERENCES


High Tide for the Wealthy: Brand Support and Wealth
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
“Can’t buy me love,” and “With a little help from my friends” are two iconic songs from the legendary Beatles, which highlight that while one can rely on other people to “get by,” money cannot buy relationships or love. These heart-warming song lyrics illustrate what research has been showing for decades: social support is necessary for positive health and well-being (Cohen et al. 2008; Uchino, Cacioppo, and Glaser 1996). Not surprisingly, the need for social relationships is considered fundamental to human psychology (Baumeister and Leary 1995); and consistent research has demonstrated that having a social network is necessary for general well-being (Berkman 1995). Relatedly, social isolation is now considered a major health risk (House, Landis, and Umberson 1988).

Instead of “love,” what if the lyrics had been “money can buy me happiness”? Or, what if the lyrics had been “I get by with a little help from my brands”? Would people believe these claims? Reactions would most likely be mixed. Reliable research demonstrates that in developed countries income level predicts well-being and happiness, and, the degree to which individuals believe they would be happy with more money (Aknin, Norton, and Dunn 2009; Diener and Biswas-Diener 2002). Taken in conjunction with the social support literature, it would seem that income level serves as a proxy for greater social connections and social support. However, Kraus and Keltner (2009) illustrated that relative to working or lower class individuals, upper class individuals have weaker social connections. In addition, other research has demonstrated that wealthier or upper class individuals, relative to their lower class counterparts, espouse autonomy and self-sufficiency to a greater degree (Stephens et al. 2011; Vohs, Meade, and Goode 2006). These competing theories led us to wonder: why are higher income individuals happier than lower income individuals, even though they have weaker social connections, a necessary component to happiness and well-being? We examine this question in the current research. The apparent decrease in desired or actual social connection as a function of increased relative wealth suggests that individuals may be turning toward other sources to fulfill the need for support. We suggest that brands are one of these sources. In other words, we hypothesize that instead of turning to other individuals for support, higher income or relatively wealthier individuals are turning to their brands for support.

In the present research, we explore the role of relative wealth and feelings of support from one’s brand. Consistent with past research, we suggest that lower income individuals turn to other people for support. Also, consistent with past research, we suggest that higher income or relatively more wealthy individuals are less likely to turn to others for support. However, contributing to the consumer behavior literature, we are also positing that these individuals still need social support, they are turning to their brands instead of other people. In other words, we are theorizing a novel use of brands: for consistent social support. Since social support stemming from relationships with others is a basic human need (Deci and Ryan 1991; Myers 1999), we predict the brands relatively wealthier individuals will be seeking and finding greater support from will be brands that fulfill basic human needs. In other words, they will feel the most supported by and connected to necessity brands, which are often privately consumed.

We present five empirical studies in support of these ideas. We first examine the role of perceived wealth and relative income level in interpersonal relationships. Demonstrating that relatively wealthier individuals are less likely to rely on and feel more distant from those around them (Study 1), we suggest that they would be more likely to rely on brands for social support. We specifically examine the relationship between wealth and brand support, including the types of brands that we predict provide the most support—brands that fulfill basic needs. We extend this research to incorporate the role of self-brand connection in brand support, hypothesizing that, contrary to prior theory, individuals will report greater self-brand connection with privately consumed, non-symbolic, necessity brands. We test these predictions across the next four studies, two correlational and two experimental. We investigate whether wealthy individuals report greater feelings of support from their brands. In three of the four studies, we examine a potential mediator between wealth and brand support, self-brand connection. Finally we conclude with how these effects can contribute directly to consumer behavior in the final study.
Driving Symbolic Consumption through Imagined Vertical Movements
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Consider Mary and John, who are prompted by an advertisement to imagine taking an elevator ride. Mary imagines going 20 floors up, whereas John imagines going 20 floors down. After this imagery exercise, both report their willingness to pay for a symbolic product, such as an expensive car. Can the imagined scenario affect their responses? We show that this is indeed the case, and, in particular, that symbolic consumption can be affected by imagining oneself moving upward or downward.

Past research shows that status and symbolic products can be consumed to reaffirm one’s positive self-view (e.g., Gao, Wheeler, and Shiv 2009; Rucker and Galinsky 2008; Sivanathan and Pettit 2010). For example, receiving feedback that threatens one’s sense of worth leads to higher willingness to spend for status/symbolic products such as exclusive watches and prestigious cars (Sivanathan and Pettit 2010). We extend this research, by showing that merely imagining moving downward or upward affects self-worth and, in turn, preference for symbolic products.

Our predictions draw on theories of embodied cognition suggesting that concepts that cannot be perceived through the senses might be mentally represented with sensory-experiences that are metaphorically associated with them (e.g., Barsalou 2008; Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff and Johnson 1980). As a result, brain circuits dedicated to the processing of sensory-motor experiences, such as vertical movements, might become interconnected with brain circuits that process abstract concepts (Gallese and Lakoff 2005). According to this stream of the literature, vertical movements (e.g., moving up or down) become associated with the notion of “more or less.” A metaphorical association between “moving up” and “more” might be created when a child repeatedly observes how adding/removing a substance to/from a container, such as water to a cup, increases/decreases its level (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Through this process, the concepts of “more” and “less” become mapped to upward and downward movements (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Furthermore, quantity is also associated with “better,” as indicated by the metaphorical association “more is better” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). As a result, an object that moves up might be associated with higher (i.e., better) evaluations, as indicated by expressions such as “the stock market went up.”

Drawing on this reasoning and the literature on compensatory consumption (e.g., Sivanathan and Pettit 2010), we propose that that merely imagining oneself moving downward, as opposed to upward, increases preference for symbolic products. This prediction is tested in two studies.

Study 1 investigated whether imagined vertical movements drive status consumption. Participants were informed that they would hear a story scripted to evoke mental images as part of a study to measure imagery ability. After being instructed to relax, they were guided by an audio to imagine entering an elevator and going either up from the 10th to the 30th floor, or down from the 50th to the 30th floor. The destination floor was the same in both conditions to avoid confounding effects from the height of the final destination. The two scripts were identical with the exception that the words indicating upward movements were replaced with words indicating downward movements and the sequence of floors was inverted. After listening to the audio and answering a few questions about it, participants were introduced to a series of supposedly unrelated studies, including a “Car Study” adapted from Sivanathan and Pettit (2010) where they considered two pre-owned cars: A BMW sedan (high-status option) and a Kia sedan (low-status option). A manipulation check confirmed the BMW had higher status than the Kia. Participants were informed of the pre-owned Kia’s price and asked to report how much more they were willing to pay for the BMW. As predicted, participants who imagined going down were willing to pay more to buy the BMW than those who imagined going up.

Study 2 tested whether the effect of imagined vertical movements on preference for symbolic products is mediated by changes in self-worth. Following the procedure described in Study 1, participants were randomly assigned to one of the two elevator scripts and then introduced to a supposedly unrelated study that included two target measures of self-worth. After a series of filler studies, all participants were asked to report their preference for appropriate prize rewards for an upcoming study. The target product choice was between a $20 gift certificate for “movie theater tickets” and a $20 gift certificate for “books.” Previous research (Gao et al. 2009) suggests that books offer greater ability to re-affirm a positive self-view than similarly priced movie tickets, as confirmed in a separate pretest we ran. Therefore, we expect that imagining downward movements increases preferences for books over similarly priced movie tickets.

As predicted, people who imagined going 20 floors down reported greater preference for books over movie tickets than those who imagined going 20 floors up. Furthermore, those who imagined going down reported lower self-worth than those who imagined going up. We suggest that imagining moving down decreases self-worth which, in turn, leads to higher preference for books (the option that offers greater ability to re-affirm a positive self-view). A mediation analysis (Baron and Kenny 1986) and a significance test of the indirect effect (Preacher and Hayes 2008) supported the hypothesis that changes in self-worth mediate the effect of imagining vertical movements on preference for books over movie tickets.

Our results extend research on symbolic consumption and embodied cognition by showing that imagining moving downward, as opposed to upward, decreases self-worth and, in turn, increases preference for symbolic products. This finding has important implications for decision making and advertising. In particular, advertisements often include scenes where people experience vertical movements (e.g., taking an elevator, taking off or landing in an airplane) which might prompt the imagination of vertical sensory motor experiences. As an example, consider the television commercial for Gillette Venus (a line of women’s razors) showing a woman taking an elevator up a few floors. Our results suggest that these scenes might affect consumers’ self-worth as well as subsequent preference for products, such as symbolic ones, that can restore a positive self-view.

REFERENCES


How Price Promotions Influence Post-Purchase Consumption Experience: The Immediate and Delayed Effects
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Consumers generally believe that getting a good deal for a product would enhance their hedonic experience of consuming the product. The present research examines this intuition. We find that, consistent with lay intuition, getting a price discount can make consumption more enjoyable. However, contrary to lay beliefs, when consumption is decoupled from payment with a time delay, price promotions actually diminish consumption enjoyment over time. While prior research has documented mixed effects of price promotions on sales and perceived quality (e.g., perceived efficacy of functional products; Shiv, Carmon, and Ariely 2005), we provide the first evidence for the effect of price promotions on hedonic consumption experience over time.

