Preface

The 11th European Association for Consumer Research Conference was held June 21-23, 2018, hosted at Ghent University this year. ACR holds a European conference every three years with the objectives of lowering research barriers, enhancing knowledge diffusion in consumer research, and offering opportunities for consumer scholars to strengthen their network for knowledge exchange and collaborative research. We believe that this year’s EACR delivered on these goals.

We were happy to be able to provide inspiring and thought-provoking keynote addresses from two of Europe’s leading scholars: learning psychologist Jan De Houwer and branding and luxury-marketing “guru” Jean-Noël Kapferer.

We were very pleased with the quality of the program we were able to put together. We received a total of 391 submissions, of which 196 submissions (50.1%) were accepted. Below are the submissions and acceptance rates across types of papers (special sessions, competitive and working papers). Although our acceptance rate might not seem especially low (selective), rest assured that it was not because we and the reviewers were particularly lenient this year. Instead, it was because we were fortunate to receive numerous strong submissions that cleared the high acceptance bar that we had set.

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<th>Submissions</th>
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<td>120</td>
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<td>Working papers</td>
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<td>52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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Not only we received many high-quality submissions, but we were pleased to see that these submissions came from all over the world, with a total of 29 different countries represented. Of all attendants, 51% came from Europe, 28% from North America, 14% from Asia, 5% from the Middle East, 2% from Australia, and .5% from Africa. A truly international conference awaited attendants in the heart of Europe. A strong attendance rate of the sessions underscores that the conference program was much appreciated by the EACR participants. We were also happy to see people enjoy themselves during our social program (i.e., welcome reception in the Town Hall with address from the deputy mayor, city walk, chocolate and wine tasting, boat trip and gala dinner).

Finally, we would like to say a big THANK YOU to everyone involved in the planning and organization of the conference: the program committee, the many volunteer reviewers, the ACR crew, and especially the PhD students and administrative staff of the consumer research group at Ghent University. Without you, this event would not have been possible.

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Michel Tuan Pham
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Jeremiah Iyamabo, IESE Business School, Spain
Irigo Gallo, IESE Business School, Spain
Priya Raghubir, NYU-Stern Business School, USA

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Joydeep Srivastava, Temple University, USA
Yuqian Chang, Temple University, USA

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- Hyewon Oh, University of Illinois, USA
- Joseph K. Goodman, The Ohio State University, USA
- Incheol Choi, Seoul National University, South Korea

### Saving for Experiences versus Material Goods

**Paper #2:**

- Masha Ksendzova, Boston University, USA
- Grant Donnelly, Harvard University, USA
- Michael I. Norton, Harvard University, USA

### The Effect of Pooling Financial Resources on Relationship Satisfaction

**Paper #3:**

- Emily N. Garbinsky, University of Notre Dame, Australia
- Joe J. Gladstone, University College London, UK
- Cassie Magiliner, University of California Los Angeles, USA

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**Paper #4:**

- Ximena Garcia-Rada, Harvard University, USA
- Ovul Sezer, University of North Carolina, USA
- Michael I. Norton, Harvard University, USA

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### Competitive Papers—Full

#### Does Face Orientation Affect the Perception of a Model and the Evaluation of Advertised Product?

- Jaewoo Park, Musashi University, Japan
- Charles Spence, University of Oxford, UK
- Hiroaki Ishii, Seikei University, Japan
- Taku Togawa, Chiba University of Commerce, Japan

#### Neural Similarity and Neural Activation Offer Robust Out-Of-Sample Predictions of Video Ratings

- Hang-yeen Chan, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- Ale Smidts, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- Maarten Boksem, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands

#### Is Social Capital Context Dependent?

**The Weight Watchers’ Online and Offline Brand Communities**

- Michelle Bergadaà, University of Geneva, Switzerland
- Nada Sayarh, University of Geneva, Switzerland

#### When Objects Trump Subjects

- Russell Belk, York University, Canada
- Marian Humayun, York University, Canada

#### Self-Gifting in Interdependent Cultures: Lonely Mothers and Self-Compassion

- Satoko Suzuki, Hitotsubashi University, Japan
- Saori Kanno, Komazawa University, Japan

#### Trying to Fit In: How Consumers Change to Embody Marketplace Aesthetics

- Aphrodite Vlahos, The University of Melbourne, Australia
- Marcus Phipps, The University of Melbourne, Australia
- Robin Canniford, The University of Melbourne, Australia
- Julie Ozanne, The University of Melbourne, Australia

#### Riches to Rags to “Riches” – Consumers’ Identity (Re-) Construction after Having Overcome a Spell of Poverty

- Julius Stephan, Aston University, UK
- Kathy Hamilton, University of Strathclyde, UK
- Aliakbar Jafari, University of Strathclyde, UK
Competitive Papers—Extended Abstracts

How to Influence Consumer Food Waste Behavior: Effects of Temporal Distance and Providing Nutritional Information on Consumption Choices and Disposal Behavior
Marit Drijfhout, University of Groningen, The Netherlands
Jenny van Doorn, University of Groningen, The Netherlands
Koert van Ittersum, University of Groningen, The Netherlands

Throwing Out the Apples and the Oranges: A Comparison of Methods to Measure In-Home Food Waste
Erica van Herpen, Wageningen University, The Netherlands
Ivo van der Lans, Wageningen University, The Netherlands
Nancy Holthuysen, Wageningen University and Research, The Netherlands
Mariska Nijenhuis-de Vries, Wageningen University and Research, The Netherlands
Tom Quested, Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP), UK

Same Same but Different – Using Anthropomorphism in the Battle against Food Waste
Katrien Cooremans, Ghent University, Belgium

I See You and I See Myself – Communication, Individual Characteristics and Others-View Explaining Choice of Imperfect Products
Jessica Aschemann-Witzel, Aarhus University, Denmark
Ilona E. de Hooge, Wageningen University, The Netherlands
Tobias Otterbring, Aarhus University, Denmark

Trickle-Round Signals: When Low Status Becomes High
Silvia Bellezza, Columbia Business School, USA
Jonah Berger, Wharton, USA

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Susan Danissa Calderón Urbina, IE University, Spain
Antonios Stamatogiannakis, IE University, Spain

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Ayalla Ruvio, Michigan State University, USA
Naomi Mandel, Arizona State University, USA
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The Influence of Power on Preference for Anthropomorphized Brands Depends on Perceived Competence
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Steven Shepherd, Oklahoma State University, USA
Olivier Trendel, Grenoble Ecole de Management, France

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Erlinde Cornelis, San Diego State University, USA
Heather Honea, San Diego State University, USA
Iana Castro, San Diego State University, USA

Matte Packaging and its Effect on Perceived Naturalness of a Product
Eva Marekghott, WU Vienna, Austria
Bernadette Kamleitner, WU Vienna, Austria

All That Glitters Is Not Gold: Packaging Glossiness, Attention, and Trustworthiness
Yegyu Han, Virginia Tech, USA

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Ulrich Orth, Kiel University, Germany
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Debbie Hill, Sheffield Hallam University, UK
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Benedetta Cappellini, Royal Holloway University of London, UK
Vicki Harman, University of Surrey, UK
Liz Parsons, University of Liverpool, UK

Don’t Trust the Humans: The Impact of Avatars on Persuasion
Polina Landgraf, IE Business School, Spain
Antonios Stamatiannakis, IE Business School, Spain

Give Me Tactile Information, but Only if Not Diagnostic:
The Effects of Online Information Sources on Consumers’ Attitude
Carmela Donato, LUISS Guido Carli University, Italy
Maria Antonietta Raimondo, University of Calabria, Italy

A Tactile Toolbox: Documenting Consumer Responses to Haptic Feedback in Advertising.
Rhonda Hadi, University of Oxford, UK
Ana Valenzuela, Baruch College, CUNY and ESADE Business School, USA
O. H. Groth, Baruch College, CUNY, USA

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Does Random Placement to Central Positions Improve Performance? Centre Effects in the Classroom and the Olympics

EXTENDED ABSTRACT
A laboratory experiment and two field experiments, in two different contexts, provide evidence that central positions, assigned at random, improve performance. Study 1 identifies students’ schemas about classroom positions. Study 2 examines performance in seven MBA courses and finds that students randomly pre-assigned to seats in the centre performed better on their examinations and overall. Study 3 shows that athletes assigned at random to center lanes in 2000-2012 Olympics 100-meter race ranked better, had higher likelihood of progression to the next round, and raced more rounds. Implications for the routes through which central position affects performance, including self-signaling, are discussed.

Central positions may confer an advantage as people almost unanimously believe that the centre is better. A person in the centre of a group is perceived to be more central than others for a group outcome (Taylor & Fiske, 1975). A product placed in the centre of a shelf space array is perceived to be more popular (Valenzuela & Raghurib, 2009) and showcases a choice advantage (Shaw, Bergen, Brown & Gallagher 2000, Chandon, et al. 2007). In the domain of sports, athletes prefer to be placed in central lanes (Green et al., 2001). In a choice of location context, Christenfeld (1995) found a centre-advantage in bathroom stall choice, and Attali and Bar-Hillel (2003) found that people believe the right answer on a multiple-item quiz is the central option.

In the domain of people, using data from the TV show, The Weakest Link, where players play for a possible pot of $1 million, Raghurib and Valenzuela (2006) showed that players who were assigned at random to central positions did better in the game: they were less likely to be voted out as “weakest links” and, therefore, played more rounds of the game, were more likely to get to the final round, and were more likely to win. In fact, later experimental studies showed that those who believed more strongly in the “important people sit in the middle” schema were, in fact, more prone to inferences based on central position: a “centre-stage” effect. Changing the rules of the end-game to a cooperative context eliminated the effect. Rodway, Scheppan, and Lambert (2012, see also Rodway, Scheppan & Thoma 2016) use the “centre-stage” reasoning to explain preferences for pictures and judgments of facial attractiveness.

Bar-Hillel (2011, 2015) proposed an integrative model of when central positions enjoy an advantage as a function of whether or not the domain is interactive or not, and whether it is cooperative or competitive. In an “interactive [context]… the payoff … is affected by … at least one other [person]” (Bar-Hillel, 2015, pg. 422). A classroom context, where grades are on a curve, and a sports context, such as the Olympics, are both interactive, as one person’s performance is contingent on the performance of others in the group. Bar-Hillel (2011, 2015) proposed that when the domain was interactive, whether or not the interaction was competitive would determine whether there would be a centre advantage. We examine Bar-Hillel’s model in two competitive contexts: an MBA classroom (Studies 1 and 2) and the 100-meter race (Study 3).

Overall, results of Study 1 (n = 207) demonstrate, in a seat choice task, that MBA students would prefer occupying a more central position significantly more when being less confident in their performance. A two-level (Confidence: well prepared, not confident) within-subject ANOVA on the Center-Stage preference variable revealed a significant main effect (F (1, 171) = 30.84; p < .001; η2 = .15), reflecting that students chose to sit more center-stage when they were not as confident (Ms = 3.09 more central vs. 3.77 less central). This pattern suggests that students use the position in the classroom as a mechanism to buffer themselves from performance uncertainty. Supporting this prediction, the pattern of central (vs. frontal) position preference was stronger for those who believed there were motivational benefits to being in the center (F (1, 169) = 3.14; p < .07; η2 = .019).

Study 2 (n= 7,209 observations) investigated whether seating position had an effect on performance when not selected strategically by the student himself/ herself. Random assignment of student to position rules out any self-selection bias. Objective assessments rule out measurement bias. Data was provided blind to the authors by the academic office of a graduate school with a one-year MBA degree. Data consisted of seating position and grades for 7 courses encompassing 3 cohorts (three consecutive years: ns = 418, 422, and 438 enrolled students by year). The classrooms used were designed as a semi-circular amphitheater. Results of the regression analysis on the entire data set with each observation treated as an independent vari-
able, show that the more center-stage students are, the higher their examination performance, $B = -0.02$, $t(6717) = -3.18$, $p = .001$, $R^2a = .001$, assignment performance, $B = -0.01$, $t(5609) = -2.04$, $p < .05$, $R^2a = .001$, and overall performance, $B = -0.02$, $t(7135) = -3.03$, $p = .002$, $R^2a = .001$, though not their CP performance, $B = -0.01$, $t(3189) = -.66$, $p = .51$, $R^2a = .000$ (similar findings when examining only data for the core courses in Term 1 taken by all students).

In Study 3 ($n = 237$), we examine objective performance measures from the Olympics 100-meter race over four consecutive Olympics (2000-2012). We test whether athletes placed at random in central starting positions in an initial heat perform better in terms of rank, progression, and number of rounds in which the athlete participated before being eliminated. Analysis showed a contingent pattern: male athletes assigned at random to the central position in the first heat consistently performed better on all measures than those in the lane next to them. They ranked better (interaction gender and distance from the centre ($F(1, 233) = 3.34$, $p = .069$, $\eta^2 = .014$, Figure 1), were more likely to progress to the next round ($M_{centre} = 55.10\%$ likelihood vs. $M_{next-to-centre} = 37\%$, $\chi^2 (1) = 3.76$, $p = .05$, Figure 2). Finally, both male and female athletes raced for more rounds when running the initial heat in a central position ($M_{centre} = 1.84$, $SD=.99$ vs. $M_{next-to-centre} = 1.54$, $SD=.85$; $F(1, 234) = 5.85$, $p = .016$, $\eta^2 = .024$) compared with those assigned to the lanes adjacent to centre. Thus, across the three measures, the centre-effect was more prevalent for men versus women.

Given the random assignment to classroom seat and lane, one of the routes through which performance was higher may be self-signaling: where the person assigned to a given position uses their position as a source of information about their ability leading to their improving their performance. Thus, it may be possible that position may also be informative to the person placed in the position. This information could potentially impact their motivation to perform better. This “centrality-produces-efficacy” route would need to be further researched at the individual motivation and aspirational goal level, especially in the context of gender differences.

**Which Side is Right? Visual Price Dominance Under Low and High Engagement**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Building on research in visual field effects and brain hemispheres, the authors predict that under low engagement, prices positioned to left will be visually dominant, whereas under high engagement, prices positioned to the right will dominate. Four studies support this assertion. Study 1 demonstrates that in a retail field setting, customers purchase more of a product when the price is not dominant. Study 2 uses a response time study to demonstrate visual dominance, and Study 3 offers evidence of activation associated with visual dominance in a neuroimaging study. Finally, Study 4 examines the impact of visual price dominance on value perceptions.

Imagine you want a new television. As you consider the options you like in the store, you realize that all the models you are considering feature the price on their right side. Why is that? This research examines whether and how the location of the price might affect consumers’ price perceptions and product evaluations, moderated by engagement. Specifically, this study predicts an engagement by visual field interaction that influences attention. This interaction leads to greater attention to the left-side visual field when engagement is low. When engagement is high though, it prompts greater attention to the right-side visual field. When information receives more attention, it also gets weighted more heavily (Bagchi and Davis 2012). When price information appears in the visual field and dominates attention, it causes the product to be perceived as lower in value.