On the one hand, getting a good bargain can elevate moods (Heilman, Nakamoto, and Rao 2002; Naylor, Raghunathan, and Ramanathan 2006), which spills over to consumption experience and makes consumption more enjoyable. On the other hand, paying a lower price for a product would reduce not only one’s motivation to “get one’s money’s worth”, which in turn reduces attention to the item being consumed. Consumption. The less an individual has paid for a product, the less relevant the individual perceives the product to be, and the less involved he/she becomes during consumption (Wathieu and Bertini 2007). The resulting lower involvement thus makes evaluation less extreme (Petty and Brinol 2010) and diminishes the intensity of consumption enjoyment. Given that mood effects are often transient, we propose that if a product is consumed immediately after payment, price promotions should enhance consumption enjoyment. However, if the consumption is delayed, the negative effect of price promotions (due to lower involvement) will dominate.

To test our hypotheses, we conducted three experiments involving real spending and product consumption in which we manipulated how much participants paid for a product and when they consumed the product after payment. Experiment 1 employed a 2 (discount: 0% vs. 50%) x 2 (consumption: immediate vs. delayed) between-subject design. Specifically, participants first earned a wage by completing an unrelated study. Then, in the main test, they used (some of) that money to purchase one of two given chocolates either at the full price or discounted price. After paying for their chosen chocolate, participants were given the chocolate either immediately or after a one-week delay, asked to consume the chocolate, and then evaluate how much they enjoyed consuming the chocolate. To control for perceived quality, the chocolate consumed was the same in all conditions and unknown to the participants. As expected, for immediate consumption, price promotions increased consumption enjoyment, whereas for delayed consumption, the effect was reversed. In Experiment 2, we replicated the findings of Experiment 1 using a different sensory stimulus (music) with a shortened time delay (25 minutes). More important, mediation analysis showed that mood mediated the effect of price promotions for immediate consumption but not for delayed consumption.

To demonstrate the role of involvement, we manipulated stimulus valence in Experiment 3. Specifically, the proposed involvement account predicts that, over time, price promotions should weaken consumption experience, making the experience of consuming a liked product (i.e., orange juice with honey) less enjoyable, and conversely, a disliked product (i.e., orange juice with vinegar) less unpleasant. Indeed, for immediate consumption, price promotions enhanced consumption experience regardless of stimulus valence. However, for delayed consumption, price promotions made the tasty juice less enjoyable and the sour juice less unpleasant. Mediation analysis confirmed that involvement during consumption mediated the effect of price promotions for delayed consumption. Finally, Experiments 2 and 3 also ruled out perceived quality as an alternative explanation, suggesting that the effect of price promotions can operate above and beyond price-quality associations.

Our work provides new insight to the literature on the psychological effects of price promotions on hedonic consumption experience over time. Contrary to lay beliefs, getting a good deal actually reduces consumption enjoyment if consumption is decoupled from payment with a time delay. Our empirical findings also offer a potential alternative explanation for the extent finding that price promotions can have negative long-term effects on customer satisfaction and brand loyalty (Mela, Gupta, and Lehmann 1997; Neslin 2002). Apart from only a few notable exceptions (e.g., Shiv et al. 2005), much of the prior work on price promotions has relied on the analysis of secondary transaction records or scanner data, thus arguably limiting the extent to which the full psychological implications of price promotions can be examined. In the current work, we employed experiments that involved real spending and consumption over multiple points in time, allowing us to investigate the direct psychological impact of price promotions.

From a consumer welfare standpoint, our results suggest that consumers will be better off if they base their purchase decision on criteria most relevant to consumption enjoyment other than solely on price discounts, particularly for durable products or items they plan to consume later (e.g., music CD, books, take-out). When they purchase discounted items, they may enhance their consumption experience by reminding themselves of the discount they received. From a managerial perspective, our results underscore the fact that price promotions could be a double-edged sword: while price promotions could induce short-term sales and enhance consumption experience if the promotional products are consumed immediately after purchase, for products consumed later, price promotions can reduce enjoyment as a result of lower involvement during consumption.

REFERENCES


Role of Information Asymmetry and Situational Salience in Reducing Intergroup Bias: The Case of Ultimatum Games
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

With the globalization of business activities as well as the increasing mobility and diversity in the general population, it is increasingly common to find business transactions in settings that involve individuals from different countries, cultures and, in general, different social backgrounds. As the social milieu in which most exchange processes are embedded becomes increasingly complex, academics and practitioners seek to better understand how the social context and situational constraints influence business transactions (e.g., Adair, Okumura, & Brett, 2001; Chen, Mannix, & Okumura, 2003). Arguing that one of the most salient features that individuals are confronted with in an exchange process is their counterpart’s social identity, this research investigates the role of social identity and information in influencing expectations of counterpart’s behavior as well as outcomes of buyer-seller transactions.

Previous research suggests that social identity biases judgments and decisions. For example, in the context of conflict management, perceptions of common group identity have been shown to enhance the concern for the needs of the other party (Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994). In contrast, perception of a separate group identity seems to lead to inter-group bias and enhance perception of the zero-sum nature of conflicts (Sidanius, Van Laar, Levin, & Sinclair, 2004). In sum, individuals interpret and react differently to transactions based on whether the counterpart is perceived to be a member of their own social group or from another social group (e.g., Brewer & Kramer, 1986; Kramer, Pommerenke, & Newton, 1993).

Several aspects distinguish this research from the existing literature. First, while much of the previous research on social identity focuses on the salience and strength of an individual’s self identity and how it leads to differences in expectation formation and decision making (e.g., Sidanius et al., 2004), this research examines the influence of the transacting counterpart’s social identity. The distinction is important because although self-interest and own-payoff maximization is inherent in most exchange processes, recent research shows that individuals are also concerned with notions of distributive justice or fairness (e.g., Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1986). In other words, individuals demonstrate “other-regarding” preferences such that they not only worry about their own expected payoff, but also about that of their counterpart (e.g., Loewenstein, Thompson, & Bazerman, 1989). The extent to which individuals exhibit these “other-regarding” preferences may depend upon whether their counterpart is perceived to be a member of one’s own social group or from another social group (Brewer & Kramer, 1979; Kramer, Pommerenke, & Newton, 1993).

Second, much of the existing research has focused on complete information situations where both parties in an exchange process have access to clear and objective referents (White & Neale, 1994). Readily available referents allow individuals to assess the fairness of potential transaction outcomes with relative ease. In contrast, many transactions are complex, characterized by uncertainty and information asymmetry (e.g., Pinkley, 1995; Srivastava, 2001). Facing uncertainty and information asymmetry, individuals may form different expectations about the mutual gains from trade as well as the attractiveness of potential outcomes (White & Neale, 1994). Since most exchange processes are characterized by information asymmetry, this paper examines the influence of information in conjunction with social identity (cf. Kramer, Shah, & Woerner, 1995). The premise is that a counterpart’s social identity may influence the outcome of buyer-seller transactions and may do so differently depending on whether there is complete or incomplete information. While the importance of social categories in the formation of norms under conditions of ambiguity is recognized (e.g., Fiske & Taylor, 1991), relatively little research examines the role of social identity in incomplete information situations. This paper thus not only adds to the few studies on the role of social identity in complete information situations but also extends the literature by examining how the counterpart’s social identity affects expectations of distributive justice and, thereby, behavioral outcomes in incomplete information situations. Examining both complete and incomplete information situations allows us to explore the boundary conditions for the unfavorable bias towards out-group members, more commonly known as out-group derogation (e.g., Kramer, Shah, & Woerner, 1995).

Three experimental studies use ultimatum bargaining as the transaction context in which to study the role of social identity. In ultimatum bargaining, one agent (proposer) makes an offer to another agent (responder) that divides a specified sum of money between the two agents (Camerer & Thaler, 1995). The responder can then either accept or reject the offer. If the offer is accepted, the sum of money is divided as proposed and the game ends. If the offer is rejected, both agents receive nothing and the game ends. Ultimatum bargaining provides the appropriate context as it is not only a model for basic transactions but also represents a building block for more complex negotiated transactions (see Camerer & Thaler, 1995 for a review). Ultimatum bargaining has been extensively used in the literature to document behavioral regularities that were interpreted to imply that fairness considerations often override strategic considerations. Importantly, for the purposes of this research, ultimatum bargaining not only represents the end state of continuous bargaining but also the simplest form of a take-it-or-leave-it transaction, thereby offering a simple structure that allows isolation of the factors of interest.

Study 1 shows that, in complete information ultimatum bargaining, individuals react more strongly to unfair offers that come from out-group counterparts than in-group counterparts. In incomplete information bargaining, where there is uncertainty about the percentage of the total amount that the offer represents, out-group derogation is still prevalent when the offer is relatively high and could possibly be fair. However, study 2 finds that when the offer is relatively low, out-group derogation is reversed and individuals react more negatively to in-group counterparts who could possibly be taking undue advantage of the situation. Finally, study 3 supports that making the situational constraints salient moderates out-group derogation and eliminates differences between in-group and out-group counterparts. Together, the findings identify conditions, based on information availability and accessibility, under which the intergroup bias can be corrected. Knowledge of such influences should facilitate better management of the trade-offs between competitive and cooperative behavior in bargaining contexts.

REFERENCES


Unavailable Cake on the Menu: How Phantom Compromise Alternatives Alter Indulgence Tendencies
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Consumers commonly choose between indulgent and prudent alternatives. Indulgence involves short-run pleasure combined with long-run harm which then risks feelings of guilt if chosen (Lascu 1991). Prudence, on the other hand, provides less utility in the short-run but more utility in the long run (Wertenbroch 1998) and is thus easier to justify (Prelec and Loewenstein 1998). The current study extends research on indulgence by showing that compromise-but-unavailable “phantom” alternatives can alter indulgence tendencies. Unavailable alternatives are common in the marketplace and often alter choices (e.g., Hedgcock, Rao, and Chen 2009). The experiments reported here test compromise phantoms that are equidistant in attribute (e.g., calorie/taste) space between two competing alternatives. Given natural tendencies for people to enjoy pleasure (Gisling 1969), we hypothesize that compromise phantoms will reduce anticipatory guilt and regret associated with indulgent choices and thereby increase the popularity of such choices, unless circumstances exist to alter hedonistic preferences.

Study 1 randomly assigned 75 participants to choose between (1) one apartment offering lower rent (prudence) and another apartment offering shorter distance to nightlife and entertainment (indulgence), or (2) the same two options when the set also included a compromise-but-unavailable alternative that fell midway between the two available alternatives. As hypothesized, the phantom increased the indulgence’s share from 28.9% to 48.6%, though only approaching statistical significance (chi-squared = 3.07; p = .08).

Study 2 replicated Study 1’s phantom-compromise effect in another consumption context (snack choice) while assessing the mediating role of anticipatory guilt and regret. Seventy-eight participants were randomly assigned to control and phantom-compromise conditions involving taste-calorie tradeoffs. The compromise phantom again increased share of high-calorie high-taste cookies from 56.1% to 79.5% (chi-squared = 10.66, p < .05), and reduced both anticipatory guilt (M’s = 4.25 vs. 3.26; F(1, 76) = 5.17, p < .05) and regret (M’s = 4.13 vs. 3.11; F(1, 76) = 5.42, p < .05), effects at Sobel tests implicate as mediators of the phantom effect (e.g., guilt; z = -1.99, p < .05).

Because we hypothesize reducing hedonistic tendencies will reverse the effect, Study 3 primed 124 participants with a prudent goal of healthy eating (Laran 2009) and randomly assigned them to control and phantom-compromise conditions using Study 2’s taste-calorie trade-offs. As hypothesized, the phantom-compromise alternative increased prudence’s share from 29.2% to 45.8% (chi-squared = 3.62, p = .06).

Study 4 extended Studies 1-3 by manipulating participants’ indulgence tendencies through the use of lower and higher reference rents on apartments being considered. The participant’s former rent was indicated to be lower or higher than the two apartments now being considered in a move to a new city. To eliminate contamination from known currency and apartment values, Study 4 enlisted a currency unfamiliar to the 191 U.S. participants (South African Rand) randomly assigned to 2 (phantom: yes/no) x 2 (reference rent: higher/lower) between-subjects conditions. We expected a high reference rent to produce underlying indulgence goals and a low reference rent to produce underlying prudence goals. As hypothesized, a log-linear model revealed a significant phantom-by-reference rent interaction (Wald(1) = 5.14, p < .05). The phantom-compromise alternative increased the indulgence’s share from 56.0% to 72.9% (chi-squared = 3.05; p = .08) under a higher reference rent, but reduced it from 65.2% to 50.0% (chi-squared = 2.18; p = .14) under a lower reference rent.

Four experiments thus demonstrate a phantom-compromise effect that either increases or reduces indulgence tendencies depending upon the circumstance. It appears that latent desires not reflected in control/baseline shares exist, desires that phantom-compromise alternatives can leverage to alter decisions to indulge. Future research is needed, however, to better identify underlying processes and potential moderators thereof.

REFERENCES
Brand Name Effect on Consumers’ Willingness-to-pay for New Versus Recycled or Remanufactured Products

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We consider the relation between brand and Willingness-To-Pay for products that are more sustainable: products made of recycled content and/or utilized parts (i.e. remanufactured). While environmental marketing has been a concern for decades, there has been limited consideration of recycled/remanufactured products in the marketing literature. This paper helps to close this gap. Reuse and consumption of products containing previously used parts or material greatly reduces environmental impact. As markets for greener products continue to expand (Prakash, 2000), the challenge for many firms is to balance consumers’ environmental concerns, profitability, and the competitive dynamics of their target markets (D’Souza et al., 2006). In this context, the manufacturing and operational issues associated with the incorporation of reused/recycled materials are increasingly addressed by academe and practice (Arndt, 2005; Finistera do Paco, 2009). However, few empirical research studies specifically address the topic of consumers’ Willingness-To-Pay (WTP) for recycled/remanufactured products (Guide and Li, 2010). Consumers do express strong concerns for the environment, for recycling and recycled products, but their attitudes are often not reflected in consumption practices and have not yet been explicitly studied.

Consumers often perceive recycled/remanufactured products to be inferior to new conventional products (Smith and Keoleian, 2004). Recent research highlights that the perceived functional risk associated with any type of recycled/remanufactured product, among other variables, must be considered since it appears to influence consumers’ WTP for the product category (Hamzaoui-Essoussi and Linton, 2010). Furthermore, this raises the question of whether a high level of perceived risk could be compensated by using well-known brand names in order to positively influence consumers’ attitudes and WTP for recycled/remanufactured products. The brand literature suggests that brands reduce perceived risk by acting as a proxy for product quality (Aaker, 1991; Erdem and Swait, 1998), but this role has not yet been considered for recycled/remanufactured products. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine consumers’ Willingness-To-Pay premium prices for branded recycled/remanufactured products vs. conventional products for different product categories. The objectives are to determine: (1) the impact of the product category and its related perceived risk, and (2) the impact of the brand name, on consumers’ Willingness-To-Pay premium prices for recycled/remanufactured products.

To address these objectives, a survey on Willingness-To-Pay for greener products (remanufactured and recycled) was composed of questions from the following topics: familiarity with recycling, environmental consciousness, involvement level with recycling, perceived risk related to the product category, perceived product quality, brand knowledge, perceived brand quality, Willingness-To-Pay for recycled product, branded recycled product, branded conventional product, and last demographic information. Six product categories were chosen, based on their different degree of perceived risk: paper, single use camera, toner cartridge, automobile tire, cellphone, and printer. Respondents were University students enrolled at a large Canadian University, and 322 surveys were used for statistical analysis.

Results highlight that consumers’ Willingness-To-Pay premium prices for recycled products is product specific, and that recycled/remanufactured products versus new products do not have the same value. It is evident that some skepticism exists on the part of the consumer about recycled/remanufactured products. This attitude seems to be based on a general perception that not all product categories can be of good quality whenever considering a recycled/remanufactured version, therefore influencing consumers’ WTP. Furthermore, respondents show a moderate level of familiarity with recycled products, which seems to be insufficient to enable them to face up with uncertain levels of quality and perceived risk associated with recycled/remanufactured products.

Paper stands as an exception. Consumers are willing to pay for recycled paper more than for branded recycled paper or for branded new paper. The environmental bonus associated with recycled paper wipes out the brand value. Although respondents are not very familiar with the paper brand name itself, they are familiar with the product category, seen as commonplace today. This suggests that when consumers are faced with a purchase involving a low level of perceived risk, familiarity seems to suffice for purchase. But for the other product categories of this study associated to higher levels of perceived risk (and higher prices), familiarity could be insufficient as consumers are facing more “unknowable” recycled/remanufactured products.

The findings also show that brand does not always matter, but other times is very important. This raises question about what factors (exactly) determine the importance of brand. This may differ based on the level of perceived risk and perceived quality of the recycled product. Although a strong brand is a safe place, acting as a proxy variable for product quality and enabling consumers to understand the offer and face up with the uncertainty and risk, this does not seem to impact consumers’ WTP for cameras, printers and tires. Consumer’s assessment of quality and risk is thus counterbalanced by the brand name depending on the product. But variability in how much the brand can counterbalance the perceived risk could also be linked to the brand familiarity and/or the brand equity, which can partially explain the results of this study (low familiarity with printers and cameras’ brand names).

In terms of managerial implications, marketers need to emphasize and ensure that the quality of the recycled/remanufactured products is perceived as equal to the conventional product one, and decreasingly associated to high levels of perceived risk and low performance. Companies should assess the value of their brand in relation to recycled/remanufactured versions of their new product. The brand may add value as a warranty overcoming the risk associated to a product that is not made entirely from new/virgin materials.

By considering the impact of brand name on WTP for recycled/remanufactured products, insight is offered on the competitive advantage that firms have if they introduce a “greener” recycled/remanufactured version of their products. Brand names tend to raise the value of recycled/remanufactured product. However, there is tremendous variation in the level of WTP that appears to be both a function of brand name and product category. Companies need to understand the value of their brand name for the product categories they offer. For theoreticians, the outstanding question is what type of risks are brand names able and unable to alleviate.
REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Even though many products are manufactured and sold as grouped sets, virtually no research has investigated how the composition of such sets influences choice. However, research on related topics suggests that the composition of a set could have strong effects on preference and choice. Early work by the gestalt psychologists (Wertheimer, 1923) shows that people categorize and group stimuli rapidly and automatically, and that some sets of stimuli are grouped together more easily than others. Furthermore, we know from research on fluency, that things that are processed more easily are generally liked better (e.g., Winkielman & Cacioppo, 2001). Therefore, it could be expected that sets that are easier to group—that form better Gestalts—will be liked better. Similar arguments can be found in work by philosophers on aesthetics. For example Klintsch (2012) argues that the lower the (Kolmogorov) complexity of a stimulus, the more it will be liked. Even though these claims have not been tested empirically, cognitive psychologists (e.g., Glanzer & Clark, 1963; Garner, 1970) have investigated the liking of patterns and found a strong negative relation between the complexity and preference. Taken together, this suggests that sets of products that are low in complexity will be preferred to sets that are more complex. More specifically, we expected that sets in which all products are either all-similar or all-different on every salient attribute, would be preferred to sets which are not. A pre-test in which participants rated 56 sets of differently colored geometric shapes confirmed our expectations. Participants consistently rated sets which were all-similar or all-different on shape and color (good set-fit) significantly higher than sets which were not all-similar or all-different (bad set-fit).