Consistent with these predictions, participants in a pretest indicate greater purchase intentions for a product for which the price is in the right-side visual field rather than the left ($p < .05$). Then the first main study uses a single, three-level factor (visual field location: left, right, control). A promotion for a product (Arizona iced tea) featured a large sign, on the front of a product cooler in an actual store, highlighting a discounted price (i.e., $.89; regular price $.99). During the first promotional week, the price appeared on the right side of the sign; in the second promotional week, it was shown on the left side. The measure of the effect of visual field location on consumer response reflected the number of units of the target product sold on average in two-hour intervals. The results show that a price in the left visual field prompted a non-significant increase in sales ($p > .22$), whereas a price featured in the right visual field led to significantly more sales ($p < .05$, see Figure 3).

Then in Study 2, 66 right-handed students participated in a 2 (engagement: low, high) X 2 (visual field location: left, right) between-subjects study. Their levels of engagement were manipulated, using scenarios adapted from Howard and Kerin (2006) and Suri et al. (2012). Half of the participants saw a description of a television and its price in their left visual field; the other half saw the same
information in their right visual field. Participants then had to recall the price of the television and recognize its slogan. Their response times were measured using DirectRT software. With an analysis of variance to test the effect of visual field location and engagement on participant response times, this study reveals, as expected, that under low engagement, participants responded faster if the price was located in the left visual field (p < .01). Under high engagement, they instead responded faster when the price was located in the right visual field (p < .05).

In Study 3, 10 right-handed people participated in a 2 (engagement: low, high) × 2 (visual field location: left, right) mixed design study. They were told that as part of a marketing study, they would see six prices in a row on the screen in front of them and be asked to remember the location of one of those prices. To assess the relative level of activation in the left versus right hemisphere during the task, the authors measured blood flow in each participant’s prefrontal cortex, at 16 different points across his or her forehead. To examine asymmetric activation in the prefrontal cortex, they used functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIR; Ayaz et al., 2012). As the participants grow more engaged in the task, activation of the left prefrontal cortex should increase. In support of this prediction, greater oxygenated-hemoglobin concentration changes were observed in the anterior left dorsolateral prefrontal cortex of more involved participants (p < .01).

Finally, in Study 4, 105 right-handed students participated in a 2 (engagement: low, high) × 2 (visual field location: left, right) between-subjects design. Half of the participants saw information with the products price on the left; the other half saw the products price on the right. As predicted, when they were less engaged, consumers believed the product offered greater value when its price was located in the right visual field (p < .05) (Grewal, Monroe, & Krishnan 1998). If they were more engaged, consumers perceived that the product offered higher value if its price was located in their left visual field (p < .05; see Figure 4). Also as expected, in the high engagement condition, participants perceived lower monetary sacrifice if the price appeared in their left visual field (p < .01). An analysis with PROCESS Model 8 reveals moderated mediation; that is, the effects of price location are mediated by sacrifice perceptions in the high (95% confidence interval excludes 0: -1.29 to -1.7) but not in the low (95% confidence interval includes 0: -.28 to .58) engagement condition.

These findings represent an exciting opportunity for retailers and advertisers. The vast majority of retail contexts induce relatively low engagement among shoppers. This research suggests that placing product prices in the right visual field will increase consumers’ perceptions of quality and value and thus lead to greater demand for those products.

Eye Buy: Visual Exploration Affects Product Choice

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Shoppers prefer centrally-located products, but this can constrain shoppers’ choices and retailers’ sales. We show that attentional priming influences visual exploration of a product display, thereby influencing product consideration and choice. In two lab studies and one field experiment, priming attention to the periphery (vs. center) affected eye movements toward, mouse clicks on, choice of, and memory of peripherally-located products. This effect of visual exploration on peripheral product choice was accentuated among impulsive buyers.

Shoppers generally prefer centrally-located products (Christenfeld 1995; Shaw et al. 2000) because they infer that the most popular products are placed centrally (Valenzuela and Raghubir 2009) and they tend to fixate central products immediately prior to choice execution (Atalay et al. 2012). Consequently, placing a product at or near the center of a supermarket shelf can increase its sales (Chandon et al. 2009). Central locations on retail shelves and online stores thus are a highly valued asset (Dreze et al. 1995). Notably, however, this central bias can constrain shoppers’ choice by limiting views of more peripherally-located products, and it may constrain retailers’ sales because fewer views elicit fewer sales (cf. Orquin and Loose 2013; Pieters and Warlop 1999). So, how can shoppers’ fixation on central products be overcome, and what are the consequences for product choice?

We show that priming shoppers’ attention influences their visual exploration of a product display, thereby influencing their product consideration and choices, especially for impulsive shoppers. Our attentional priming task requires participants to view a series of objects, attending selectively to objects either in the center (narrow attention) or the periphery (broad attention). We predicted that attentional breadth would affect visual exploration (i.e., viewing relatively more or fewer of the products distributed across a display; Büttner, Wieber et al. 2014) and peripheral choice (i.e., the number of peripheral, non-central products chosen). We further predicted that this effect is accentuated among impulsive shoppers (Rook and Fisher 1995), who may be especially susceptible to visual exploration (cf. Büttner, Florack et al. 2014).

Study 1 (N = 150) tested whether attentional breadth affects visual exploration of product displays. First, we showed participants 20 object pairs, with one object in the center and the other in the periphery (Figure 5A), and they named aloud either the central object (narrow attention group) or the peripheral object (broad attention group) of all 20 pairs. Then, in a product memory task, participants viewed an array of 15 products (Figure 5B) and subsequently reported all the products they could recall. Finally, in an oddball detection task, participants viewed a series of 18 product shelves from
a retail shop, two of which included a peripherally-located oddball product that did not belong in the shown array (Figure 5C and 5D). As predicted, the broad attention group recalled more peripherally-located products (t = 3.22, p < .01, d = .53) and detected more oddball products in the periphery (t = 2.84, p < .01, d = .47) than the narrow attention group. Thus, activating broad attention increased visual exploration of peripherally-located products.

Study 2 (N = 78) is a field experiment that tested whether attentional breadth affects product choice, and if so, whether that effect is mediated by visual exploration. We intercepted customers entering a grocery shop and we asked them to wear mobile eye-tracking glasses. After manipulating their attentional breadth (as in the prior study), we directed them to an aisle of candies and snacks, and we asked them to place in their basket any products they were interested in buying. As predicted, the broad attention group fixated significantly more products (t = 2.72, p < .01, d = .65; Figure 6) and chose more products (t = 1.97, p = .05, d = .44) than the narrow attention group. Moreover, visual exploration significantly mediated the effect of attentional focus on product choice (B = .44, CI = .13 to .94; Figure 7). Thus, activating broad attention increased visual exploration of shelves in a retail shop, which in turn increased product choices. While our measure of purchasing was hypothetical, it nonetheless involved shoppers choosing real products in an actual retail shop.

Figure 5. Example stimulus from the attentional manipulation task
(A), product array from the product memory task (B), and product arrays from the oddball detection task, Study 1. Oddball products were a can of beer (C) and a spray can of whipped cream (D)

Figure 6. Distribution of visual attention (fixations) across the 47 product compartments by the broad and narrow attention groups, Study 2

Figure 7. The effect of attentional breadth (narrow = 1, broad = 2) on product choice (number of products chosen) was fully mediated by visual exploration (number of product compartments fixated), Study 2

Study 3 (N = 129) tested whether the effect of attentional breadth on product choice is moderated by chronic buying impulsiveness. We again manipulated participants’ attentional breadth as
in Studies 1 and 2. Participants then viewed an arrangement of nine refrigerators of frozen food products (Figure 8), clicking on all the products they would like to purchase, and finally they reported their buying impulsiveness (Rook and Fisher 1995; \(a = .84\)). The broad attention group hypothetically chose more products from peripheral locations (t = 3.21, \(p < .01\), \(d = .58\)), and more products overall (t = 2.12, \(p < .05\), \(d = .38\)), than the narrow attention group. This effect was moderated by buying impulsiveness, \(B = .48, t = 2.56, p = .01\), with the Johnson–Neyman point at a buying impulsiveness score of 3.55 on a 1-7 scale. 54% of participants were above this J-N point in buying impulsiveness (Figure 9). In other words, more controlled shoppers were unaffected by the attentional manipulation, whereas more impulsive shoppers were indeed affected: Directing impulsive shoppers’ attention to the center or periphery subsequently decreased or increased their choice of peripherally-located products.

Consumers generally prefer choice options from the center of a display, such as a shelf in a shop or a product line-up on a website (Atalay et al. 2012; Chandon et al. 2009). Yet, consumers do often choose products from the periphery of a display (Valenzuela and Raghubir 2009). So what leads those consumers to the periphery? The present research demonstrates that inducing broad attention expands shoppers’ exploration from centrally-located products toward peripherally-located ones, ultimately increasing the quantity and variety of products chosen. These results thus complement prior theorizing on location-based product choice: Central product choice may be the default, but it is easily and strongly counter-acted by broad attention. This research also provides novel insights on impulsive buying. We show that impulsive shoppers’ tendency to choose more products is accentuated at the peripheries of product displays, especially when stimulated to visually explore the display. Alternatively stated, the centrality bias in perception and choice seems to be particularly pronounced for non-impulsive shoppers.

**Swiping Is the New Liking: How Product Orientation Shapes Product Evaluations Conveyed Through Swiping**

Apps like Tinder or Stylect require consumers to evaluate people/products by swiping them, to the right or left. This work explores whether product orientation affects the product evaluations expressed by swiping movements. Building on stimulus–response compatibility theory, which indicates the facilitation of certain motor responses by task-irrelevant visual aspects of a stimulus, a horizontal product orientation, cueing a horizontal direction, is predicted to facilitate responses in a congruent direction. Four studies indicate that when people use swiping movements to evaluate objects, their evaluations are influenced by the object’s orientation, whereas evaluations conveyed through button presses reveal no orientation effect.

The conversion to touchscreen interfaces has introduced “swiping” as a movement to interact with products onscreen. The current study assesses a bias in product evaluations conveyed by swiping and consider product orientation as a source of bias. As such this work relates to a body of research showing that product display pervasively influences evaluations (e.g., Keller, Markert, and Bucher, 2015; Valenzuela and Raghubir, 2009). Our central proposition that people are more inclined to swipe in a direction congruent (vs. incongruent) with the direction primed by an object’s horizontal orientation builds on two arguments.

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**Figure 8. Product array, Study 3.** Participants hypothetically purchased products by clicking on them, which placed a red dot on each chosen product. Hypothetical purchases were analyzed according to their selection from the left, central, or right refrigerators.

**Figure 9.** The effect of attentional breadth (broad v. narrow) on product choice (i.e., products chosen from peripheral locations) was moderated by buying impulsiveness, Study 3. The solid diagonal line is the slope of the moderation, dotted lines are 95% CIs, and the solid vertical line is the Johnson-Neyman point, above which the moderation was significant.
First, we draw on the vast experimental psychology literature on stimulus response compatibility effects dealing with the interference of irrelevant stimulus features with the proper response to it (Kornblum, Hasbroucq, and Osman, 1990) to explain the origin of this effect. The dominant explanation for SRC phenomena proposes that when responses and stimuli vary along the same dimension, dimensional overlap occurs, resulting in the automatic activation of responses congruent with the irrelevant feature (Kornblum et al., 1990). Similarly, a horizontal orientation can prime congruent swiping responses that also imply movement along the horizontal direction. Two studies indeed show that product orientation affects swiping responses but not key press responses (which lack a similar horizontal directional component). Moreover, study 2 demonstrates that the effect is attenuated in case dimensional overlap is reduced.

Second, the process via which response activation translates into response selection is different from that in SRC tasks, where errors occur due to speeded responses. Participants generally realize making mistakes. In evaluation tasks, participants are unlikely to realize that automatically activated responses conflict with their actual evaluations, as numerous studies illustrate the contextually constructed nature of evaluations (Schwarz, 2006). If orientation congruent responses affect people’s swiping responses unwittingly when conveying subjective evaluations, time pressure should not moderate the effect. It should moderate, though, when respondents make objective judgments. Allowing sufficient time, consumers can override the influence of product orientation on objective classification judgments but not on subjective evaluations (study 3). Study 4 shows that rightward oriented products are no longer preferentially swiped to the right once consumers become aware of this bias, if consumers are given sufficient time to render their evaluation.

Study 1 demonstrates the hypothesized effect: Rightward (vs. leftward) product orientations elicit more like responses when the positive evaluations are mapped at the right side and evaluations are conveyed through swiping. No orientation effect is expected for button pressing though. Fifty-eight participants were instructed to evaluate thirty pictures of toys, each with a clear, randomly determined leftward or rightward orientation, on their attractiveness as a gift for children. Half of the participants were instructed to evaluate the thirty pictures of toys, each with a clear, randomly determined leftward or rightward orientation, on their attractiveness as a gift for children. Half of the participants conveyed evaluations by pressing the green versus red onscreen presented button (respectively on the right and left side), and the other half conveyed evaluations by swiping the picture to the red or green button. The results point to a significant effect of orientation in the swipe condition, but not in the button press condition (Figure 10).

Study 2 introduces a second directional cue (i.e., implied motion) as a moderator. In this study, 185 participants evaluated the aesthetic appeal of 12 pictograms, with a randomly determined leftward or rightward orientation, either by pressing a red or green button or by swiping the pictograms to the left or right. The 12 pictograms fell into three categories: static images (no implied motion), congruent images (orientation and implied motion are in the same direction), and incongruent images (implied motion is opposite to orientation). As expected, we find that: (1) there is no effect of orientation on evaluations conveyed via button presses, (2) the effect of orientation on swiping responses replicates for the first two sets of stimuli, but (3) is attenuated for the third set of stimuli as dimensional overlap in not unequivocally established here (See Figure 11).

![Figure 11. Mean Estimated Likelihood To Like A Product As A Result Of Pictogram Orientation, Response Mode, And Pictogram Type](image)

Figure 11. Mean Estimated Likelihood To Like A Product As A Result Of Pictogram Orientation, Response Mode, And Pictogram Type

Note. * significant difference with a p-value < .05, ** significant difference with a p-value < .001

Study 3 focuses on objective vs. subjective judgments and shows that the effect is moderated by time pressure for the former, whereas time pressure does not affect the extent to which the latter type of evaluations are influenced. Ninety-six participants first evaluated 30 toys on their attractiveness. Next, they assessed whether the toys represented animals or not (objective judgment). Each time, responses were conveyed by swiping the toys, either presented with a leftward or rightward orientation, to the left or right. Half of the participants performed these tasks under time pressure (responses within 1000ms). The results (see Figure 12) indicate that response speed does not alter the impact of stimulus orientation for subjective judgments, while it is crucial for objective judgments. We attribute this difference to a lack of awareness of the influence of stimulus orientation in case of the subjective judgments.

Study 4 tests the role of awareness more explicitly. A sample of 122 participants evaluated 30 shoes, with randomly determined right- or leftward orientations, on their aesthetic appeal. Time pressure was manipulated as in study 3. Before the experiment started, half of the respondents were made aware that product orientations could bias evaluations. Results (see Figure 13) show that when participants were not informed about the possibility of shoe orientations influencing their evaluations, rightward oriented shoes have a higher chance of being liked than leftward oriented ones and this was not moderated by time pressure. When participants were warned, time pressure moderates the orientation effect. Participants not experiencing time pressure could override the influence of product orientations and even tended to prefer leftward oriented shoes. We observed no
differences in preferences when time pressure is applied, suggesting that even under time pressure, participants were able to inhibit the orientation-based response.

In summary, we find that consumers tend to swipe in the direction congruent with product orientation. This effect unfolds because stimulus-response overlap serves as a source of response action priming, and because consumers implement the activated response as they lack awareness of possible interference. By focusing on horizontal product orientations rather horizontal location effects (Chandon et al., 2009; Christenfeld, 1995; Janiszewski, 1990), we contribute to literature on the influence of irrelevant visual product presentation cues on product judgments.

REFERENCES

Paper 1


Paper 2


Paper 3


Paper 4


Inside the Numbers: Unexpected Influences of Numbers on Consumers’ Behavior  
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Paper #1: Smaller Numerical Differences can Enhance Product Appeal  
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Paper #2: Do Consumers Expect Values to Increase or Decrease over Time?  
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Paper #3: Holistic Processing and Left-Digit Effect  
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Paper #4: Not Just a Number: The Effect of 100% Claims on Consumers  
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Smaller Numerical Differences can Enhance Product Appeal

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We demonstrate that smaller numerical differences can be perceptually larger, enhancing product appeal. When a change in a product’s numerical information is decimal-to-integer (3.4 to 4) rather than integer-to-integer (3 to 4), consumers infer that intermediate values were skipped, moving the product into a different category and increasing product attractiveness.

This research explores situations in which smaller numerical differences can be perceptually larger. We find that when a product’s numerical information changes from a decimal number to the next integer (e.g., 5.4 to 6), consumers are likely to find the product more appealing than when the change is between two consecutive integers (e.g., from 5 to 6), even though the second difference is mathematically larger. We propose that when a product’s version number or rating changes from a decimal number to an integer, consumers infer that the product has skipped over intermediate values and crossed the threshold into a new category, which indicates greater improvement.

Specifically, when consumers encounter a decimal number, they may infer that it is drawn from a relatively precise numerical scale. Distances between units on more precise scales can be perceptually greater, and may suggest that there are intermediate values (e.g., Pandalaere, Briers and Lernbrecht 2011; Zhang and Schwarz 2012). If decimal numbers are perceived as intermediate values, integers could then become endpoints or category boundaries. Building on research showing the impact of category boundaries on consumers’ perceptions and behavior (e.g., Irmak, Walker-Naylor, and Bearden 2011; Isaac and Schindler 2013), we suggest that a decimal-to-integer change is perceived as boundary crossing. Consumers should therefore conclude that the product has improved substantively, making it more appealing. If the change is from one integer to the next, consumers have no reason to assume that intermediate values exist, so an integer-to-integer difference will be perceived as more sequential.

The decimal-to-integer effect is contingent on the perception that a category boundary has been crossed. It should not occur for changes within the same integer (e.g., from 2 to 2.6), as there is no integer boundary. If the decimal number is close to the integer (e.g., 2.8 vs. 3), the difference may be too small for the integer to be a meaningful category boundary, which should also eliminate the effect.

Because the decimal-to-integer effect derives from the perception that intermediate numerical values have been skipped, information about the nature of the scale should moderate the effect. Explicit information indicating that there are intermediate (decimal) values should make integer-to-integer changes more meaningful, but should not affect the perception of decimal-to-integer changes. Because integer-to-integer changes would then skip over more intermediate values, the effect should be reversed. In three studies, we provide support for the proposed effect and its underlying process.

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

In study 2, participants (n=387) read about two different software versions or two different camera models, with different combinations of version/model numbers. The pattern of results was similar for both products, and the data was combined for the analysis. The difference in version numbers had a significant effect on participants’ interest in the product (F(4, 377) = 4.07, p = .003). Post-hoc analyses revealed that interest in the product was lower in the 2 vs. 3 condition (M = 4.68, SD = 1.79) compared with the 2.4 vs. 3 condition (M = 5.61, SD = 1.14, p < .001) and compared with a 2.7 to 3.3 change (M = 5.33, SD = 1.55; p = .02). There was no significant difference between the 2 vs. 3 condition and the 2 vs. 2.6 condition (M = 5.00, SD = 1.64; p = .62) and the 2.8 vs. 3 condition (M = 5.14, SD = 1.55; p = .20). These results indicate that the effect is driven by the combination of numerical precision and the crossing of a numerical category boundary.

In study 3, we explored the moderating role of explicit cues regarding scale precision. Explicit information about scale precision should indicate that integer-to-integer changes have also skipped over intermediate values, making them seem boundary crossing; because they skip over more intermediate values than decimal-to-integer changes, the effect should be reversed. We also measured the mediating role of perceived category change in driving the effect. Participants (N=190) read about a camera whose “color accuracy rating” had improved from 5 to 6 (integer condition) or from 5.4 to 6 (decimal condition). They were provided a scale illustration that included only integer values (round scale) or one that also included intermediate decimal values (precise scale).

A 2 × 2 ANOVA revealed a significant interaction (F(1, 186) = 9.42, p < .001). In the round scale condition, the camera was evaluated more positively when the color accuracy improved from 5 to 6 (M = 5.78, SD = .90) as opposed to an improvement from 5 to 6 (M = 5.35, SD = .82; F(1, 186) = 5.32, p = .02). In the precise scale condition, the camera was evaluated more positively in the integer condition (M = 6.06, SD = .70) compared to the decimal condition (M = 5.59, SD = .97; F(1, 186) = 7.96, p = .005). As expected, perception of category change mediated the effect, such that the mediation was
positive in the round scale condition (b = .10, SE = .07; 95% CI: .0009 to .27), and negative in the precise scale condition (b = -.12, SE = .06; 95% CI: -.27 to -.017).

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

**Do Consumers Expect Values to Increase or Decrease over Time?**

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We show that people associate quantity changes with increases—when shown one data point (e.g., this year’s profit) and asked to estimate next year’s profit, consumers expect the estimate to be higher. We report findings from five studies and contribute to the forecasting literature.

Do we expect a company’s profits to be higher or lower next year over this year? Likewise, will companies advertise more next year versus this year? Why? Consider profits. A priori there is no reason to expect profits to increase or decrease next year—some companies do better than others. However, we suggest that consumers’ expectations vary systematically—given profits this year, consumers expect profits next year to be higher. This occurs because consumers associate change with increase (rather than with decrease).

Is this normative? Imagine estimating the number of trees cut each year in the rain forest. We suggest that irrespective of negative framing—number of trees cut—or positive—the number of trees saved, people expect increases next (vs. this) year. This also rules out optimism bias (Weinstein 1980) as an explanation because optimism would lead to a lower estimate in the negative condition.

Our theory is related to, yet different from research on trend forecasting. For example, Harvey and Bolger (1996) suggest that consumers expect trends to continue. Relatedly, Thomson and colleagues (2013) find that, people are better at generating forecasts for, and at identifying ascending, rather than descending, trends. This occurs because people are more often exposed to increasing (vs. decreasing) data series (Harvey and Bolger 1996).

We make a broader point: even when consumers have only one data point (and not a trend), they expect the next point to be higher. These effects emerge because of learned association—because consumers encounter increasing (vs. decreasing) trends more often, they believe change implies increase. Indeed, physical changes in everyday life are associated with increases—saplings grow into trees, cubs become tigers, and children, adults. Abstract changes also lead to increases—trees grow stronger and tigers more ferocious. Thus, we believe that people tend to generate increasing estimates because they naturally expect quantifiable events to improve over time. Taken together, we predict change is associated with increase and demonstrate this in five studies.

If change is associated with increases because of learned association, then people should generate more examples of events leading to increases, than to decreases or remain unchanged. In a pilot study using a 3-cell design (N=127), participants listed as many things they could think of that increased, decreased, or did not change in their life. As expected, the number of examples in the increase (vs. decrease or no-change) condition was higher (Mincrease = 5.02, Mdecrease = 4.38, Mno change = 3.63, F(3, 123) = 10.57, p < .001). Thus, people are able to remember positive (vs. negative) changes more.

In study 1, we demonstrate our basic effect—even when provided with only one data point, people predict increases. We used a 2 timeframe (near vs. far) by 6 replicates design (N=501). Each replicate included a brief introduction and a benchmark value. For example, in the rainforest scenario, we indicated that in 2010, 113,000 square miles of rainforest were cut; we then asked participants to estimate the amount cut in 2012 (near) or in 2015 (far). As predicted, in each replicate, participants expected the estimates to be higher than the benchmark for both near and far conditions. Furthermore, consistent with the belief that change is associated with increases, the estimate was higher in the far (vs. near) condition. Participants also indicated what they thought while providing estimates. Thought protocol analyses suggest that they thought more about increases (vs. decreases or status quo) in all the conditions, thus confirming our intuition that change is associated with increase.

In study 2, using three replicate scenarios from study 1, we manipulated frame to be positive or negative (N=62). For instance, in the rainforest scenario, participants in the positive (negative) frame read about the number of trees saved (cut) in the rainforest and provided an estimate for next year. Both estimates were higher than the benchmark (ps < .05), ruling out optimism as an explanation. To wit, participants estimated in the negative frame that the numbers of trees cut would increase but also estimated in the positive frame that the number of trees saved would increase, even if it is logically impossible for both to increase.

In study 3 (N=97), participants imagined searching for a new AC unit to buy. They were told that the company would be making changes to the AC efficiency level or price depending on condition, and were subsequently asked whether they would buy the AC at that moment or wait. If consumers predict both favorable and unfavorable attributes to increase over time, this might lead to different buying decisions depending on the focal attribute. As predicted, participants in price condition were more likely to buy the product sooner for fear that the price would increase (Mprice = 4.81) than participants in efficiency condition, who hoped the efficiency would increase (Mefficiency = 3.47; F(1, 95) = 22.40, p < 0.001).

If the association between change and increase is learned, then participants should respond faster to changes that relate to increases (vs. decreases). We measured response latencies in study 4 to provide such evidence. Participants read one of three scenarios, and were provided a benchmark value (e.g., number of visits to the ER made this month; N=115). Following this value, we presented them with 60 potential future estimates (e.g., ER visit next month). In each case, participants assessed if this estimate was likely to be correct or not. As predicted, with an increase (vs. a decrease), participants deemed the change more likely and also responded faster.

Together, we show that changes are associated with increases. Thus, we generalize the research on trends by showing that even when only one data point exists, consumers expect increases (vs. decreases). However, contrary to this research, which suggests that consumers expect both increasing and decreasing trends to continue, when only one value is presented, the estimate is higher. We believe these findings are likely to impact not only numerous marketing contexts (e.g., cost, efficiency, performance expectations) but also provides important insight into how people evaluate numbers.

**Holistic Processing and Left-Digit Effect**

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The paper examines when people are more likely to fall prey to the left-digit effect. We show that when people make stimulus-based (vs. memory-based) evaluations, the left-digit effect is enhanced. We
argue that this effect is driven by the relative salience of digital (vs. holistic) processing of price information.

This paper focuses on a well-documented and one of the most pervasive biases in behavioral pricing known as the left-digit effect (Manning and Sprott 2009; Thomas and Morwitz 2005). The effect manifests as individuals’ tendency to anchor their judgments of numeric differences on left-most digits. Falling prey to the left-digit bias, people judge the difference between $8.00 and $6.99 ($=1.01) to be larger than that between $8.01 and $7.00 ($=1.01). While its robustness and implications have been demonstrated in a variety of contexts, the conditions that facilitate the left-digit effect remain unclear.

Building on the behavioral pricing literature (Cheng and Monroe 2013; Monroe and Lee 1999; Vahneue and Dreze 2002) and the cognitive psychology literature (Thevenot and Barouillet 2006), we propose that people compare prices in two ways: by comparing them digit-by-digit under digital processing and by estimating approximate price differences under holistic processing. When people compare prices (e.g. $8.00 and $6.99) digitally (i.e. as digit sequences – 8-0-0 and 6-9-9), they are more likely to exhibit the left-digit effect. When they compare prices holistically (i.e. as rough approximations ï¿½8 and ï¿½7), the left-digit effect is reduced. We argue and show empirically that reference price type (stimulus-based vs. memory-based) drives price processing (digital vs. holistic) and, consequently, affects the magnitude of the left-digit effect. When people rely on stimulus-based (memory-based) reference prices, they are more likely to rely on digital (holistic) price processing and are more (less) susceptible to the left-digit effect.

Study 1 tested our predictions using supermarket scanner data. We inferred reference price type from product category usage: infrequent (vs. frequent) category users were assumed to rely more on stimulus-based (vs. memory-based) reference prices (Kyung and Thomas 2016; Rajendran and Tellis 1994). Thus, infrequent (vs. frequent) category users were expected to be more susceptible to the left-digit effect. Analysis of choice data supported our predictions.

Study 2 manipulated reference price type in a controlled experiment. The study employed a 2 (left-digit difference: small vs. large) x 2 (reference price: stimulus-based vs. memory-based) between-subjects design (n=145). Participants rated pairs of premium brand and store brand prices, four fillers and one test pair. Test pair prices were $4.01 vs. $3.00 ($4.00 vs. $2.99) in the small (large) left-digit difference condition. Participants saw premium and store brand prices on the same screen (separate screens) in the stimulus-based (memory-based) condition.

We found a marginal effect of left-digit difference (F(1,141)=3.26, p=.073), and an interaction between left-digit difference and reference price (F(1,141)=4.84, p=.029). The effect of left-digit difference was significant in the stimulus-based condition (Mssmall LDD=3.43 vs. Mlarge LDD=2.58, F(1,141)=8.08, p=.005). The effect was not significant in the memory-based condition (Msmall LDD=2.83 vs. Mlarge LDD=2.92, F<1). Consistent with our predictions, the left-digit effect was stronger when people relied on stimulus-based (vs. memory-based) reference prices.

Studies 3 and 4 ruled out alternative process accounts of the interaction between left-digit difference and reference price. One could argue that memory-based reference prices reduced the left-digit effect not because people relied more on holistic processing, but because they were less certain of their price attitudes and gave less extreme price evaluations to small and large left-digit difference pairs. To rule out this account we introduced a numeric price difference manipulation in studies 3 and 4. If attitude certainty was driving the effect of reference price type on the left-digit effect, there would be a stronger effect of left-digit difference and a stronger effect of objective numeric difference in the stimulus-based (vs. memory-based) condition.

Study 3 employed a 2 (left-digit difference: small vs. large; within-subjects) x 2 (reference price: stimulus-based vs. memory-based; between-subjects) x 6 (numeric difference: $1.01 to $7.01, 6 levels; within-subjects) mixed factorial design (n=120*2*6=1440). Counter to the attitude certainty account, we found an interaction between left-digit difference and reference price (F(1,118)=3.86, p=.05), but no interaction between numeric price difference and reference price (F<1). The left-digit effect was stronger in stimulus-based evaluations (Mssmall LDD=6.19 vs. Mlarge LDD=6.71, F(1,118)=31.14, p<.001), than in memory-based evaluations (Mssmall LDD=6.22 vs. Mlarge LDD=6.48, F(1,118)=7.09, p<.01).

Studies 2 and 3 used 99-ending (00-ending) prices for low (high) left-digit prices. One could argue that more cognitively taxing memory-based comparisons made people less likely to infer that 99-endings prices were low or “special” prices (Anderson and Simester 2003; Rottenstreich, Sood, and Brenner 2007; Schindler 1991). To rule out this account we tested the effect of reference price type for both 99 and 75-ending prices. If inference-making was driving the results we would expect to replicate our results for 99, but not 75-ending prices.