Building on these findings, we proceeded to investigate if and how such preferences affect choice. We first investigated this by having participants make choices between either two individual items or two logically equivalent sets. For example, we had young children in one condition choose between a striped translucent marble and a red opaque one. Consistent with a pre-test, we found that an overwhelming majority of the children chose the striped translucent marble. In another condition, we added an opaque green, blue and yellow marble to both sets. Even though the only difference between the two sets was the presence of either a striped translucent or a red opaque marble, we expected the children to exhibit a preference reversal—to be more likely to choose the set with the red opaque marble since it formed an all-similar, opaque set. This is what we found; whereas only 10.4% of the children chose the red marble in the individual-choice condition, 72.7% chose the marble when it was contained in an all-similar set.

We did not only look at differences in choice proportion between individual and set-choices, but also varied the contents of the set in other experiments. For example, in one study participants always chose between sets of mugs. In each condition the choices were logically equivalent; the only difference between the two sets was always a green or an orange mug. In two conditions these mugs were embedded in all-similar sets, created by adding three orange or three green mugs to both options. Consistent with our expectations, participants were more likely to choose four green mugs over three green ones and an orange mug. When adding three orange mugs, participants were more likely to choose the set consisting of four orange mugs. This again demonstrates the all-similar effect. In two other conditions we added a pink, blue and either an orange or a green mug to both options. There we found the all-different effect. Adding a pink, blue and green mugs to both options increased preference for the set including the orange mug, but adding pink, blue and orange increased preference for the set with the green mug.

After establishing the effect and ruling out several alternative explanations, we investigated the intuitiveness of the effect. If the all-similar and all-different effects are due to the sets representing a more natural form of grouping, then the effect should be attenuated when consumers use more deliberate choice-strategies. To test this, we had participants choose between two different sets of pens: one set was more functional (multiple blue and black pens) but did not have a “good set-fit”, another set was all-different but less functional (including pink, yellow and turquoise). We found that deliberating on the use of both sets reduces choice for the good-fitting but less functional set, which is consistent with the idea that the effect on choices stems from an intuitive affective response to the structure of the set.

The experiments reveal a strong effect of the set-fit on consumer-choice. Effects that cannot be explained by well-known accounts of non-normative influences on choice, such as attraction and compromise effects (Simonson, 1989), contrast or assimilation (Wanke, Bless, & Schwarz, 1999), or variety-seeking (Ratner, Kahn, & Kahneman, 1999).

These findings hold direct practical implications. When selling products that are consumed in sets, making sure that the sit fits well will make consumers more likely to choose those products. Several interesting consequences and questions also arise for consumer research. First of all, even though variety-seeking and set-fit are the result of two different underlying processes, it can be expected that set-fit effects increase variety seeking, because consumers diversifying their first choices for satiation reasons may be more likely to continue choosing diversified options to maintain the set-fit. Furthermore, the intuitive rather than deliberative nature of the set-fit effect suggests that people who choose according to set-fit may later experience regret about their choices.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

It is well-established that one fundamental aspect of being human is the need to belong, and this need is relatively universal across cultures. Because this need is so fundamental, threats to belongingness can produce strong responses. However, the responses to these threats are surprisingly diverse and sometimes inconsistent. In studies of social exclusion, excluded people (vs. control groups) have responded in antisocial and often aggressive ways, such as giving more negative job evaluations (Twenge et al. 2007) or more unappealing snacks (Twenge et al. 2001) to an interaction partner (Twenge et al. 2001), or allocating more hot sauce to partners who disliked spicy food (Warburton et al. 2006). In contrast, excluded people (vs. control groups), have also responded in prosocial, affiliative ways, such as showing more conformity to others behavior (Williams et al. 2000), an increased desire to work with others (Maner et al. 2007), and reconnecting through affiliative spending (Mead et al. 2011).

In attempting to explain these seemingly contradictory findings, Lee and Shrum (2012) proposed the differential needs hypothesis, which proposes that different types of social exclusion threaten different fundamental needs, which in turn produce different behavioral outcomes. In a series of studies, they showed that social exclusion in the form of being ignored threatens efficacy needs such as power and control. When ignored, people try to bolster those needs by restoring feelings of power and control, and one way of doing this is by showing off or gaining attention. In consumer contexts, this can be accomplished through conspicuous consumption. Conversely, social exclusion through rejection threatens relational needs such as self-esteem. People react to threats to self-esteem in more prosocial, affiliative ways, such as through charitable donations.

However, one question is whether these findings are culture-specific. Research has shown that Eastern and Western cultures differ on a number of factors that may relate to responses to social exclusion (e.g., communication norms, self-identity, regulatory focus). Thus, it is possible that Eastern and Western cultures may differ on both perceptions and reactions to self-threats such as social exclusion.

To test whether the differential needs hypothesis generalizes to Eastern cultures, we conducted two experiments with Korean participants in Korea. The experiments were close replications of Lee & Shrum (2012), which were conducted with American participants. Conducting close replications allowed for the most conservative contrasts (i.e., ruling out alternative hypotheses) between the two cultures.

In Study 1, participants wrote about an instance in their past in which they were either ignored (implicit exclusion), rejected (explicit exclusion), or went grocery shopping (control). Next, in an ostensibly unrelated study, participants read a variety of scenarios. In one, they were asked to express their preferences for two Calvin Klein T-shirts, one with no logo and one with a large logo. In another scenario, they were asked about their willingness to donate money to a charitable cause.

Recall that in Lee and Shrum (2012), being ignored increased conspicuous consumption (greater preferences for the shirt with logo) relative to the control group, but being rejected did not, whereas being rejected increased helping behavior (more willing to donate money) relative to the control group, but being ignored did not.

However, in this study with Korean participants, the results were exactly the opposite. Being ignored increased willingness to give money (M = 3.69) relative to the control group (M = 2.86), but being rejected did not (M = 2.97), whereas being rejected increased conspicuous consumption (M = 7.98) relative to the control group (M = 6.58), but being ignored did not (M = 6.97).

There are two possible explanations for the differences between the Korean and U.S. studies. One is that being ignored or rejected threatens the needs of Korean and American participants differently, with being ignored threatening efficacy needs (power and control) for American participants but threatening relational needs (self-esteem) for Korean participants. A second possibility is that being ignored and being rejected threatened the same needs for Korean as for American participants, but that Americans and Koreans attempt to repair the threatened needs in different ways: Americans restore power needs through conspicuous consumption, whereas Koreans restore through charitable behavior, and the opposite for restoring self-esteem needs.

In Study 2, we attempted to untangle these possibilities. Korean participants again wrote about a time in which they were either ignored or rejected, and then indicated their preferences for conspicuous consumption and charitable behavior. However, before they provided those responses, some of the participants received a self-esteem boost, some received a power boost, and some received no boost. This procedure allows us to determine which needs were threatened in each condition. If a certain need is threatened (e.g., power) and people attempt to repair the need (e.g., through conspicuous consumption), providing a boost to that need should eliminate the need to repair, and thus eliminate the effect on the behavior (e.g., conspicuous consumption). Thus, the design was a 2 (rejected, ignored) × 3 (power, self-esteem, no boost) between subjects factorial.

The results supported the first possibility. In no-boost conditions, being rejected increased conspicuous consumption (M = 7.89) relative to being ignored (M = 6.71), replicating Study 1. However, this effect was eliminated (and in fact slightly reduced) for those receiving a power boost (M = 5.91) but the effect remained for those receiving a self-esteem boost (M = 7.71). Neither boost had any effect on those in ignored conditions (ps > .40). This indicates that being rejected threatened power needs but not self-esteem needs, opposite of the U.S.

The opposite effects were noted for charitable behavior. Replicating Study 1, in no-boost conditions, being ignored increased charitable behavior (M = 6.03) relative to being rejected (M = 5.44). However, a self-esteem boost eliminated this effect (M = 5.50) but a power boost did not (M = 6.03). Neither boost had any effect on those in rejected conditions (ps > .30).

The results support the differential needs hypothesis, but show that the same types of exclusion affect different needs in Korea and the U.S., and in turn cause different behavioral outcomes.

REFERENCES


Film Festival 2013

“I Win!”: An Exploration of the Male Information Shopper
Linda Tuncay Zayer, Loyola University Chicago, USA *
Aaron Salles Torres, Loyola University Chicago, USA
Peter Coleman, Loyola University Chicago, USA
Avro Deb, Loyola University Chicago, USA

With the emergence of social media and new technologies, consumers are increasingly engaging in extensive information search not only for expensive items but also for mundane goods. This film brings to life the motivations behind men’s search and shopping behavior within the context of a broader online consumer behavior study. Link: https://vimeo.com/55469461 Password: eacr2013

What happens when brand evangelism meets entrepreneurship?
Introducing the second tier tribal entrepreneur
Stephen O’Sullivan, Euromed Management School, Marseille, France*

This videography explores the evolving nature of tribal entrepreneurship within the international beer pong consumer tribe. It discusses how passionate consumers are evangelising a focal tribal brand in a sophisticated entrepreneurial manner. Second tier tribal entrepreneurs aid the process of communal glocalization. Thus, they are understood as cultural gatekeepers: a link between the focal tribal brand and a remote sub-tribe.