Study 4 employed a 2 (left-digit difference: small vs. large; between-subjects) x 2 (reference price: stimulus-based vs. memory-based; between-subjects) x 3 (numeric difference: 3 levels; within-subjects) x 2 (endings: 99 vs. 75; within-subjects) mixed factorial design (n=99*2*3*2=1188). Counter to the inference-making account, we found an interaction between left-digit difference and reference price type (F(1,97)=5.00, p=.05), but no three-way interaction between left digits, reference price, and endings. The left-digit effect was stronger in stimulus-based evaluations (Mssmall LDD=5.99 vs. Mlarge LDD=6.73, F(1,97)=80.99, p<.001), than in memory-based evaluations (Mssmall LDD=5.90 vs. Mlarge LDD=6.39, F(1,97)=40.70, p<.001). The results also countered the attitude certainty account.

Study 5 (n=245) directly tested our process account. It examined the effect of number of evaluations (multiple vs. single) – a factor linked to piecemeal/holistic processing (Hochstein and Ahissar 2002; Jia, Shiv, and Rao 2014). Building on the finding that people focus more on gestalt-oriented (piecemeal) features in single (multiple) viewings, we predicted that single stimulus-based price comparisons would be similar to memory-based price comparisons. Indeed, the left-digit effect was significant in the multiple stimulus-based comparison condition (Mssmall LDD=2.18 vs. Mlarge LDD=3.34, F(1,223)=7.52, p=.007), but not in the single stimulus-based evaluation condition, nor in the memory-based condition. Consistent with the digital/holistic framework multiple stimulus-based (vs. single stimulus-based and multiple memory-based) comparisons, those expected to rely more on holistic (vs. digital) processing, produced a stronger left-digit effect.

We outline a digital/holistic framework of price comparisons and identify reference price type as a factor that determines whether and when the left-digit effect will emerge.

Not Just a Number:
The Effect of 100% Claims on Consumers

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We find that participants evaluate products less favorably when those products carry a pseudo-informative 100% claim (e.g., “100% juice”), as compared with a 99% or non-numerical claim, or even a
101% claim. This effect is triggered by enhanced focus on the symbolism of “100%” and decreased reliance on numerical information.

Many product labels include numerical claims. Consumers interpret these claims in different ways, beyond their numerical value. Non-round numbers, for example, are considered more informative and scientific than round numbers (Guang-Xie and Kronrod 2012). Correspondingly, evaluations of products associated with non-round numbers are based more on cognitions, whereas evaluations of products associated with round numbers lean more on feelings (Wadhwa and Zhang 2015). Round numbers, on the other hand, symbolize completion, and consumers are therefore more willing to accept offers with round prices (Yan and Pena-Marín 2017).

In the current research we focus on a common yet underexplored numerical claim, a 100% claim (e.g., “100% natural”). More than any other round number, 100% mathematically denotes completeness, and accordingly, in everyday language, the term “100%” stands for completeness, fullness or perfection (Lee 2014). Thus, it is not surprising that marketers intuitively believe that a 100% claim can make products more appealing, an intuition reflected in their extensive use of such claims. Indeed, Canadian consumers perceive a “100% Canadian milk” claim on milk and ice cream as an indication of product quality (Forbes-Brown, Micheels, and Hobbs 2016).

We suggest that this intuition may backfire when the 100% claim is pseudo-informative, namely, does not convey meaningful information regarding the associated product—for example, a claim stating that a drink contains “100% juice”, which does not specify percentages of fruit content or other similar information. In these cases, consumers may rely less on the numerical information conveyed by the claim, and refer more to its symbolism. In addition, because the perfection symbolized by the term “100%” might be perceived as “cheap talk” that cannot actually be measured, consumer’s product evaluations decrease.

Four experiments show that participants evaluate products less favorably when those products carry a pseudo-informative 100% claim, as compared with a 99%, non-numerical, and even 101% claim (that serves as a symbol). We further show that the effect of a pseudo-informative 100% claim is triggered by perceptions of low measurability of the information embedded in the claim, suggesting an enhanced focus on 100% as a symbol.

Study 1 tested the effect of a pseudo-informative 100% claim on evaluations. Participants (n=99) reviewed a picture of a beverage with a label that contained either a “100% juice” or a “99% juice” claim. They provided product evaluations by indicating on 7-point scales how appealing, tasty, healthy, fresh, natural, good versus bad, of high versus low quality, and close to perfection this product seemed to them (Cronbach’s a=.89). Participants also reported their perceptions of the products consumers: how successful, powerful, and high versus low in status they perceived them to be (Cronbachs a=.89). As expected, when the label contained a 100% claim, product evaluations were lower (M=4.36, SD =1.17) than when the label contained a 99% claim (M=4.81, SD=1.07; F(1, 97)=3.86, p=.05), and perceptions of the products consumers were less favorable (M=3.76, SD=1.16 vs. M=4.19, SD=97; F(1, 97)=3.93, p=.05). Thus, a product label containing a 100% claim can sometimes harm product evaluations.

Study 2 (n=153) compared the effect of a 100% claim not only to that of a 99% claim, but also to that of a non-numerical claim. To make sure the (uninformative) numbers on the label triggers our effect, we used a foreign product—a Russian jam, such that participants could only understand the numbers, but not the text, written on the label. Put differently, the text on the label was exaggeratedly uninformative for participants. A MANOVA revealed significant differences in product evaluations (F(2, 150)=4.30, p=.015) and perceptions of the product’s consumers (F(2, 150)=4.77, p=.01). Product evaluations were lower with a 100% claim (M=3.42, SD=1.16) than with either a 99% claim (M=4.06, SD=1.26, p=.02) or a non-numeric (non-understandable) claim (M=3.89, SD=.97, p=.11). Perceptions of the jam’s consumers were also less favorable with a 100% claim (M=3.02, SD=1.06) than with either a 99% claim (M=3.51, SD=1.16, p=.06) or a non-numeric claim (M=3.62, SD=.93, p=.01).

If the effect of a pseudo-informative 100% claim is indeed triggered by decreased consideration of the numerical value of 100%, and enhanced consideration of its symbolism, then our effect should emerge also when a 100% claim is compared to other, superior, claims involving percentages that are symbolic rather than numerically informative. Thus, Study 3 used a 101%-satisfaction guarantee claim. Note that while 101% has no numerical logic, a 101%-satisfaction claim may imply extra effort to satisfy consumers, which consumers may find more convincing. Participants (n=81) reviewed a hotel picture that contained either a 100% or 101% “satisfaction guarantee” claim. As expected, evaluations of the hotel were lower with a 100% claim (M=4.94, SD=0.91) than with a 101% claim (M=5.36, SD=0.84; F(1,79)=4.53, p=.04), and perceptions of the hotel’s consumers were less favorable (M=3.92, SD=1.10 vs. M=4.46, SD=1.17, F(1,79)=4.61, p=.035).

Study 4 aimed to provide more direct evidence for our hypothesis that consumers rely more heavily on the symbolism, rather than the numerical value, of a pseudo-informative 100% claim. Thus, Study 4 tested whether measurability perceptions mediate the claim effect on behavioral intentions (the mean of willingness to taste and willingness to buy the product, Cronbach’s a=.75). Participants (n=200) reviewed a picture of ice-bars that included one of three uninformative claims: Made with [100%/99%/no number mentioned] juice blend and other added ingredients. The results of a mediation analysis (PROCESS Model 4, multincategorical, with 5000 resamples; Hayes 2013) show that both the 99% claim and the non-numerical claim were perceived as more measurable than the 100% claim (B=63, SE=.28, p=.03, 95% CI [.07,1.18] and B=63, SE=.27, p=.025, 95% CI [.08,1.18], respectively). Importantly, the relative indirect effects of the difference between the 100% claim and both the 99% claim and the non-numeric claim on behavioral intentions through measurability were significant (B=.13, SE(boot)=.07, 95% CI [.02, .31] and B=.13, SE(boot)=.07, 95% CI [.02,.30], respectively), suggesting that the negative effect of a 100% claim on willingness to adopt the product ensues from perceptions of lower measurability of that claim.

Our results suggest that using 100% claims for products may sometimes have unintuitive effects on consumers, which may yield negative effects.

REFERENCES

Paper 1


**Paper 2**


**Paper 3**


**Paper 4**


Does Every Penny Count?
The Role of Perceived Donation Efficacy in Consumers’ Decision to Help
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We build on research on the dynamics of regulation, which distinguishes between the motivation to make progress and the motivation to signal personal commitment, in goal pursuit (Koo and Fishbach 2008; Fishbach et al. 2014). At times, people choose goal-directed actions with the motivation to make progress on and eventually complete a goal, whereas at other times, their main motivation is to express their commitment to pursuit of the goal regardless of progress. Likewise, we suggest that people may give to express commitment to a cause or to make progress in solving the problem. We further propose that social campaigns and fundraisers tend to rely on two common categories of persuasive appeals, which map onto and activate these distinct motivations.

First, an appeal to express support (e.g., “express your support” “show that you care”) taps into commitment-based motivation: motivation to choose more symbolic actions that are less concerned with moving the goal forward than with demonstrating that many people endorse the goal. An appeal to express support encourages many people to participate in a campaign by contributing something, even if it is a small amount, because people understand that the number of contributors matters for successfully communicating support.

By contrast, an appeal to make a difference (e.g., “make a difference,” “let’s make progress”) taps into progress-based motivation: motivation to move a goal forward, close the gap, and complete the goal. These appeals encourage actions that are designed to change the status of a goal. Therefore, when a social organization encourages people to make a difference, it communicates that the amount of contributions matters most, such that a few large contributions are as useful as many small contributions.

Accordingly, our hypothesis is that express-support (vs. make-a-difference) appeals would generate a larger number of contributions, because it motivates people to give symbolically to express their commitment. By contrast, make-a-difference (vs. express-support) appeals would generate higher average contributions, because it motivates givers to give substantially to make progress.

We report two field studies and two lab studies. Study 1 was a field study in which we mailed solicitation letters to a selected group of alumni (N = 10,189) as part of an annual fundraising campaign at a large business school. We framed the request as “express support of the school” or “make a difference for the school” in the letter. As predicted, we found a greater participation rate in the express-support appeal than in the make-a-difference appeal, but a greater donation amount in the make-a-difference appeal than in the express-support appeal.

Study 2 was another field experiment with Compassion International, including a control condition (neutral appeal) to demonstrate the observed effects were driven by the positive impact of the appeals, not by the negative impact. We asked participants to write a message to children on a campaign website and told them that the university would donate 1 cent per character submitted by each participant (i.e., the longer the message, the greater the donation amount). The participation rate was higher in the express-support condition than other conditions, whereas the average length of message was longer in the make-a-difference condition than other conditions.

Whereas field studies with real contributions provide high external validity, they also create a natural dependence between the de-
cision to give and the decision about the amount to give. To address the dependency, in Study 3, we moved to a lab setting to have participants make only one decision: either decide whether to give or how much to give. Participants were presented with one of the following appeals: expressing support, making a difference, or no appeal (control), and indicated either the likelihood of donating something (%), or the amount of donation assuming they all donate something ($). Donation rate was higher in the express-support condition than other conditions, whereas donation amount was higher in the make-a-difference condition than other conditions.

In Study 4, we provide more evidence for process underlying the distinct patterns to solicitations. In a two-step study, we showed (a) express-support versus make-a-difference appeals activate distinct motivations (commitment vs. progress), and (b) a manipulation of these distinct motivations affected the pattern of donation decisions (more giving vs. giving more).

When people join a social movement to promote a social cause, free riding and social loafing naturally result in motivational deficits. Therefore, understanding people’s source of motivation for contributing personal resources toward a social cause is critical. This research finds that different persuasive appeals evoke different motivations for giving, which has implications for whether and how much people give.

**Differences in Spending Time and Money: The Case of Charitable Giving**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

We suggest that one important consideration when donating resources is consumers’ ability to shape how their donations will be utilized, where such ability is desirable and leads to increased donations. Five studies support this proposition, demonstrating that consumers feel more control over their time (vs. money) donations, increasing donation intentions.

Charitable organizations rely both on monetary and time donations with recent research showing that Americans give over $390 billion a year (Giving USA, 2017) and that 62.6 million volunteered their time at least once a year (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). Although charities may desire donations of both money and time, there is evidence that these two resources are psychologically distinct in a number of ways (Leclerc, Schmitt, & Dube, 1995; Mogilner & Aaker, 2009; Okada & Hoch, 2004; Zauberman & Lynch, 2005) and that these differences may impact consumers’ behavior in a variety of domains, including charitable giving (Liu & Aaker, 2008).

In this research, we argue that differences in giving behavior of time and money can be attributable to how integral the donor is in the way donation is used. We predict that individuals will feel a greater sense of control over donations of time than money because when donors give their time they are present for its actual consumption, which allows donors to experience and shape the ultimate outcome of its use. In contrast, money is largely considered a means to an end (Lea & Webley, 2006), so once donors give money to a charity they are no longer instrumental in its ultimate usage. Since ability to control and influence outcomes is considered a primary motivator of behavior (Kelly, 1971; Miller, 1979) and individuals strive to be causal agents (deCharms, 1968), we predict that greater perceived control over donation outcomes will lead to increased donation intentions (and donation amounts) for time versus money.

Participants in Study 1 (N = 175) were told that the Humane Society had approached them about making a time or money donation depending on their condition and were informed that their donation would be assigned to an activity based on need. Participants indicated how much they wanted to donate (slider scale from 0 = very little time/money to 100 = a lot of time/money), and how much control they felt like they had over the way their donation would be used. As predicted, those in the time condition and wanted to donate more (MTime = 35.13 vs. MMoney = 26.23) and felt significantly greater control over their donation (MTime = 3.38 vs. MMoney = 2.06). Mediation analysis (Hayes PROCESS Model 4) revealed that perceived control over the donation mediated amount donated (95% CI: [-3.2294 to -.0181]).

Study 2 examined our predictions via moderation (Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005) by directly manipulating the participants’ ability to influence how their donations will be utilized. We predicted that once participants have the ability to shape their donation through other means, the difference between time and money would disappear. Participants (N = 185) were assigned to one of four conditions in a 2 (Donation Type: Time vs. Money) x 2 (Donation Control: Choice vs. Baseline) design. Participants were told that their college’s alumni association approached them about a program aimed at promoting donations of time or money. Half the participants were told that they can choose one of five charities for their donation while the other half were told that their donation would be assigned to one of these charities based on need. Participants answered the same questions as before. We found the expected significant interaction between donation type and control where participants showed significantly more interest in donating time (MTime = 3.93 vs. MMoney = 3.18) in the baseline condition, but not when participants chose which charity their donation would be allocated to (MMoney = 4.54 vs. MTime = 4.23). To test the role of perceived control, we conducted a moderated mediation analysis (Hayes PROCESS model 7) that yielded significant results (95% CI: .00248 to .4316).

In Study 3 (N = 121) we manipulated sense of control in an unrelated (ease of retrieve task; Cutright, et al., 2013) and measured interest in donating for both time and money to Feed the Children — resulting in a 2 x 2 mixed design. Consistent with compensatory control theories (Kay et al., 2008), we anticipated that when individuals feel a lower general sense of control that they would have greater interest in donating time but not money. A repeated measures ANOVA revealed the predicted significant interaction where low control individuals were significantly more likely than the baseline condition to be interested in donating time (MLow = 4.72 vs. MBaseline = 3.87) but not money (MLow = 3.36 vs. MBaseline = 3.45).

In Study 4a and 4b (N = 181, 205) we provide evidence for our proposed process by adding a third condition which utilized other donation forms — goods and vouchers. We reason that while purchased with money, goods/vouchers also share similarities with time in the way it allows donors to better influence how their donation will be utilized. Thus, we expected the goods/voucher condition to behave like the time condition, despite being more interchangeable with money. In these studies participants considered donating time, money, or food (4a)/gift certificates to a grocery store (4b) to Second Harvest and answered the same questions. To test our predictions, we used orthogonal contrast codes (Rosenthal, Rosnow, & Rubin, 2000). In Study 4a we find that compared to participants who considered donation of money (M = 3.77), those considering a donation of time and food (MTime = 4.37, MFood = 4.81) were significantly more interested in donating (M = 3.77), which were not different from each other. The same pattern emerged in study 4b (MMoney = 3.67, MTime = 4.25, MVoucher = 4.25). Once again, a mediation analysis (Hayes PROCESS Model 4) revealed that perceived control mediates the relationship between donation type and interest in donating.
Taken together, studies reported demonstrate a process that can explain why consumers prefer to give time over money: their perceived ability to influence donation utilization. Put differently, because a time donation can only be spent with the involvement of the donor, time donations allow the donor to take direct part in how charities use their donations. This perceived control not only increases willingness to donate, but also the amount donated.

**Personalized Hardship Sparks Donations**

**From Self-Interested Individuals**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

On a regular basis people are confronted by donation solicitations from charities that request financial contributions to help the needy. In an effort to illustrate the negative consequences of humanitarian catastrophes, these charity requests often feature single identified people. This individualizes the tragedy of the many by portraying the suffering of one person who acts as an emblem or iconic victim.

Research on the single identified victim effect (SIV; Kogut & Ritov, 2005a,b; Small, Loewenstein, & Slovic, 2007) suggests that personalizing the hardship of an individual can indeed increase donation responses (Slovic, 2007). However, empirical evidence for the SIV suggests that the effect might depend on additional factors. For example, Kogut & Ritov (2007) show that the effect is stronger for in-group victims, and Dickert, Kleber, Peters and Slovic (2011) report that only people with lower numeric skill prefer helping a single identified victim whereas people with higher numeric skill do not.

The current paper extends the investigation of factors underlying (and moderating) the single identified victim effect to the realm of people’s inherent prosocial predispositions. Thus, we examine whether the preference for helping single identified victims depends on individual differences in prosocial value orientation (Murphy, Ackermann, & Handgraaf, 2011; Van Lange, 1999). To date, much of the research on the underlying processes of the SIV effect has focused on situational cues (e.g., the number of total lives at risk or the culpability of the single identified victim) rather than dispositions of the donors. Including general prosocial dispositions in the investigation of the single identified victim effect advances theory in two important ways: First, it informs the ongoing debate about whether (and under what conditions) giving is an intuitive reaction (e.g., Rand et al., 2013). And second, it allows drawing conclusions about whether the reasons for giving to identified single victims depend on individual differences in social value orientation.

The current project features two studies in which we test the competing hypotheses that (1) prosocial individuals are influenced more by identified single victims because they also pay more attention to situational cues instead of focusing only on their own well-being (e.g., Fiedler et al., 2013) or that (2) pro-self individuals are more influenced by situational cues because they intuitively focus on their own wellbeing first and need extra motivation to consider the welfare of others. We examine the interplay of the SIV and social value orientation in a charitable giving context. The first study used the classic 2x2 between-subjects design of Kogut & Ritov (2005a) in which participants saw a donation request with either one or eight victims in an identified vs. unidentified condition. Study 2 examined the SIV by showing only one victim and varying identifiability, the scope of the victim’s symptoms, and probability that a donation would help alleviate the victim’s symptoms.

Results show support for the notion that only pro-self individuals are influenced by the situational cues whereas prosocial individuals display a high rate of giving regardless of the manipulations. In Study 1, the typical SIV effect on donations only emerged for pro-self individuals, such that a single identified victim (77%) received a significantly higher donation rate than eight identified victims (54%). Results of Study 2 confirm these findings by demonstrating that only pro-self individuals are influenced by victim identifiability, the amount of symptoms, and the probability that a donation will actually help. Whereas prosocial individuals display a higher donation rate overall, pro-self individuals give more when the single victim is identified, when the scope of the problem is limited (i.e., only few of the victim’s symptoms are presented), and donor efficacy is high (i.e., probability of a donation making a difference). Additionally, prosocial individuals report higher levels of warm glow from giving than pro-self individuals.

These results indicate that the motivation for giving is malleable depending on context primarily for pro-self individuals, whereas prosocial individuals do not seem to discriminate in their helping. This is further supported by our finding that prosocial individuals generally exhibit more warm glow, and suggests that for these individuals giving is an intuitive response. Pro-self individuals, on the other hand, react to situational cues present in SIV giving contexts (e.g., identifiability) and when giving is more effective. However, the comparatively low level of expressed warm glow indicates that giving does not make pro-self individuals feel better about the donation. This resonates with findings in the social value orientation literature that pro-self individuals are more concerned about their own well-being as well as with the efficiency of an action rather than equality (DeCremer & Van Lange, 2001).

**The “Opt-out” Effect:**

**When the Need to Choose Decreases Donations**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Choosing between donation targets is a common practice for donors who donate online. We demonstrate the “opt-out” effect – wherein donors refrain from donating when asked to choose between similar victims. This effect is driven by the fear of making a wrong decision and is attenuated when given a differentiating cue.

The need to choose between donation targets has become a common practice for donors who donate online. For example, out of a sample of 55 nonprofit international organizations dedicated to helping children, 23 request that donors sponsor a child. Of these 23 organizations, 60% (14) further ask potential donors to choose which child they would like to support and donors are faced with the dilemma of whom to help. Although asking potential donors to choose whom to help is becoming a common method to elicit donations, the question of whether this method is effective, and under which conditions, is yet to be examined.

Research on donation decisions has primarily focused on decisions that are made toward one donation target without a comparison to other targets (e.g., Lee & Feeley, 2016; Ein-Gar & Levontin, 2013). The current research aims to explore whether providing potential donors with a choice of whom to help would increase or decrease their willingness to help.

On the one hand, allowing potential donors to choose a recipient may increase attachment to the chosen recipient since a selected alternative becomes more attractive immediately after it has been chosen (Bem, 1972; Festinger, 1957). Several studies have demonstrated how choice bolsters positive attitudes toward the chosen option (e.g., Gilbert & Ebert, 2002; Lieberman, Ochsner, Gilbert, & Schacter, 2001; Russo, Medvec, & Meloy, 1996; Svenson & Benthorn, 1992).
On the other hand, offering a choice between donation targets may not be beneficial, since the choice involves the presentation of more than one person in need, which increases potential donors’ awareness of the existence of needy recipients that will not be helped. This awareness was found to decrease the “warm-glow” feelings that are associated with helping (Västfjäll, Slovic & Mayorga, 2015). In addition, the need to choose between recipients may raise an inner conflict, especially when it is difficult to differentiate between recipients who suffer from a similar misfortune, or have similar traits, such as age and gender. This tendency toward indecision may become a problem for nonprofit organizations if potential donors tend to avoid donating altogether when encountered with a choice between similar donation targets.

We suggest that when asked to choose between two similar and equally needy recipients, potential donors might avoid making a decision and refrain from donating altogether. We term this decision not to donate at all the “opt-out” effect.

Since a choice between donation targets includes a joint evaluation mode, in which individuals engage in a relatively rational, comparative decision process (Hsee & Rottenstreich, 2004), we expect individuals to show efficiency in their donation decisions (Sharma & Morwitz, 2016) and demonstrate sensitivity to scope (i.e., donate more when the scope of the problem is greater). Consequently, when presented with a choice between helping a single person in need or a group of recipients with the same need, individuals are expected to choose the group over the single victim (Kogut & Ritov, 2005). However, we suggest that when presented with a choice between helping one of two individuals experiencing a similar need, potential donors will more often refrain from helping unless they find a justification for helping one recipient over the other. We further argue that this opt-out effect may extend to even less emotionally intense choice-sets (e.g., two group of victims), as long as the two options are perceived as similar. Moreover, we expect that decision-makers’ fear of making the wrong decision will mediate the opt-out.

Across four studies, participants were presented with two donation targets and were asked to choose which one to help. Importantly, participants were given the option to refrain from choosing. We were interested in the percentage of participants who chose to opt-out and not donate at all.

In study 1 (N=301, Mage=35), we compared a focal choice-set of two similar victims with a control choice-set which included an individual in need and a group of individuals with a similar need. More participants chose to donate overall (N=220) than to opt-out (N=81). Supporting past findings, participants in the control choice-set were more likely to donate to the group (N=106; 84.8%) than to the single victim (N=19; 15.2%). This effect was replicated across all studies. Of relevance to this research, more participants chose to opt-out in the focal choice-set (N = 55; 36.7%) than in the control choice-set (N=26; 17.22%; χ²(1)=14.47, Cramer’s V=.22, p<.001).

In study 2, (N=173, Mage=38) we show that the opt-out effect is stronger in the focal choice-set (N=42; 52.5%) than in the control choice-set (N=12; 12.9%; χ²(1)=31.41, Cramer’s V=.43, p<.001), and that this effect is mediated by the fear of making the wrong decision (B=-.11, SE(boot)=.09, 95% CI [-.34, -.00])

In study 3 (N=267, Mage=39) we tested 3 choice-sets, the focal and the control choice-sets were the same as in studies 1 and 2. The third choice-set included two groups of victims with a similar need. The opt-out effect was the strongest in the focal choice-set (N=42; 46.2%) but was also strong in the new choice-set (N=35; 38.9%), compared to the control condition (N=19; 22.1%; χ²(2) = 11.62, Cramer’s V=.21, p<.003). Fear of making the wrong decision mediated the effect for the focal choice-set (B=-13, SE(boot)=.07, 95% CI [.03, .31]) and for the new choice-set (B=-.16, SE(boot)=.08, 95% CI [-.36, -.04]).

In study 4 (N=442, Mage=37), we tested 4 choice sets; a focal choice-set similar to studies 1-3 (two single girls), a new choice-set with a differentiating cue (single girl vs. single boy) and two control choice sets (control 1: single girl vs. group of girls; control 2: single boy vs. group of girls). Opt-out was the highest in the focal choice set (two girls; N=50; 45.9%) compared to control 1 (N=15, 13.5%, χ²(1)=27.66, p<.001) and control 2 (N=17, 15.3%, χ²(1)=24.24, p<.001) and to the choice-set with a differentiating cue (single girl vs. single boy: N=33, 29.7%, χ²(1)=6.10, p=.014). Interestingly, Opt out in the choice-set with a differentiating cue was still higher than both control 1 (N=15, 13.5%, χ²(1)=8.61, p=.003) and control 2 (N=17, 15.3%, χ²(1)=6.61, p=.010).

REFERENCES

Paper 1


Paper 2


**Paper 3**


**Paper 4**


Paper #1: The Art of Framing the Deal: The Salience of Restrictions vs. Rewards
Kirk Wakefield, Baylor University, USA
Priya Raghubir, New York University, USA
Jeff Inman, University of Pittsburgh, USA

Paper #2: “4” vs. “Four”: The Influence of Number Format on Perceived Magnitude and Product Evaluations
Marisabel Romero, Colorado State University, USA
Adam W. Craig, University of Kentucky, USA
Anand Kumar, University of South Florida, UK
Milica Mormann, SMU Cox, USA

Paper #3: Forgetting to Remember Our Experiences: People Overestimate the Future Salience of Past Personal Events
Stephanie Tully, University of Southern California, USA
Tom Meyvis, New York University, USA

Paper #4: Reward Salience vs. Hedonic Adaptation: Liking vs. Wanting in Response to Sequential Persuasion
Mingyu (Max) Joo, Ohio State University, USA
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The Art of Framing the Deal:
The Salience of Restrictions vs. Rewards
EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Two field studies and a series of experiments examine the effect of varying the salience of a “reward” versus a “restriction” in framing a deal. Deals often offer rewards with strings attached (restrictions). We show that presentation order of the discount and restriction determines perceptions and responses to the offer.

From sports contexts to supermarket shopping, promotions where a reward is accompanied by a restriction are ubiquitous. We define “reward” as a promotion that offers an incentive to purchase (e.g., discount). Typically, the restrictions follow the deal offer and are frequently in a smaller font, making the offer appear to be one with strings attached. One important issue facing firms that wish to impose restrictions is how to communicate the restriction such that consumers are not annoyed. Our research examines the effect of presenting the restriction prior to (versus after) the promotional reward. We propose that an offer leading with a restriction (versus reward) makes the restriction more salient and makes the subsequent deal appear to be less of an “offer-with-strings-attached,” and more of a “reward-for-incident-cost.” Three studies demonstrate this basic framing effect of switching the presentation order of the deal and its accompanying restriction. Results show that presenting the restriction prior to the reward leads to higher perceptions of deal value, purchase intentions and, ultimately, click-through rates. The effect is robust across the studies, (z = 3.24, p < .01, combining studies using the mean p value, Rosenthal, 1978).

Grewal et al. (2011) call for research to examine the relative effectiveness of ways of communicating restrictions. We argue that changing the order of the promotion and its restriction, can reframe a promotional offer to make it feel like more of a reward. Building on self-attribution theory which posits that deal evaluations are improved if consumers can attribute liking the offer for intrinsic versus extrinsic reasons (Brehm, 1966; Dodson et al., 1978; Kivetz, 2005; Scott, 1976), we argue that the same deal will be more favorably evaluated if consumers feel they have earned it by incurring a cost, as compared to it being offered to them by a company with strings attached. Said differently, a reward is, by definition, something a person gets after having done something. Thus, it follows, somewhat counter-intuitively, that making the restriction more salient by presenting it prior to the promotional deal (vs. after it), frames the offer as more of a “reward-for-cost-incurred,” than a “reward-with-strings-attached,” and improves evaluations.

We test our research questions across three contexts. Study 1 (n=265 non-US random telephone sample) is in the context of the purchase of a commemorative stamp and shows the basic effect. Participants were 265 Hong Kong residents. We used a 2 (frame: reward vs. restriction) x 2 (discount: 20% vs. 50%) between-subjects design. The restriction was a precondition: purchase of a fictional commemorative stamp collection priced at HK$25 (US$/HK$7.8). The discount was 20% or 50% off a purchase of a HK$5 stamp. A 2x2 (discount by frame) ANOVA on purchase intent reveals a significant interaction (F (1,261)=5.06, p<.05). Follow-up contrasts show that the reward frame (restriction-before-discount) elicited higher intentions (M=3.18) versus the restriction frame (discount-before-restriction, M=2.49) at the 50% discount level (F (1,262)=6.86, p<.01) but not the 20% discount level (Ms=2.94 vs. 2.79, for reward and restriction respectively, F<1).