Arab Hospitality
Russell Belk, York University
Rana Sobh, Qatar University

This ethnographic study and 36-minute film address a particular Islamic consumptionscape as well as a related commodified practice: that of Arab hospitality in Qatar and United Arab Emirates. This much celebrated Arab virtue is examined in three contexts: home hospitality, commercial hospitality, and hospitality toward foreign guest workers and visitors. We find that home hospitality is largely extended inward and involves sharing in with close same sex friends and family in a tournament of status, while hospitality toward foreigners is largely either non-existent or out-sourced to other foreigners. These patterns are explained in terms of hyper-ritualization of that which is most in doubt, namely, multiculturalism and patriarchal authority. This same pattern of hyper-ritualization may apply in other ritual contexts like American Thanksgiving celebrations.

Arab hospitality is one of the tropes that defines Arab cultures. In the tradition of Arab, and especially Bedouin Arab, culture, hospitality was long a part of the survival rituals that helped to sustain a nomadic people in a harsh desert environment. A traveler was not only fed and housed for up to three days without question, but was given the best the host could offer, even if it meant doing without themselves. Today, the Bedouin Arabs of Qatar and United Arab Emirates (UAE) are urbanized residents of the two wealthiest nations on earth. There is no longer any survival imperative underwriting hospitality. Nevertheless their hospitality rituals persist and appear to be stronger today than ever before. It is not unusual, for example, for Qatari and Emirati men to be occupied seven nights a week as either guests or hosts in male-only hospitality spaces called majlises. Gulf women typically entertain other women only several times a month, but their hospitality rituals are no less elaborate and stylized than those of Gulf men. Thus one conundrum that the present study seeks to understand is why hospitality rituals have continued and grown in importance in these Arab Gulf states despite the disappearance of necessity.

One ostensive function of hospitality is to break down barriers between people and groups and to remove the fear attached to the stranger as a danger and a threat. There is a preponderance of guest workers, expatriates, and tourists in the Gulf States and Qatari and Emirati citizens comprise only 15 to 20 percent of their countries’ populations. Non-Qatari and non-Emirati residents are part of the new global nomadism that increasingly sees hundreds of millions of people temporarily or permanently living outside of their countries of birth. They are the worker class for these countries and in the UAE they hold 99 percent of all private sector jobs and 91 percent of public positions. Given this domination by potentially threatening foreigners, it would be logical to assume that hospitality rituals are also prominent in foreign guest/local host relationships at both the personal level of the family and home and at the commercial level within the hospitality industry. But although Arab hospitality toward foreigners is common at the commercial level, it is exceedingly rare at the personal level. Therefore, a second conundrum we sought to unravel in our research is why hospitality toward foreigners is absent at the personal level of the home.

Using depth-interviews and observations of hospitality rituals in Qatari and Emirati households, we explore culturally constructed meanings of hospitality rituals in Gulf Arab States and examine associated performative constructions of ethnic identity as well as the multifaceted exchange of material and symbolic possessions (especially foods, perfumes, and incense) that take place between the host and guests. We also study commercial hospitality in high end hotels, restaurants and similar touristic sites in the Gulf region, focusing on the capitals of Doha in
Qatar and Dubai in the UAE. But between citizens and non-citizens of these Arab states there is little in the way of personal hospitality, even if the non-citizens were born and raised in the local culture. This is a clear signal that they may be residents, but not members, of the local Arab society.

We conclude that Arab Gulf hospitality operates at several levels that involve ironies and inversions of apparent meanings. It appears open and hospitable while operationalizing boundaries of exclusion. It appears highly traditional while the countries are rapidly transforming and modernizing. And it appears full of patriarchy and male control while women are gaining greater and greater independence. It is this set of contradictions that makes Arab hospitality a simultaneous affirmation of culture and Islamic religious precepts, a nostalgic re-enactment of that which has been lost, a celebration of affluence and membership in the leisure class, and a bulwark against further cultural pollution.
Roundtable Summaries

Eco-Food Consumption: The Roles of Ethics, Healthstyles, and Environment

Chair
Natalia Maehle, Institute for Research in Economics and Business Administration (SNF), Norway

Participants
Cele Otnes, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA
Benedetta Cappellini, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK
Elizabeth Parsons, Keele University, UK
Søren Askegaard, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark
Hilke Plassmann, INSEAD, France
Giana M. Eckhardt, Suffolk University, USA
Paolo Antonetti, Cranfield University, UK
Carolina Werle, Grenoble Ecole de Management, France

Food choice and consumption are complex phenomena. Eating represents a form of “congenial” consumption which involves not only objective and tangible benefits, but also subjective, hedonic, or symbolic components (Havlena and Holbrook 1986). The growing popularity of eco-food (i.e., green, healthy and ethical food) can be explained by the general trend that many consumers are switching towards socially and environmentally responsible products (Harrison, Newholm, and Shaw 2005). Moreover, changing lifestyles and an increasing focus on health make health concerns an important factor in food consumption. For example, interest in health has been found to be a primary motive for the purchase of organic food (Grankvist and Biel 2001). However, these new trends often contradict traditional purchasing criteria such as price and taste. Eco-food is usually sold at premium price, and many previous studies show consumers do not want to pay a price premium for ethical alternatives (e.g., De Pelsmacker, Driesen, and Rayp 2005). Moreover, consumers do not consider ethical company behavior as a substitute for product quality (Sen and Bhattacharya 2001). Few consumers agree to trade basic functional attributes for socially acceptable attributes (Auger et al. 2008). There is also evidence that less healthy alternatives are perceived as better tasting (Raghunathan, Naylor, and Hoyer 2006). Thus, consumers have to deal with many contradictory requirements and expectations while making their food choices. There is need for a unified understanding of the role of different factors affecting eco-food consumption. It is important to explore how consumers make the trade-offs in their food choices, and why eco-products are not always preferred. The previous research demonstrates there is a “disconnect between the issues consumers claim to care about” and “their purchasing behavior” (Belk, Devinney, and Eckhardt 2005, 276). What consumers say about the importance of eco-issues differs from their actual behavior. This “attitude-behaviour gap” is demonstrated in many studies (e.g., Auger and Devinney 2007; Carrigan, Szmigin, and Wright 2004).

References
Harrison, Rob, Terry Newholm, and Deirdre Shaw (2005), The Ethical Consumer, London: Sage.
Consumption in and of Space and Place

Chair
Andreas Chatzidakis, Royal Holloway University of London, UK
Morven McEachern, University of Salford, UK

Participants:
Russell Belk, York University, Canada
Stefania Borghini, Bocconi University, Italy
Adriana Campelo, Cardiff University, UK
Fiona Cheetham, University of Huddersfield, UK
Alain Debenedetti, Université Paris-Est (IRG), France
Massimo Giovanardi, Stockholm University School of Business, Sweden
Olga Kravets, Bilkent University, Turkey
Gretchen Larsen, Kings College London, UK
Pauline MacLaran, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK
Killian O’Leary, University of Limerick, Ireland
Luca Visconti, ESCP Europe, France

Although consumer research has been exposed to a variety of different philosophical perspectives and disciplinary traditions, spatial perspectives (e.g. Harvey, 2003) remain relatively absent. Perhaps due to the difficulty of understanding “space”, with its unique quality of being either too obvious or too implicit and taken-for-granted (Vice, 1997), consumer researchers have, until recently (e.g. Visconti et al. 2010), ignored more nuanced and sophisticated understandings of the concept. In the main, space continues to be treated as something absolute, physical, or a “thing in itself” that forms either the background setting, or the object (e.g. public parks, entertainment venues etc) of consumption activity. This contrasts sharply with more dynamic and relativistic perspectives that have originated from disciplines such as geography and spatial studies. Accordingly, the aim of this roundtable discussion is to foreground more nuanced understandings of space in consumer research. First, acknowledging that all consumption is in space and place we want to discuss spatial, geographical and other perspectives that have attempted to account for the less obvious and “taken-for-granted” impacts of space. Second, we want to build on the well-attended special session at the last EuropeanACR on “problematizing public space consumption” (Visconti, 2010), to consider more recent advancements and problematizations on the consumption of space and place.

All consumption activity is in space and place, yet with the exception of the literature into retail atmospherics and servicescapes (e.g. Sherry, 1998; Bitner, 1992; Wakefield and Blodgett, 1994), there has been very little research on the broader spatial parameters of consumption. For instance, within geography and spatial studies, aside from the traditional understanding of space as location or background setting, authors such as Agnew (2005) highlight at least two additional, equally fundamental variants, that is space as locale and sense of place. Space as locale encapsulates the role that space plays as a setting or backdrop for a variety of social relations and activities, the “...where of social life and environmental transformation. Examples would be settings from everyday life such as workplaces, homes, shopping malls, churches, etc.” (Agnew, 2005, p.89). On the other hand, sense of place embraces the more affective and phenomenological aspects, individual and group identifications with places and feelings of “belonging to a place, either consciously or as shown through everyday behavior” (Ibid., p. 89). Largely resonant with seminal contributions by other spatial theorists such as Lefebvre, Soja and Harvey, Agnew’s triadic understanding of space points to the need to move beyond the material, taken-for-granted dimensions of space, to consider more phenomenological and social-relational dimensions. An example of this is in a consumer context is Chatzidakis et al.’s (2012) study on how forms of consumer-oriented activism are affected not only by the built environment but also by notions of a place identity and spatio-temporally embedded social relations.