Study 2 (n=161 US undergraduates) is in the context of an online coffee purchase and examines process. We used a 2 (frame: reward vs. restriction) x 3 (25% off, 50% off, or one free) between-subjects design. The primary measures collected were deal evaluations, deal enjoyment, positive and negative affect, and regret. Study 2 reveals that leading with a restriction leads to more positive feelings that translate into greater deal enjoyment and follow-through to higher deal evaluations and purchase intentions than leading with the reward.

Study 3 (n=329,647 basketball fans in an email-marketing field experiment) is in a professional sports context and examines external validity. In cooperation with an NBA team, this study examines the role of the reward-restriction frame in an email marketing campaign. The promotion was a limited time restriction as the offer was only available for Black Friday. Study participants received one of two emails: “30% OFF SELECT MAVS TICKETS” (N=164,823) or “SELECT MAVS TICKETS 30% OFF” (N=164,824). The two samples were matched on the team’s database in terms of contacts, accounts, and leads. The dependent measure was the click-through rate. The reward frame produced an 8% higher click-through rate of total emails sent (3.51%, N=5,788) than the restriction frame (3.25%, N=5,358, Z=4.14, p<.01). The team’s web analytics reveal that typically 12.5% of those who click-through, convert to purchases averaging $115 per order. Thus, the additional 430 click-throughs are estimated to lead to additional revenue of $6,181.

The key practical implication of this research is that when presenting a restricted promotional offer, present the restriction prior to the promotional offer. This will lead to more positive feelings towards the offer, greater deal enjoyment, improved deal evaluations, higher purchase intent, and greater click-through. From a theoretical perspective, our research adds to the work on the effect of restrictions on price promotions, showing that they can be an effective tool for increasing sales when they are associated with greater enjoyment and positive feelings.
“4” vs. “Four”: The Influence of Number Format on Perceived Magnitude and Product Evaluations

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Do consumers evaluate a pizza differently when its name is expressed as “4 cheese pizza” vs. “Four cheese pizza”? This research proposes that consumers process digits (e.g., 4) differently than number-words (e.g., Four), which ultimately leads to changes in quantity estimations and product evaluations.

The numerical cognition literature documents that digits are processed as graphic symbols, object, or pictures, while number words are processed alphabetically (Cohen Kadosh, Henik & Rubinstein 2008; Damian 2004; Ferran 1999; Besner & Coltheart 1979). The nature of number notation implies that when consumers see the digit (e.g., “4”) they gain automatic access to its magnitude information and then may proceed to naming that quantity. On the other hand, when consumers see the number word (e.g., “Four”), they cannot easily name the quantity but magnitude information is not automatically accessible. In addition to differences in information accessibility, the nature of the notation can also change saliency of quantitative information. Because product packaging mostly contains text, we propose that digits will be more salient compared to number-words and that they will pop-out (Treisman 1985). Moreover, salience can have downstream effects on magnitude perceptions. In particular, people overweight salient attributes (Taylor & Fiske 1978) and attributes that attract attention lead to higher magnitude perceptions (Folkes & Matta 2004).

Based on the above literature review, we propose that digits (vs. number words) are more salient and attract attention, which leads to higher magnitude perceptions. That is, if it is good for an attribute to be larger (e.g., more fiber content) then using digits (vs. number words) will lead to higher product evaluations.

Our first two experiments examine whether number format influences magnitude perceptions. Consistent with our expectations, we find that using digits (vs. number words) increases magnitude perceptions. First, participants considered time passage to be longer when the months were expressed in digits (e.g., “5 months”, M = 28.59 seconds) as compared to number words (e.g., “Five months”; M = 20.62 seconds; p < .05). We replicate these findings in our second study. Participants saw a chalkboard with the message: “Come in and try our Breakfast Burrito. “54” (or “Four Dollars”). Participants rated the price of the burrito as higher when the price was presented in digits rather than number words (Msymbolic = 6.17, Mverbal = 5.22; p < .05). These studies provide evidence that presenting quantitative information in digits, rather than number words, increases magnitude perceptions.

In our third experiment, we (a) replicate the above effect of using digits on higher magnitude perceptions, (b) test whether digits lead to higher product evaluations, and (3) test whether magnitude perceptions mediate the effect of digits on product evaluations. Participants were shown product packaging for whole grain cookies. The product indicated that the cookies contained “100%” or “one hundred percent” whole grain, low fat and sugar, and high fiber. We find that (a) Magnitude perceptions of wheat content are higher when the quantity is expressed in digits (M = 7.41) vs. number words (M = 6.63, p < .01); (b) Nutritional value evaluations are improved when the whole grain content is presented in digits (M = 4.87; SD = 1.14) vs. number words (M = 4.48; SD = 1.24; p < .05); and (c) Perceived magnitude mediates the effects of number format on products’ nutritional evaluation.

In experiment 4, we use eye-tracking technology to measure whether digits indeed increase attention to quantitative information, relative to number words. To do so, we manipulated number notation as well as the amount of product information presented in 17 product packages (e.g., cheese crackers, light bulbs, a car, etc.) that highlighted a quantitative benefit. Based on the principles of attention, we expect that when the amount of product information presented is large, there will be more competition for attention among product elements. Hence, digits should lead to greater attention to quantitative information when the display is visually complex. However, when the amount of information presented is small, consumers will be able to attend equally to quantitative information regardless of the number format, and hence, our effects will be attenuated. Thus, for 9 (8) out of 17 products, we included a large (small) amount of information in the package design. Across conditions, the products only differed on the number format (e.g., the cracker cheese content is “4 cheese” vs. “Four cheese”). In the session, we continuously recorded the participant’s eye movements using Tobii eye-tracking apparatus.

We find that consumers pay attention to digits (vs. number words) earlier during the product evaluation process when the products include a large amount of information (Mdigits = 5.60 seconds, Mwords = 7.16 seconds; p < .05). However, this effect is attenuated when the products contain small amount of information (Mdigits = 2.16, Mwords = 1.96; p = .49). Thus, using eye-tracking methodology, we show that digits, relative to number words, “pop out” and increase salience of the quantitative information presented on the product packaging.

So, can the mere number format (i.e., using digits vs. number words) shape consumers’ magnitude judgments and product evaluations? We show that digits (compared to number words) are (a) more salient, (b) lead to higher magnitude perceptions, and (c) positively affect product evaluations. Given the essential role numbers play in forming consumer judgments, the findings of this research have important managerial implications.

Forgetting to Remember Our Experiences: People Overestimate the Future Salience of Past Personal Events

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumers value experiences in part because of the memories they create. Yet, we find that consumers systematically overestimate how much they will retrospect about an experience. We propose that consumers are motivated to believe they will frequently talk about experiences, but overestimate the future salience of past experiences.

People enjoy retrospecting about past experiences and sharing information about those experiences with others (Tamir and Mitchell 2012). It also appears to be one of the reasons why consumers are happier with their experiences than with their material goods (Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). Furthermore, consumers seem to anticipate the future retrospection that experiences provide as they sometimes choose experiences as a function of their retrospective value (Keinan and Kivetz 2011; Ratner, Kahn, and Kahneman 1999). But how accurate are consumers at predicting the extent of their retrospection?

Because sharing one’s experiences is intrinsically rewarding, people should want to talk about their experiences. However, given the abundance of experiences people live through, people cannot continue to talk about all of their experiences indefinitely. The salience of each completed experience will quickly decline over time as it is crowded out by other experiences and the concerns of everyday life. As a result, memories of the experience will gradually recede, as will the likelihood that the experience is spontaneously brought to mind. Indeed, the majority of memories that people remember and think about have recently occurred (Crovitz and Schiffman 1974).
Yet, since consumers have a strong desire to retrospect about their experiences they may be motivated to overestimate the enduring salience of their past experiences. We therefore expect consumers to systematically overestimate how much they will retrospect about an experience. We show that this overestimation is not the result of misconstrual of the event (it persists after the experience occurred), is moderated by the positivity of the experience, and is attenuated when physical reminders are present to increase the future salience of the experience, and thus facilitate retrospection.

In our first study, participants were asked to consider an experience that had occurred 3-6 months in the past or that would occur 3-6 months in the future. After describing the experience, participants indicated how often they did (past condition) or would (future condition) think about and talk about the experience during the two months following the experience. Next, they rated the experience on a number of dimensions. As expected, participants in the future condition predicted greater retrospection than participants in the past condition actually recalled ($F(1, 157) = 15.08, p < .001$). This result held when adjusting for differences in participants’ perception of their experience ($F(1, 154) = 8.18, p = .005$) and when adjusting for the type of experiences people wrote about ($F(1, 117) = 8.79, p = .004$). Thus, people considering a future experience predict more frequent retrospection than participants report having actually engaged in after a past experience.

Study 2 was identical to Study 1 except that participants were constrained to write about a summer trip, either a trip that they had taken last summer (past condition) or one that they planned to take the following summer (future condition). Consistent with the results of the first study, participants expected to retrospect more after a future trip than they reported having actually engaged in after a past trip (Retrospection Index: M Future = 0.41, M Past = -0.41, $F(1, 82) = 24.50, p < .001$). This effect persisted after controlling for any perceived differences between future and past summer trips.

In study 3 we contacted people after the event instead, thus ruling out misconstrual of the future experience as an alternative explanation. Participants were approached a day after they attended the US Open tennis tournament and were asked to predict their future retrospection. Two months later, we measured their actual retrospection. As expected, participants predicted they would talk about their U.S. Open experience more often than they reported having done at time 2 ($F(1, 139) = 259.62, p < .001$). This overestimation was moderated by their willingness to recommend the experience ($F(1, 138) = 10.46, p = .002$). These findings indicate that the overestimation is not simply misconstrual of a future, unknown experience, and that it is more pronounced for people who feel more positively about the experience—suggesting a motivated reasoning process.

In study 4, we replicated the results of study 3 with an experience for which retrospection should be a particularly important contributor to the value of the experience. A group going on an African safari completed the survey days after returning to the U.S. and completed a follow-up survey two months later. In this study, we measured the estimated frequency of looking at pictures of the event rather than the estimated frequency of thinking about the event, since the former should be easier to objectively recall at time 2. Replicating earlier studies, participants overestimated how much they would retrospect about the safari ($F(1,26) = 21.42, p < .001$). In line with a motivational explanation, this overestimation was moderated by how much participants reported wanting to talk about the trip at time 1 ($F(1,25) = 6.078, p = .021$).

We have proposed that the overestimation of retrospection occurs because people want to recall experiences, but do not recognize the difficulty of spontaneously recalling previous experiences. In the last study, we examined this latter proposition by demonstrating that overestimation is attenuated when physical objects serve as reminders to cue retrospection.

In study 5, participants in an obstacle course fun run completed a survey in the days following the run and completed a follow-up survey two months later. In addition to indicating their frequency of talking and looking at pictures, respondents indicated whether they had purchased a souvenir. Replicating previous studies, people overestimated how much they would retrospect about the race ($F(1,152) = 97.24, p < .001$). However, a significant time by souvenir interaction showed that this overestimation was attenuated for people who purchased a souvenir ($F(1,152) = 4.32, p = .039$): souvenir owners increased actual, but not predicted retrospection (people do not intuit their impact).

**Reward Salience vs. Hedonic Adaptation: Liking vs. Wanting in Response to Sequential Persuasion**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Our research demonstrates the divergence of liking versus wanting responses after sequential exposures to persuasive messages, using a large field experiment involving more than 100,000 subjects. Whereas wanting is driven by reward salience, which grows with exposures, liking is driven by hedonic adaptation, and wanes with exposures.

Persuasion is an important context in which liking and wanting responses coexist. Further, individuals frequently experience multiple persuasive messages presented in close succession, such as a series of TV commercials, ads in a magazine, or speeches in a primary election debate. For each persuasive message, the person directly experiences the persuasion stimulus. The overall affective impact of this experience, which can derive from both emotions and cognitions generated by the persuasion stimulus, results in a liking response to the persuasion stimulus. Further, through experiencing the persuasion stimulus, the individual may form an anticipation or urge for a positive reward or relief from a state of deficiency, resulting in a wanting response for the promoted object. Lay wisdom may expect a convergence of liking and wanting responses to a sequence of persuasive messages, such that a particular serial position (e.g., going first) that increases liking of the persuasive stimuli would also increase—or at least not decrease—wanting of the promoted item. However, in a large field experiment, we observe a robust divergence of liking versus wanting over the course of multiple persuasive messages.

Liking and wanting are two foundational processes underlying the individual’s “pleasure system” that drives evaluations and decisions. Research increasingly shows that they are distinct processes with divergent properties (e.g., Berridge, 2009; Litt, Khan, & Shiv, 2010; Garbinsky et al., 2014). Wanting is generated by the appetitive anticipation of a rewarding outcome, whereas liking refers to the actual affective impact of an experienced event (Berridge & Robinson, 2016). We propose that liking and wanting may diverge in sequential response due to their different psychological underpinnings.

For wanting, we consider the process of reward salience. Past research that shows that a previous goal activation by a persuasive stimuli may increase the reward salience of subsequent stimuli. Specifically, activating the motivation for one reward (e.g., a picture of a sexy model) may increase the reward salience of other unrelated appetitive stimuli, leading to greater urgency to acquire other unrelated rewards (e.g., good food; Li, 2007; Wadhwa, Shiv, & Nowlis, 2008). Thus wanting may amplify over the series of multiple stimuli due to a reward salience “build up” effect.
For liking, we consider that liking responses over multiple stimuli may be subject to hedonic adaptation (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Nelson, Meyvis, & Galak, 2009) because affective responses tend to be reference dependent (Kahneman 1992; Li & Epley 2009). Thus when stimuli are overall liked, we may expect liking intensity to decline after the first stimulus. Consequently, for well-liked stimuli, liking and wanting may diverge. We test this proposition in a large field experiment.

Specifically, we partnered with a large national market research firm to conduct a field experiment. The firm specialized in the testing of new television commercials in the United States. For the experiment, the firm recorded 1,344 new commercials that aired on TV between 2013 and 2016, representing most of the high-expenditure campaigns during that period and covering a broad cross-section of products and services.

The ads were tested in groups of six (referred to as a “series”), for a total of 224 series. Each series was shown to a nationally representative set of at least 500 online subjects collected by market research partner companies. No subject was exposed to more than one series. The average series was shown to at least 500, and an average of 507 (rounded), participants. Thus there were 507 (rounded) x 224 = 113,535 unique subjects in the data.

Each subject was exposed to the series of six ads in a fully randomized order. After each stimulus exposure, the subject responded to several survey items (described in detail below) before she could proceed to the next stimulus in the series. The interface ensured that each ad was played in its entirety and that each subject answered every question. Thus in essence, each series was a fully randomized experiment with serial position as the manipulated factor and wanting and liking responses as dependent variables, with an average N = 507. The full sample contains 224 replications of the design with unique sets of stimuli and unique subjects in each replication.

Subjects responded to two questions of interest, namely, “I like this ad” and “I want that! (whatever you think the commercial is about)” (the text in quotes, including parenthetical, reflect the original wording provided to subjects), plus some other questions for the firms clients unrelated to this research. In each question, subjects indicated agreement to a statement by moving a slider on a horizontal scale between 0 (“Not At All”) and 100 (“Very Much”) from 0 to 100.