Space and place as the object of consumption has been the focus of an increasing number of studies, focusing on contexts such as the consumption of flagship stores (Kozinets et al. 2002), theme parks (O’Guinn and Belk, 1989) and festival shopping malls (Maclaran and Brown, 2005). More recently, drawing on spatial theorists such as Lefebvre (1991) and de Certeau (1982), there has been an implicit theoretical shift away from the consumption of space and place to consider processes of co-production and social contestation. For instance, Visconti et al. (2010) focus on how public art is contested by artists, urban planners and city dwellers whereas drawing on Lefebvre (1991), McEachern et al. (2012) explore the ways in which the urban park experience is co-created by park managers, park users and non-human entities.

References


When East Meets West: Cross-Cultural Consumer Research

Chair
Gregory Kivenzor, Rivier University, USA

Participants
Gregory Kivenzor, Rivier University, USA
Elena Reutskaja, IESE Business School, Spain
Amaleya Goneos-Malka, University of Pretoria, South Africa
Roy Toffoli, University of Quebec at Montreal, Canada
Andriy Ivchenko, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain*
Mirella Yani-de-Soriano, Cardiff University, UK

Significant differences exist between consumer behavior patterns in developed countries and these in countries with transitional economies. Consumers in transitional economy markets (TEM) represent more than a half of the world population – 3+ billion people. Turbulent times associated with rapid economic transition change consumer behavioral patterns, needs and wants at a pace by far exceeding these in developed economies. Western marketing theory has yet to adequately explain consumption phenomena and address cross-cultural issues in marketing strategies and tactics.

Among the discussion topics of cross-cultural comparison are: socio-psychological characteristics of consumers; cultural transformation from collectivism to individualism; transition from choicelessness to choice overload; ethical issues in consumption; gender differences in purchasing decision making.

Problem Outline
Although the importance of large and growing consumer markets in transitional economies is widely recognized, these markets remain under-researched due to multiple reasons main of them are the following.

First, up until recently TEMs represented a relatively small portion of sales of multinational corporations. Hence, funding for such research was hard to obtain and came in insignificant amounts in comparison with the size of TEMs and scope of research. Second, existing theories of consumer psychology, product/service choice and purchasing decision making, etc., were based on the knowledge accumulated by scholars having researched Western consumers with much higher income levels, living in stable economic environment, and focusing on more on self-fulfillment than on basic physiological needs. TEM consumers are quite different, therefore, their behavioral patterns may differ.

Third, TEMS represent a much more diverse mix of national cultures and, particularly, subcultures. This mixture represents a substantial challenge to Western researchers attempting to apply etic approach to learn emic cultural values. Most TEMs cannot be described as “national cultures” as they are comprised of distinct subcultures with their respective languages, religions, customs, and mores.

Fourth, as TEM consumers progress from narrow choice of basic products and services to a “tyranny of choice” due to newly open markets and online shopping capability, they experience pain due to choice overload. This leads to behavioral patterns seen as paradoxical by Western theorists – for example, a spike in luxury consumption. Also, gender-based choice processing and decision making in TEM societies appear to be substantially different from those in Western societies.

Another problem – on the top of the listed ones – is the pace of transition. TEMs remain in flux, consumers affected by economic, political and cultural transition keep changing their preferences and behavior. These dynamics may invalidate many past research results and call for new concepts and theories in consumer research.

Discussion Venues: Opinions, Research Methods and Potential Solutions
Participants of the round table represent a diverse mix of scholars whose research of consumer markets shall serve a basis of a comprehensive discussion. Their collective experience and understanding of consumer behavior shall make an exchange of opinions particularly productive.

It is important to mention that participants at one time or another conducted and published conceptual and empirical research of both Western markets and TEMs. A fruitful discussion shall stem from their broad understanding of general marketing and consumer behavior theories. Their ability to approach research with an open mind and embrace (rather than ignore) a diversity of cultural mix in TEMs shall afford the audience a discussion rich in content and thought provoking.

The discussion shall address the problem areas outlined above, allowing each panelist to contribute to the fabric of exchange depending on his/her experience and research specialty. Panelists shall review the current status of the TEM research and suggest the priority areas in need of attention of academic and industry researchers.

The round table organizer plans to reach out to immediate participants and broader audience in the room to identify and outline research methods and tools appropriate for TEMs. To connect theory with practice, each round table participants will be asked for his/her vision of the conceptual and empirical research paths. Such a collaborative discussion shall provide a comprehensive review of existing deficiencies and proposed solutions to better understand the consumer behavior in TEMs.

Conclusion
A comprehensive review of the ongoing consumer research seems to be a timely and worthy goal. Comparison of Western theories with TEM realities shall provide both the participants and audience with food for thought regarding strength and weaknesses of the current concepts and practices. Due a sheer size of multibillion TEMs and their growing purchasing power, it is important to have an open exchange of opinions among people sharing their passion to and expertise in consumer research. Discussion of the research directions and potential solutions to the listed above problems shall stimulate a new wave of quality consumer research.
1. The Role of Ethical Evaluation on The Purchasing of High-Involvement Eco-Innovations

Lidia Jareño-Macías, University of Granada, Spain*
Francisco-Javier Montoro-Ríos, University of Granada, Spain
Juan Sánchez-Fernández, University of Granada, Spain

We propose a new approach to marketing decision ethics (usually focused on communication issuers) by implementing Hunt and Vitell (1986)’s theoretical model for ethical decision-making processes, in order to explain consumers’ purchasing behavior of high-involvement eco-innovations, linking deontological and teleological reasoning to variables related to pro-environmental purchasing.

2. Gender Differences in the Influence of Weight on Product Evaluation

Jaewoo Park, Chiba University of Commerce, Japan*
Hiroaki Ishii, Chiba University of Commerce, Japan*

Studies on weight perception have shown that experiences of physical heaviness affect evaluation of target stimuli. However, the question of how individual differences in weight perception moderate evaluation remains unanswered. Through three experiments, we demonstrate that physical heaviness influences product evaluations positively for men but not for women.

3. The ‘Young Global Elite’ of Tomorrow: Attachment to Foodstuffs, Food Brands and Food Consumption Practices in a Liquid, Mobile World

Nina Brosius, University of Auckland, New Zealand*
Ashleigh Logan, University of Strathclyde, UK*

This study is a cross-cultural comparison between Europe and Asia that examines the ‘young future global elite’. The research demonstrates that in liquid modern times, foodstuffs and food consumption practices remain and exist as highly embedded infrastructures that anchor individuals to their native and other cultures.

4. First Steps Towards Conceptualization and Measurement of Consumers’ Perceptions of the Nostalgia Aroused by Brands

Anne-Laure Bartier, UCL/Louvain School of Management, Belgium*
Mike Friedman, UCL Mons/Louvain School of Management, Belgium

Nostalgia evoked by brands is at the forefront of contemporary marketing theory and practice. To date, little attention has been paid to understanding the consumers’ perceptions of the nostalgia aroused by brands. This article outlines research designed to conceptualize, develop, and validate a new scale to measure brand nostalgia.

5. What Makes Brands Cool: An Exploration of Producer Perspectives

Geraldo Matos, University of Rhode Island*
Nikhilesh Dholakia, University of Rhode Island
Hillary Leonard, University of Rhode Island
Delancy Bennett, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Cool is hard to define but widely pursued. Many have studied Cool but few have explored it from the producer’s perspective of what makes brands cool. This study involves in-depth interviews with marketing executives from the Street/Sportwear industry. Preliminary findings identify core elements of a Cool brand.
6. Emotional Suppression as a Moderator for the Impact of a Transgression on Consumers’ Satisfaction

Tatiane Silva dos Santos, Universidade Federal do Paraná
Paulo Henrique Muller Prado, Universidade Federal do Paraná
Danielle Mantovani, Universidade Federal do Paraná*
José Carlos Korelo, Universidade Federal do Paraná

This research demonstrates that consumers who are better able to suppress the negative emotions experienced a lower decrease in their satisfaction evaluation of the relationship with the seller after a transgression than those who had a lower negative emotion suppression capacity behavior.

7. Lone no more: The Sociable Ethical Consumer

Minbye Lee, University of Leicester, U.K.*
Andrea Davies, University of Leicester, U.K.
Matthew Higgins, University of Leicester, U.K.

Based on 6 months ethnographic participant observation and in-depth interviews with a self-defined ethically conscious consumer group in Korea this study reconceptualises ethical consumption and problematises contemporary views of the ethical consumer. Theoretical and methodological implications for the practice of qualitative research in a Korean context are also advanced.

8. Giving Yourself a Gift this Christmas

Theeranuch Pusaksrikit, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, Thailand*

This research aims to examine the immigrants’ self-gift behavior while they experience their Christmas event in the UK. Employing the critical incident technique, it attempts to see how effective self-gift giving as a tool to express the identity and how self-gifts can help to increase the immigrants’ emotional well-being.


Jackie Clarke, Oxford Brookes University, UK*
Jillian Farquhar, University of Bedfordshire, UK

In this paper we look to develop initial understanding of the collective consumption practices of multiple occupancy households who share dwelling spaces. The rationale for this research is rooted in the growth of alternative modes of dwelling in the UK where non-family groups share living space and as a consequence are involved in communal decision making about household consumption of both goods and services. The findings are from the preliminary analysis of two focus groups held in different locations (Oxford and Luton) and concentrate on the emergent categories of experience, international dimensions, and fluidity.

10. Evoking Informant Self-Reflexivity: A Case of Courtship within the British Sikh Community

Amandeep Takhar, University of Bedfordshire, United Kingdom*
Pepukayi Chitakunye, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*

Our longitudinal study contributes to reflexivity theories by focusing on evoking informant self-reflexivity. The findings reveal that techniques such as “reiterative questioning” encourage informants to delve deeper into their emotions about courtship. We argue that evoking informant self-reflexivity is as significant to the interpretive research process as researcher reflexivity.
11. The Curious Case of Curiosity: Unpleasant Advertising and Curiosity

Liesbet Van den Driessche, Ghent College University, Belgium*
Iris Vermeir, Ghent University, Belgium
Mario Pandelaere, Ghent University, Belgium

This research examines whether evoked curiosity can explain the effectiveness of unpleasant advertising. Our results indicate that although unpleasant advertising did not lead to behavioral intention with regard to the advertised product, unpleasant advertising did evoke curiosity. Curiosity itself proves to be a strong predictor of behavioral intention.


Peter Darke, York University, Canada
Jennifer Argo, University of Alberta, Canada
Monica Popa, University of Saskatchewan, Canada*

We show that financial advisors’ luck in areas unrelated to investment influences consumers: they invest more when learning that the advisor is lucky. The effect is prominent for consumers who believe in good luck, and arises regardless of advisor’s expertise: consumers place as much stock in luck as in competence.

13. Speak to the Leg: A Post-paralympic Analysis of Consumer-object Relations

Rikke Duus, University of Leicester, United Kingdom*
Andrea Davies, University of Leicester
Michael Saren, University of Leicester

This paper reviews and re-theorises objects in consumer research with specific focus on consumer-object relationships. The research investigates individuals’ experiences of living with a prosthetic limb using phenomenological interviews, diaries and autodriving. Findings are analysed from a posthuman perspective and reports on descriptions of companionship, dependence/independence, identity formation and normality.

14. Process of Solution Design: the Curator’s Intent and the Viewer’s Interpretation

Hee Young Chung, Hongik University, Korea*
Nara Youn, Hongik University, Korea*

We address how to best minimize mismatch occurrences between what the supplier intends to provide versus what the customer envisions, especially in the context of art exhibition. We conducted ethnographic research featuring in-depth interviews and participant observation on the curator’s design process of the solution and the viewer’s consumption experience.

15. The Weibo of Desire: Transforming Consumptionscapes in the Social Media Era

Jingyi Duan, University of Rhode Island, USA*
Nikhilesh Dholakia, University of Rhode Island, USA

This study explores how Weibo, the Chinese Twitter, constructs consumers’ desires and promotes consumerism. Content analysis is applied to 250 consumption related Weibo messages. The findings show that idealizing and fantasizing are the ways that consumers use social media to construct and project their desires, and Weibo significantly boosts consumerism.
16. Perceived Benefit of Social Media and Commitment on Service

JungKun Park, University of Houston, USA*
Teling Chung, Iowa State University, USA*
Younhee Lee, University of Houston, USA

This study examined the effects of consumers’ perceived functional, economic, experiential, and symbolic benefits on consumers’ multidimensional commitments to social media service usage. Three dimensions of commitment were discussed, including calculative commitment, affective commitment, and normative commitment. Moderating effects of satisfaction of information via social media and social influences of using social media service are examined too.

17. Impacts of Expected and Experienced Processing Fluency on Consumer Judgment

Yuwei Jiang, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong*
Jiewen Hong, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong

Results from two studies suggest that the interpretation of the fluency experience is contingent on how easy or difficult people expect the incoming information would be processed. Specifically, participants had higher evaluations of the target when their experienced processing fluency conformed (vs. did not conform) to their expected processing fluency.

18. Experiencing Works of Art Enhances Creativity: The Role of Inspiration as a Mediator

DongWhe Ahn, Hongik University, Korea*
Nara Youn, Hongik University, Korea*

This research empirically documented the effect of experiencing works of art on creativity. Participants experiencing works of art were inspired more, and showed higher performance in creative search for solutions. Positive affect induced from inspiration explained the effect of art appreciation on creativity.


Tino Bech-Larsen, Aarhus University, Department of Business Administration*
Jessica Asheman-Witzel, Aarhus University, Department of Business Administration
Mario Mazzocchi, University of Bologna, Department of Statistical Sciences

Whether consumer’s self-regulation characteristics (Higgins, 1997) influence their support for different types of policy instruments (e.g.: information campaigns, taxes, bans) for the promotion of healthier diets, was explored in a survey with 3003 consumers in five European countries: Belgium, Italy, Poland, the UK and Denmark.

20. Measuring the Full Breadth of Consumer’s Attitudes Towards Consumption

Rajesh Iyer, Bradley University, USA*
James Muncy, Valdosta State University, USA

Anti-consumption is simply one area upon a larger continuum of consumers’ attitude towards consumption. A thirteen-item scale was developed which measures consumers’ pro/anti-consumption attitudes at both the micro and the macro level. The scales psychometric properties were also studied.
**21. Female Perceptions of TV Models Attractiveness and its Effect on Advertising Likability: An Exploratory Study**

Essam Ibrahim, Senior Lecturer in Marketing, Edinburgh University Business School, UK*
Anel Baimuratova, Edinburgh University Business School, UK
Abeer Hassan, Lecturer, University of West of Scotland*

This exploratory study aims to examine female’s perception of TV models attractiveness and its effect on advertising likability. A mixed-method was adopted to collect data from 140 respondents in Eastern Europe. The results suggest that the normally attractive models generated a greater degree of positive effect, which have improved advertising likability.

**22. Peer Group Influences in Development of Self-Brand Connections**

Burak Tunca, University of Agder, Norway, burak.tunca@ui.a.no
Sigurd V. Troye, Norwegian School of Management NHH, Norway

Although peers’ role in consumer socialization process is well acknowledged, little is known with regard to their influence in development of self-brand connections. The paper addresses this gap and finds that, compared to children, adolescents perceive higher self-image congruity with peers and incorporate larger number of peer-associated brands into self-descriptions.

**23. Consumers’ Reactions to Assortment Reductions and Shelf Categorizations**

Thomas Rudolph, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland
Liane Nagengast, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland*
Christina Heidemann, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland*

In order to support customers in their shopping processes, retailers should take into account (1) the actual assortment size and (2) the categorization of the shelves. We show in a field setting that both instruments simplify customers’ shopping processes. The combination of both instruments shows the most positive outcome.

**24. Sharing and social Bonds, A Disruptive View of Luxury**

Rosa Llamas, University of Leon, Spain*

This research aims to study the multiple meanings of luxury in the consumer society. To address this objective, an interpretive study based on verbal accounts and visual methods was carried out. Findings illustrate that sharing, togetherness, belongingness, and the gregarious self are keys in understanding the contemporary view of luxury.

**25. Giving with the Hand that Bites: A Fresh Perspective on Communal Consumer Loyalty Programs**

Bernard Cova, Euromed Management Marseille France*
Eric Remy, Iae Rouen France*

Communal loyalty programs have been introduced as a new form of loyalty programs that elicit emotional connections with the brand. Unlike approaches where loyalty of this kind is based on a gift’s linking value, we analyse it in relation to the concept of the gift that bites.

**26. The Effects of Shopping Goal Concreteness on Shoppers’ Behavior and Inspiration in Online Retailing**

Thomas Rudolph, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland
Tim Böttger, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland*

We reveal that shoppers with concrete (vs. abstract) shopping goals focus less on product displays, but more on user recommendations in e-retailing. Attention paid to navigation elements and product displays correlated negatively with shoppers’ inspiration, whereas attention to user recommendations and low shopping goal concreteness had positive effects on inspiration.
27. Is “Angry” More Fun than “Happy” for Mobile Game Name? A Pleasure-Arousal Perspective

Sara H. Hsieh, National Chengchi University, Taiwan*
Crystal T. Lee, National Chengchi University, Taiwan*
Timmy H. Tseng, National Chengchi University, Taiwan

Drawing from pleasure-arousal theory, the present research reveals how the affective cue of brand name exerts influence on consumers’ experiential consumption. Findings show brand name with negative affective cues exhibit greater pleasure arousal than positive affective cue, and the effects are moderated by the need for entertainment and game involvement.

28. Draw Me Closer: The Role of Psychological Distance on Mobile Device Attachment

Sara H. Hsieh, National Chengchi University, Taiwan*
Timmy H. Tseng, National Chengchi University, Taiwan*
Crystal T. Lee, National Chengchi University, Taiwan

Drawing from construal level theory, this study contributes to exemplify the antecedent factors and the consequence of mobile device attachment. Results show psychological distance plays a fundamental role in affecting self image congruity, ritual attachment and normative influence to drive attachment that leads to psychological well being and loyalty.