For wanting, we consider that wanting responses over multiple stimuli may be subject to reference dependence (Kahneman 1992; Li & Epley 2009). Thus when stimuli are overall wanted, we may expect wanting intensity to decline after the first stimulus. Consequently, for well-wanted stimuli, liking and wanting may diverge. We test this proposition in a large field experiment.

Separate regressions for liking and wanting confirmed that whereas liking is the greatest at the first position, consistent with growing reward salience.

Further, bootstrap analysis of replications contained within the overall sample showed the effects are extremely robust—liking is best at the first position for 100% of the bootstrap subsamples, and wanting is the best at the last position for 95% of the bootstrap subsamples.

Our results suggest marketers should consider reward salience and wanting, versus experience and liking separately in advertising effects.

REFERENCES

Paper 1


Paper 2


Paper 3


**Paper 4**


**Money in Context**

Theodore J. Noseworthy, Schulich School, York University, Canada

**Paper #1: How Slider Scales Systematically Bias Willingness-to-Pay: Implicit Recalibration of Monetary Magnitudes**

Manoj Thomas, Cornell University, USA
Ellie Kyung, Dartmouth College, USA

**Paper #2: Denomination Anchors: Demonstrating the Contingent Nature of the Denomination Effect as a Function of Price Level**

Elena Reutskaja, IESE Business School, Spain
Jeremiah Iyambo, IESE Business School, Spain
Inigo Gallo, IESE Business School, Spain
Priya Raghubir, NYU-Stern Business School, USA

**Paper #3: Moderators of the Denomination Effect: Role of Hedonic versus Utilitarian Consumption and Denomination**

Joydeep Srivastava, Temple University, USA
Yuqian Chang, Temple University, USA

**Paper #4: Malleable Monopoly Money: Does How You Pay for a Gift Card affect How You Spend it?**

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How Slider Scales Systematically Bias Willingness-to-Pay: Implicit Recalibration of Monetary Magnitudes

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Although organizations use text boxes and slider scales interchangeably to elicit consumers’ willingness-to-pay, nine experiments demonstrate that slider scales elicit more extreme responses than text boxes. This happens because slider scales alter the calibration of the mental number line that people use to evaluate their bids.

Today many organizations allow customers to decide how much to pay for a product or a service on technology interfaces. Online retailers such as eBay allow customers to bid on the items. Priceline allows customers to name their own prices for hotels rooms. Charitable organizations, such as Doctors Without Borders, allow donors to enter a donation amount of their choice. In many cases, the response format is an open-ended textbox where people have to come up with a price in their mind and enter it. However, with the proliferation of mobile transactions, some organizations have started using slider scales instead of textboxes due to their perceived ease of use. This has led to a proliferation of their use in mobile interfaces, web sites, and even by academic researchers.

Interchangeable use of textboxes and slider scales is based on the assumption that response formats do not change people’s responses because their values should be stable. While several studies suggest that this assumption might not be valid (Champ and Bishop 2006; Klien, Thomas, and Sutter 2007), somewhat surprisingly, none of the extant studies have examined whether valuations and bids elicited using a textbox would be any different from those elicited through a slider scale. This research focuses on the following questions: Do consumers respond differently in systematic ways when presented with textbox versus slider scale response formats? If so, then what is the psychological mechanism underlying this systematic difference? Is there a difference for ascending versus descending bids?

Across nine experiments, we show that relative to a textbox, a slider scale elicits more extreme responses in willingness-to-pay contexts. In experiment 1a, participants were shown three products in an ascending bid format where bids were made that were higher than the starting point (e.g. e-Bay) and asked to indicate their willingness-to-pay for the products through a slider scale or text box. The slider scale ($281) elicited higher bids relative to textbox format ($273, main effect of response format, F(1, 188) = 29.11, p < .01.). Experiment 1b examined descending bids (e.g. Priceline) where the bids were made that were lower than the starting point—they were asked to indicate their bids for six items using a textbox or using a slider with an anchor on either the right or left side of the scale. Participants’ average bids in both the left-to-right-slider condition ($133.24 vs. $143.49; F(1, 298) = 48.65, p < .01) and right-to-left-slider condition ($137.74 vs. $143.49; F(1, 298) = 15.52, p < .01) were lower than bids in the textbox condition. In experiment 1c, some effect holds even in a real bidding context where participants were given the opportunity to bid on a Japanese thermal mug and were all given the retail price of the item ($24) and explicitly given the same range of possible bids—those using slider scales bid higher ($18.80) than those using a textbox ($16.62, F(1, 141) = 6.54, p < .01).

We offer an explanation for this effect based on the numerical cognition literature in cognitive psychology (Dehaene 2001, 2003; Dehaene and Changeux 1993; Parducci 1965, 1995) and consumer psychology (Adaval 2013; Bagchi and Davis 2016; Cheng and Monroe 2013; Grewal and Marmorstein 1994; Lembregts and Panderela 2013; Monroe 1973; Thomas and Morwitz 2009). Building on this work, we propose that the effect of response formats on valuations is caused by a change in the boundaries of mental categories—such as low, medium, and high—that people use to judge magnitudes. When people use a textbox to submit their bids, the category boundaries are assimilated towards the starting bid on the mental number line. With a textbox, only the starting point is salient. In contrast, when people use a slider scale to submit their bid, the category boundaries are influenced by both end-points of the scale, causing people to recalibrate their mental number line. Therefore, the boundaries of the mental categories used to judge magnitudes can be quite different depending on whether the responses are elicited using textbox or slider scale.

We demonstrate this underlying process in several ways. (For the sake of brevity, the remaining results are summarized in the table below.) First, we show that the range salience effect is stronger for extreme categories that a farther away from the starting point in both bidding and non-bidding contexts. In experiment 2a, participants were asked to submit what they considered low, medium, and high bids for a product using either a textbox, slider scale, or select a bid amount from a horizontal list of bid amounts. In experiment 2b, participants were asked to submit low, medium, and high taxi fares + tip using either a textbox or slider scale. In both studies, the effect of response format increased as distance from the starting point increased, and the effect of selecting a bid amount from a horizontal list was the same as using a slider scale, providing further evidence that visualization of a number line is important for the effect. Second, we show that reducing the response range attenuates the range salience effect both by explicitly reducing the size of the range (experiment 3a, giving a small, medium, or large range of possible responses) and reducing attention to the upper end of the range through mode of payment (experiment 3b, telling people they are paying in cash v. credit). Finally, we show that the visual salience of the range moderates the range salience effect—merely including a text box with a
Denomination Anchors: Demonstrating the Contingent Nature of the Denomination Effect as a Function of Price Level

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Five studies show that at lower price/spend levels, the denomination effect replicates, but at higher price/spending levels it can reverse. This pattern suggests that the denomination effect may be driven by anchoring on price and matching it with the available denominations in one’s wallet: the Denomination Anchor effect.

The denomination effect has documented that people are more likely to purchase when they carry smaller (vs. larger) denominations. It has been explained using perceptual fluency (Mishra, Mishra and Nayakankuppam 2006), self-control (Raghubir and Srivastava 2009), disgust (Di Muro and Noseworthy 2013), and memory (Raghubir, Capizzani, and Srivastava 2017). We examine the denomination effect using choice of denomination to pay.

We propose and demonstrate that at lower price/spend levels, people choose to pay in lower denominations, replicating the denomination effect conceptually, but at higher price and spending levels, people choose to pay with the denomination that matches the price of the product. This leads to a reversal for higher priced items. Together, this pattern suggests that the denomination effect may additionally be driven by anchoring on the price of items to be purchased and matching them with available denominations in one’s wallet: the proposed Denomination Anchor effect.

Studies 1–3 establish the effect. Study 4 demonstrates its robustness to precise prices (e.g., .99€ endings). Study 5 establishes boundary conditions when the price of the product to be purchased ranges between 70%-100% of the value of the highest denomination held. The studies use US and European participants, prices in $ or €, both MBA students, and online panelists. In all studies participants were given a vignette with a certain amount to spend and the denominations in which they carried their money and a product that they had to purchase with these factors systematically varied across studies. The product options presented varied as a function of the amount of money they were asked to imagine they had, and whether it matched the value of the lower or higher denomination that they carried. Their choice of denomination to pay was analyzed. All studies used random assignments to between-subjects conditions.

Study 1 (n=661 mTurkers, Male=53%, M=36 years) used a 2 (Price match: higher or lower denomination carried) × 3 (amount: $2: $1 coin+4x$0.25¢, $2: $1 bill+4x$0.25¢, and $100: $50+5x$10) design. In the $2 conditions, the product was either Trident $1 (higher denomination price match), or Wrigley’s 0.25¢ (lower denomination price match). Analogously, in the $100 condition, the options were perfume $50, or shampoo $10. In all four $2 conditions, participants were more likely to use their 0.25¢s (71%, 96%, 70% and 96%, c2(1)=16.0, p<.001). This replicates the denomination effect using the measure of choice between denominations (Raghubir and Srivastava 2009). On the other hand, in the $100 conditions, participants preferred to pay with the denomination that matched the price: for $10, 88% chose $10 (z=9.899, p<.001), but at $50, only 19% did (z=8.07, p<.001), supporting the proposed Denomination Anchor effect.

Study 2 (n=750 panelists from Prolific Academic, a European online panel, Male=65%, M=29 years), used a 2 (Price match: higher or lower denomination) × 5 (amount: $2: $1 coin+5x$0.20, $4: $2 coin+4x$0.50, $20: $20 bill+4x$5, $100: $100 bill+5x$10) design. The price match set varied as a function of whether it was a high or a low price match depending on the amount -- for $2: Trident ($1) or Wrigley ($0.25¢); for $4: breath mints ($2), or candy ($0.50¢); for $20: duvet cover ($20) or six coast hangers ($5); for $100: a jacket ($100), or headphones ($20), for $1000: TV ($500) or camera ($100).

In the lower priced $2 and $4 conditions, participants were more likely to pay using their smaller denominations: $0.20¢ versus $20, but $0.50¢ versus $1 or $2 coins respectively (68%, 97%, 65%, 97%, c2(1)<6.5, p<.001). However, in the higher priced conditions the evidence was consistent with denomination anchors. When prices matched the lower denomination participants were more likely to pay using the lower denomination (92%, 91% and 76%, c2(1)<18.5, p<.001), but when prices matched the larger denomination they were less likely to (24%, 12%, 11% for $50, $20 or $100 respectively, c2(1)=19.25, p<.001).

In Study 3 (n= 550 mTurkers, Male=56%, M=36 years) we used a 2 (Price match: the larger denomination versus not) × 2 (amount: $100 [$50+50x$1] versus $200 [$100+100x$1]) design. In the $100 conditions, the higher and lower price-match products were perfume ($50) and shampoo ($10). In the “$200” conditions, they were a camera ($100) and shampoo ($10). In the shampoo conditions, participants were more likely to use their smaller $1 denominations (85%, 93%, c2(1)>81.0, p<.001). In the perfume and camera conditions, they were less likely to (29% and 32% for $50 and $100 respectively, c2(1)>13.0, p<.001).

In Study 4 (n=215 MBA students from a European business school, Male=74%, M=30 years) examines whether this effect holds for precise prices. Participants were given $100 as $50 bill+$5x$10, and encountered products that matched the higher or lower denomination: perfume ($50 or $49.99) or shampoo ($10 or $9.99). Replicating earlier results, participants used $10 for shampoo (93% and 92% for $10 and $9.99 respectively, c2(1)=3.30, p<.001), but not perfume (26% and 13% for $50 and $49.99 respectively, c2(1)<12.50, p<.001).

In Study 5 (n=881 mTurkers, Male=49%, M=37 years) participants encountered either a camera ($200: $100+5x$20) or perfume ($100: $50+5x$10) at prices 100%-70% of the higher denomination (Camera: $100-$90-$80-$70; Perfume: $50-$45-$40-$35). Participants were less likely to purchase a camera with $20 when the prices were 80%-100% of $100 (30%, 17%, 40% for $100, $90 and $80, c2(1)<4.70, p<.05), but not at $70 (44%, p>.05). Participants were less likely to purchase perfumes with $10 when the price was $50 or $45 (12% and 13%, c2(1)<61.0, p<.001), but not at lower prices (45% and 49%, p>.05).

To summarize, five studies show that at lower price/spend levels, the denomination effect replicates using choice of denomination as the dependent variable, but at higher price/spending levels it can reverse. Participants choose smaller denominations to make smaller purchases, but for larger purchases they choose the denomination that matches the product price. This pattern suggests that the denomination effect may be driven by anchoring on price and matching it with available denominations. This research adds to the literature on anchoring on price information (Mowritz, Greenleaf and Johnson 1998, Thomas & Morwitz 2005).
Moderators of the Denomination Effect: Role of Hedonic versus Utilitarian Consumption and Denomination Matching

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The denomination effect suggests that individuals are less likely to spend when money is in the form of a single large denomination (e.g., a $10 bill) relative to many smaller denominations (e.g., ten $1 bills). This research examines whether hedonic versus utilitarian considerations and denomination matching moderate the denomination effect.

Previous research has documented the denomination effect (Mishra, Mishra, and Nayakankuppam 2006; Raghubir and Srivastava 2009) wherein individuals are less willing to spend a specific amount of money when it is represented by a single large denomination (e.g., a $10 bill) relative to multiple smaller denominations (e.g., ten $1 bills). Raghubir and Srivastava (2009) suggest that the denomination effect occurs because large denominations are psychologically less fungible and individuals use large denominations as a way to control and regulate spending.

The current research examines two factors that may moderate the denomination effect. First, this research argues that hedonic versus utilitarian considerations may moderate the denomination effect. According to Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), hedonic consumption “relate to the multi-sensory, fantasy, and emotive aspects of one’s experience with products.” Hedonic products are thus desired for pleasure, excitement, fantasy, and fun. In contrast, utilitarian consumption, relating to functional and instrumental benefits, tend to fulfill basic needs (Khan, Dhar, and Wertensbroch 2004). Since hedonic (vs. utilitarian) consumption is more discretionary, it symbolizes waste, indulgence, guilt, and thus the need to control. As such, given that a large denomination is used to control and regulate spending, such control is more likely to be exercised when the spending is for something hedonic versus utilitarian. Said differently, the denomination effect is more likely to be manifested for a hedonic consumption whereas the effect is less likely to be attenuated for a utilitarian consumption.

Study 1 showed that when faced with a hedonic purchase, people were less likely to spend when they had a one $10 bill than ten $1 bills. In contrast, the likelihood to spend did not vary across the large and small denominations when faced with a utilitarian purchase.

In a within-subjects design, study 2 found that when people had one $20 bill and four $5 bills to buy two items from 2 hedonic and 2 utilitarian products (all valued at $20), hedonic products were more likely to be paid with small denominations than utilitarian products.

Study 3 proposes to examine, in the context of choosing denomination of cash at the ATM, whether people choose a single large denomination or several small denominations when considering a hedonic versus utilitarian product.

The second factor that this research considers is denomination matching or the extent to which the price matches the denomination of money. Raghubir and Srivastava’s (2009) explanation that individuals use denominations strategically as a way to control their spending is based on the assumption that a large denomination is easier to manage since it facilitates better monitoring and tracking of behavior (spending) than an equivalent amount in many smaller denominations. Raghubir, Capizzianni, and Srivastava (2017) further show that individuals’ monitoring and tracking capabilities are influenced by the denomination of money. Based on prior research, we argue that the denomination effect occurs in conditions where failures in self-control are more likely. When the price matches the large denomination (e.g., $8 price tag when one has one $10 bill versus two $5 bills) there is less of a need to monitor and track spending when the purchase is to be made. In contrast, if the price matches the small denomination (e.g., $4 price tag when one has one $10 bill versus two $5 bills), the denomination effect is likely to be attenuated since the large denomination acts as a mechanism for precommitment to exert self-control.