29. Measuring Strategies to Resist Persuasion

Marieke Fransen, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands*
Peeter Verlegh, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Claartje ter Hoeven, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

In the present research, we developed a scale to measure strategies that people adopt when resisting persuasive communication. Nine strategies (e.g., counter arguing, selective exposure, and avoidance) were observed. As expected, the likelihood of adopting the strategies shows a positive correlation with negative affect and a negative correlation with age.

30. Risk Perception and the Commitment to Reduce Global Climate Change in Spain

Nuria Rodriguez-Priego, University of Granada, Spain
Francisco J. Montoro Ríos, University of Granada, Spain
Lucia Porcu, University of Granada, Spain*

An online national survey (n = 602) was conducted to examine drivers of risk perception toward global climate change, and level of commitment that participants would make in order to reduce it. Multiple hierarchical regression analysis was conducted in four steps and a structural equations model was tested.

31. A Meta-Analysis of Mimicry Outcomes in Consumer Research Settings

Susan Andrzejewski, Franklin & Marshall College, USA*
Dhruv Grewal, Babson College, USA
Krista Hill, Northeastern University, USA

This meta-analysis quantitatively summarizes the literature on the relationship between mimicry and consumer response (e.g., evaluation, consumption, behavior, etc.). In addition, this meta-analysis explores several potential moderators of the relationship between mimicry and consumer response (e.g., domain, nonverbal vs. verbal mimicry, conscious vs. nonconscious mimicry, etc.).
32. The Effects of Seeing Attractive Women Pictures on Females’ Pro-Social Behavior

Xiuping Li, National University of Singapore, Singapore
Meng Zhang, the Chinese University of Hong Kong*

Results from three studies support our prediction that exposure to pictures of attractive women as those portrayed in mass media will enhance other women’s pro-social behavior in unrelated tasks.

33. Tipping Point in Consumer Choice: The Case of Collections

Leilei Gao, The Chinese University of Hong Kong*
Yanliu Huang, Drexel University
Itamar Simonson, Stanford University

We show that owners of one collectible item are no more likely to start collecting than non-owners. Possessing two items, however, significantly increase consumer’s likelihood to collect. This is because two is a difficult-to-justify status quo and collecting serves as a means to justify consumers’ past purchase of redundant items.

34. The Impact of Goals on Inferences and Evaluations of Hybrid Products

Moon-Yong Kim, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, South Korea*

This research proposes that (1) consumer’s inferences of a hybrid product generating multiple-category inference can change if only one of the key focal goals attached to the hybrid product is activated; and (2) the active goal can lead to a higher evaluation of the hybrid product (i.e., the valuation effect).

35. The Effect of Color Harmony in Charity Advertisements on Pro-Social Behavior

Nara Youn, Hongik University, Korea*
Chang Yeop Shin, Hongik University, Korea*
Jiyeon Nam, Hongik University, Korea*

We show when the degree of color harmony used in charity ads evokes disfluency, the path from disfluency to high construal to empathy explains the effect of color harmony on pro-social behavior. Moderate (vs. low or high) level of disharmony between colors led to enhanced pro-social behavior.

36. Shopping in the MRI Tube? A Comparative Ethnography of Consumer Behaviour in and Outside of the Scanner

Niklas Woermann, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark*
Vanessa Dirksen, University of Constance, Germany*

We present an ethnographic study of fMRI research on shopping undertaken in a leading laboratory and show how the consumers taking part experience the process. We then compare this to consumers’ everyday experiences of just that kind of behaviour the fMRI studies focus on. Challenges and suggestions for improvements follow.


Gema Vinuales, University of Rhode Island, USA*
Nikhilesh Dholakia, University of Rhode Island, USA

Curatorship is a natural propensity in the social media. This study explores consumers’ behavior on the fully visual Pinterest B2B corporate sites. Preliminary findings show that individuals’ interest in the imagery of the corporate environment leads to following behaviors. Consumers’ attention is directed towards visuals that generate emotions.
38. The Effects of Perceived Goal Progress and Assortment Size on Choice

Moon-Yong Kim, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, South Korea*

When consumers buy multiple items simultaneously, this research proposes that (1) consumers’ perceived level of goal progress will affect their relative choice share of vices (vs. virtues); and (2) their perceived goal progress will moderate how assortment size influences their choice between vices and virtues and their variety-seeking behaviors.

39. “Piled Higher and Deeper”: Insights into “The PhD Comics” as a Co-Creative Consumption Experience

Markus Wohlfeil, Norwich Business School, University of East Anglia, UK*
Mar Solé, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark*

The Piled Higher and Deeper comic strips appeal to a very distinct brand community that is narrowly defined by common shared experiences as postgraduate researchers. This netnographic study explores whether, to what extent and how members of Piled Higher and Deeper brand community are getting actively involved in co-creation activities.

40. Subjective Expected Utility and Subjective Well-Being: Effect on Luxury Consumption in Transitional Economies

Gregory Kivenzor, Rivier University, USA*

Transitional economies represent a substantial market potential. However, understanding of the “anomalies” of consumer behavior in those countries lacks specificity due to dynamic changes in economic, social and political environment. The paper applies a concept of subjective expected utility and analyzes consumer subjective well-being in BRICS.

41. Brand Extensions and Consumer fit: Prototype or Exemplar

Pronobesh Banerjee, Winston Salem State University, North Carolina, USA
Ze Wang, University of Central Florida, USA
Sanjay Mishra, University of Kansas, USA*
Surendra Singh, University of Kansas, USA*

More than 80% of new products are brand extensions; the majority of them fail in the marketplace. In a series of experiments, we find that by increasing the match between the extension type (prototype or exemplar) and audience characteristic (independent versus interdependent self-construal), a firm can bolster its extension’s success.

42. Branding 2.0: The Interplay of Fair-Trade and Private Labeling, and The Role of Gender

Mastoori Yassaman, IE Business School*
Stamatogiannakis Antonios, IE Business School
Mukesh Mudra, IE Business School
Luffarelli Jonathan, IE Business School
Dilney Gonçalves, IE Business School

We find that the fair-trade label increases the quality perception and purchase intentions of females only for private labels. In opposition, the fair-trade label increases the quality perception and purchase intentions of males only for national brands. We attribute these findings to differences in the perception of fair-trade between genders.
43. Working and Consuming Together: Talking about New Workplaces and Collaborative Consumption

Stéphanie Toussaint, Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium*
Mike Friedman, Université catholique de Louvain, Belgique
Nil Özçağlar-Toulouse, Université Lille Nord de France - SKEMA Business School, France

This research investigates the consumption of ‘shared’ spaces, activities and objects in the realm of workplaces. It explores how consumption expresses itself within new forms of working environments, by looking at public workplaces, collaborative consumption and consumers in motion.

44. Social Media as Innovation: Students’ Perceptions on the Use of Social Media Tools in Pedagogy

Stacy Neier, Loyola University Chicago, USA*
Linda Tuncay Zayer, Loyola University Chicago, USA*
Carolyn Rivers, Loyola University Chicago, USA*

This research examines students’ perceptions of the use of social media tools in the classroom. Findings suggest the pedagogical use of social media is related to perceptions of instructor and university innovativeness. This research contributes to a growing body of literature about social media and offers theoretical and pedagogical implications.


Srividya Raghavan, Icfai Business School, Hyderabad, India*
Sridhar Samu, Indian School of Business, Hyderabad, India*

The relationship between attitude functions, its affective-cognitive bases and attitude was proposed in an integrated framework of persuasion. This framework was tested using SEM. The implications are demonstrated in a set of matching studies which indicate that matching both functions and affective-cognitive bases is more effective than matching only one.

46. Favorites Fall Faster: Consequences of Initial Preference

Alexander DePaoli, Stanford University, USA*
Uzma Khan, Stanford University, USA

We investigate the role of initial stimulus “liking” on the rate of satiation. Intuitively, it might be assumed that stimuli “liked more” tend to be enjoyed longer and more consistently. However, we demonstrate that more liked stimuli may satiate at a much faster rate than much less liked stimuli.

47. In a New Grade, In a New Pair of Shoes: Child-Parent Negotiation in the Back-to-School Shoe Shopping Ritual

Katherine Sredl, University of Notre Dame, USA*
Butigan Ruzica, Zagreb University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Marketing

We conducted ethnographic research on the back-to-school shoe shopping ritual to challenge the assumptions of consumer socialization of children. The findings show that children are active participants in consumption rituals: they re-appropriate the evaluative frameworks of their parents and articulate desires, influenced by peers.
48. Lacking Control, Touch, and Willingness To Pay—Implications to Online and Offline Retailers

Wumei Liu, Sun Yat-Sen Business School, Marketing Deaprtment Sun Yat-Sen University, Guangzhou, China*
Haizhong Wang, Sun Yat-Sen Business School, Marketing Deaprtment Sun Yat-Sen University, Guangzhou, China*

Touch is very important to consumers and marketers. Past research found touch and imagery touch can both increase willingness to pay. We found that this effect can only apply to consumers with low personal control, for the high control, their willingness to pay did not affected by touch or not.

49. The Impact of Feedback from other Consumers When Contributing to Brand Pages

Salvador Ruiz de Maya, Universidad de Murcia*
Maria Sicilia Piñero, Universidad de Murcia
Mariola Palazon Vidal, Universidad de Murcia

Consumers may get feedback from others when participating in brand pages. We implemented a two phases survey to analyze how the likes and comments people get as reactions to their posts impact them. Results show that the number of likes received increases social recognition and the intention to participate again.
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