Study 4 was designed to test this prediction. Consistent with our conceptualization, the results showed that while there was no difference in the likelihood to spend as a function of denomination (one $20 vs. four $5), when the price was $18. However, when the price was $4, people were more willing to spend when they had four $5 bills than when they had one $20 bill.

Overall, the results of the studies along with the conceptualization is consistent with the idea that people use denomination as a way to control and regulate their spending. As such, factors that enhance the need for self-control such as when individuals consider a hedonic consumption, the denomination effect is accentuated whereas when there is less of a need to exercise self-control, the denomination effect is attenuated. Further, factors that increase the need to monitor and track one’s spending, larger denominations may be used as a precommitment mechanism to preempt such self-control failures.

Malleable Monopoly Money: Does How You Pay for a Gift Card affect How You Spend it?

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Four studies show that ‘monopoly money’ is a relative construct and the subjective value of a gift card is influenced by the currency it was converted from. Gift cards purchased with cash are perceived to be more valuable and easier to spend than those purchased with points/miles.


Gift cards are interesting because consumers can buy them using a range of currencies, and all currencies are not equally fungible (Prelec and Loewenstein 1998). We examine how the currency used to pay for a gift card influences the subjective value of the resulting gift card, with carry through effects to spending. Normatively speaking, a gift card should have the same value regardless of how it was purchased. But the results across four studies suggest that it is not.

Study 1 examines how 26 currencies are subjectively valued. 100 U.S. mTurkers (64% male, M = 32.96 years) answered to what extent a range of 26 currencies were like money (0 = Not at all like money/legal tender to 100 = the same as money/legal tender). Participants perceived cash to be most similar to money (M = 91.68) and airline miles to be least (M = 36.46, F(25, 1925) = 48.67, p < .0001). Perceptions of gift cards purchased with cash, gift cards purchased with reward points, plastic gift cards, and email gift cards diverged (F(3, 285) = 5.50, p = .001), with gift cards purchased with cash (M = 65.15) perceived to be more like money than those purchased with reward points (M = 57.64, t = 3.44, p < .05).

To examine whether the subjective value of a converted currency reflects the combined subjective values of the former and new currencies, we conducted a regression with the subjective value of a
gift card purchased with reward points as the dependent variable and the subjective value of an email gift card and the subjective value of reward points as predictors. The regression was significant (F(2, 96) = 100.41, p < .001, R² = .67), with both coefficients significant (bs = .54 and .36 for email gift card and reward points respectively, ts = 7.23 and 4.79, ps < .001). Similarly, a regression with the subjective value of a gift card purchased with cash as the dependent variable and the subjective value of an email gift card and cash was significant (F(2, 94) = 76.39, p < .001, R² = .61, bs = .74 and .15 for email gift card and cash respectively, ts = 11.41 and 2.35, ps < .05). Studies 2-4 focus on a gift card that has been purchased using a form of money that is more like money than a gift card (i.e., cash), or one that is less like money (e.g., miles or points). In Study 2, 1,054 mTurkers (53.7% male, M = 34.18 years) were asked to imagine they had to buy 5 different gift cards using $250 in which was in one of six forms: reward points, airline miles, cash, a PayPal account, a Visa gift card, and a credit card. A one-way six-level ANOVA on judgments of 12 $25 gift cards, revealed that they are perceived to be differentially valuable (F(5, 1048) = 4.12, p < .001), and have differential purchase intentions depending on the form of payment (F(5, 1048) = 2.50, p < .05). Purchase intentions were the lowest when participants were paying in cash and highest when paying with reward points (M = 4.2 vs. 4.6, p < .001).

In Study 3, 162 undergraduates (42.6% male, M = 19.98 years) were asked to imagine that they had gone to a holiday party and brought a gift of $50 for a gift exchange game, which ironically they returned home with. The manipulation was in the form of the $50: cash, gift certificate purchased with cash, gift certificate purchased with credit card points, and gift certificate purchased with airline miles. Participants were then asked how much they would be willing to spend on a set of DVDs. There was a main effect of currency (F(3, 157) = 6.57, p < .001): Participants reported being willing to spend $32.44 when they had received $50 in cash; $37.64 when they had received a gift card purchased with cash, but as much as $46.46 when the gift card was purchased using credit card points and $53.00 when it was purchased using airline miles.

Study 4 tests the effect in the field using a sample from a university paid pool (n = 184, female = 115, M = 23.27 years). Participants were sent to one of four breakout rooms which were set up like a store. Participants were given $5 for a dummy ratings task in one of four forms: cash, gift card, a 500 point certificate worth $5 cash or a 500 point certificate worth a $5 gift. In the “500 points certificate for a gift card” condition participants spent $2.02 on average, or 71.19% more than when they had exchanged their 500 point gift certificate for $5 cash (M = $1.18; F(1, 88) = 4.23, p < .05).

To summarize, four studies show that ‘monopoly money’ is a relative rather than a binary construct and the subjective value of a gift card is influenced by the subjective value of the currency it was converted from. Thus, when points and miles are monetized into their gift card equivalents, the gift card is perceived as less valuable, and, accordingly, easier to spend, than a gift card of the same value purchased with cash: the Malleable Monopoly Money effect.

**REFERENCES**

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**Paper 2**


**Paper 3**


The Happy Consumer: Psychological, Financial, and Relational Well-being
Hyewon Oh, University of Illinois, USA

Paper #1: Reversing the Experiential Advantage: Happiness Leads People to Perceive Purchases as More Experiential than Material
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Paper #2: Saving for Experiences versus Material Goods
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Paper #3: The Effect of Pooling Financial Resources on Relationship Satisfaction
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Paper #4: Rituals and Nuptials: Relationship Rituals Predict Relationship Satisfaction
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Reversing the Experiential Advantage: Happiness Leads People to Perceive Purchases as More Experiential than Material
EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Consumers derive more happiness from purchasing experiences instead of material goods. However, we propose that at least part of this experiential advantage could be backwards. Four studies demonstrate how happy people (both chronic and incidentally induced) perceive their purchases as more experiential.

Consumers derive more personal satisfaction and happiness when they consume experiences instead of material goods (Gilovich, Kumar, and Jampol 2015; Van Boven and Gilovich 2003), suggesting that consumers should be spending more of their discretionary income on experiences instead of material goods to increase happiness (Dunn, Gilbert, and Wilson 2011; Dunn and Norton 2013). In this research, we investigate whether part of this puzzle may be backwards: Could happy consumers view their purchases as more experiential and less material? If so, can encouraging consumers to view their purchases as more experiential increase their happiness?

Related research hints at the possibility that happy people may view their purchases more experientially. First, happy people tend to construe the world more abstractly (Updegraff and Suh 2007) and a positive mood evokes an abstract construal (Labroo and Patrick 2009). If we assume that experiences are construed more abstractly, and given that happy people tend to think more abstractly, then we would expect that happy participants will perceive their purchases as more experiential than material compared to those less happy.

Further, to test this abstract mindset mechanism, we test whether the effect of happiness on experiential perceptions is stronger when consumers are in an abstract mindset compared to a concrete mindset.

Studies 1 and 2 test our main hypothesis with chronic happiness, examining whether consumers high on subjective well-being (SWB) perceive purchases as more experiential (vs. material) than those low on SWB. Study 1 examined consumers’ own purchases using the experience sampling (Csikszentmihalyi and Larson 1987).
they made at the end of each day. At the end of the intervention, participants completed the same well-being measures. Only participants framed their purchases as experiential reported significantly increased levels of life satisfaction, affect balance, happiness, and financial well-being over time (p’s < .05). No differences between pre- and post-measures were found in the purchase-planning group and the control group.

In sum, these results suggest that happy consumers view their purchases as more experiential than their less happy counterparts. This bi-directional relationship between happiness and experiential framing implies that consumers can strategically use such malleability of purchase perception to increase their financial well-being and happiness by changing their way towards everyday purchases. Study 5 provides such evidence. The research provides an additional explanation for the experiential advantage and throws into question whether experiences lead to more happiness compared to material purchases or whether happiness leads to experiential framing (or both).

**Saving for Experiences versus Material Goods**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Consideration of future experiential (vs. material) consumption better encourages consumers to save. In a field experiment with financial-service customers, emphasis on experiential purchases generated greater interest in saving. Further, in two scenario-based experiments, participants allocated more money to saving when considering an aspirational experience, compared to a material good.

Saving money involves a trade-off between present and total utility: Consumers forego spending in the present to increase available resources for future use to purchase both experiences and material goods. This practice reduces consumers’ reliance on credit to fund consumption, as well as their financial stress (Ksendzova, Donnelly, and Howell 2017; Xiao, Sorhaindo, and Garman 2006). Despite these benefits, household savings rates are relatively low worldwide (OECD 2014).

Thus, researchers and practitioners face an important question of how to encourage consumers to save. The answer offers value for marketers, as saving is multiply determined: While recognizing that saving money is important for its mere availability (e.g., to spend in emergencies), consumers also acknowledge more hedonic motivations to save, such as future discretionary purchases (Canova, Rattazzi, and Webley 2005; Xiao and Noring 1994).

In the current research, we explore what characteristics of discretionary purchases can motivate saving behavior, comparing consumers’ interest in saving money for material and experiential purchases. On one hand, the time-sensitive nature of experiences (vs. material goods) more often leads consumers to take on debt for experiences in order not to delay or forego the purchase (Tully and Sharma, in press). On the other hand, consumers find more pleasure in waiting for experiential (vs. material) purchases (Kumar, Gilovich, and Killingsworth 2014) and see experiential purchases as less comparable (Carter and Gilovich 2010). Thus, they may save for the experience they wish to afford in the future instead of spending money for an affordable substitute in the present.

To answer this question, we examine the influence of experiential versus material consumption on consumers’ interest in saving, as expressed in scenario-based studies and revealed in a field experiment.

In Experiment 1, we prompted all participants (N=261) to name one desired but currently unaffordable purchase that would increase their happiness. Participants were randomly assigned to prompts specifying that this aspirational purchase should be experiential or material (i.e., “an event or series of events that you personally encounter or live through” or “a tangible object that you obtain and keep in your possession”). Subsequently, we asked participants to decide how much they would allocate to savings from a $100 wind-fall. In turn, the named purchases did not significantly differ in desirability and estimated cost (med.=$1200) by condition. However, participants chose a greater saving allocation after considering an experiential purchase (med.=$60) than a material one (med.=$50). Further, purchase type predicted saving allocation beyond the effects annual income and general saving tendency (ratio of self-reported money in one’s savings vs. checking accounts).

In Experiment 2 (N=18,542), we partnered with a financial service company to encourage saving among their customers, using experiential or material purchase motivation. Prior to New Year’s Eve (a popular time for goal-setting), customers received an e-mail encouraging them to create a savings goal for the new year, with an emphasis on later spending the saved money on desired but costly purchases that improve happiness. We randomly assigned customers to a message emphasizing experiential or material consumption (textually and graphically). At the e-mail’s conclusion was a link to the service’s website, urging customers to create a new year’s goal. We treated clicking on the link as a proxy for interest in saving. We found that the encouragement of saving for experiences (compared to material goods), increased customers’ likelihood to click on the link.

Upon finding that experiential consumption may better motivate saving, we explored the mechanisms underlying this effect. In Experiment 3 (N=424), we again asked participants to consider a single aspirational purchase (experience vs. material good, which were similar in desirability and cost between conditions, per Experiment 1). As before, participants chose a greater saving allocation when considering a desired but unaffordable experience (med.=$75/100), compared to a material good (med.=$51/100). Further, this relationship between purchase type and intended savings was not explained by perceived importance of purchase timing or likelihood of sharing one’s purchase with others. Instead, this exploration provided evidence for mediation via pre-purchase savoring - the pleasant overlap consumers perceived between anticipation and consumption (i.e., extent to which waiting feels like already experiencing/owning, weighed by enjoyment).

In sum, we find that consumers feel more encouraged to save for future experiential (vs. material) consumption, reflected in either a single aspirational good (Experiments 1 and 3) or a broader notion of buying experiences to be happy (Experiment 2). Relative to material goods, experiential purchases connote greater pre-purchase savoring, which helps explain why they foster a stronger interest in saving. With consumers’ personal savings rate on the decline, our research suggests that saving may increase when closer coupled with consumption. If the saving process better allows consumers to affectively “preview” the benefits of future purchases, they may allocate more money towards their saving goals.

**The Effect of Pooling Financial Resources on Relationship Satisfaction**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Does the way in which couples manage their money affect happiness in their relationship? Across four studies, we demonstrate that couples who pool their money together experience greater relationship satisfaction, compared to couples who keep all (or some) of their money separate.
When couples decide to share their lives, they are simultaneously faced with the far more mundane decision of how (or whether) to pool their finances. Can the way couples manage their financial accounts influence their happiness in the relationship? Across lab and field experiments, as well as analysis of a publicly available largescale longitudinal survey, we found that couples who pool all of their money together through the use of joint bank accounts experience greater relationship satisfaction, compared to couples who keep all (or some) of their money separate.

Study 1: British Cohort Study. To first investigate the effect of account management on relationship satisfaction over time, we analyzed data from the British Cohort Study—a nationally representative study of children born in Britain during a single week in 1970. The survey captures participants at nine points across their life. In the year 2000, participants were asked how they pool money with their partner. Responses included: “Pool all money” (n = 4311, 57.3%), “Pool some, separate rest” (n = 2104, 28%), and “Keep all money separate” (n = 1096, 14.6%).

We first ran an ordinal logistic regression predicting relationship satisfaction. We found that pooling money in joint accounts is associated with higher levels of relationship satisfaction than keeping money separate (b = .60, SE = 0.07, z(6985) = 8.33, p < .001). We next calculated how many couples stayed together or broke up as a function of whether they had pooled or separate accounts in the year 2000. Results indicated that the percentage of couples who stayed together was higher for those who reported pooling their money. More specifically, 23.75% of couples who pooled their money broke up, compared to 29.39% of couples who kept their money separate. A chi square test revealed that these differences are significant (c2 = 35.80, p < .001).

To examine whether these differences are robust to the inclusion of a large number of covariates, we ran a logistic regression, reporting odds ratios. The results showed that the odds of the relationship ending were 1.4 times higher for couples with completely separate finances compared to couples who pooled their money. OR = 1.4, 95% CI = 1.19, 1.65).

Study 2: Replication on Mturk. To establish robustness, we next conducted a survey among 1,005 married adults on MTurk. Participants reported their relationship satisfaction on the 18-item validated scale (Fletcher, Simpson, and Thomas 2000), followed by various demographic questions, including how they currently manage finances with their partner.

Results indicated that there was a significant effect of account management structure on relationship satisfaction, F(2, 1002) = 23.015, p < .001. Those who pooled all of their money together were significantly happier in their relationship (M = 6.06, SD = .94) than those who kept all of their money completely separate (M = 5.44, SD = 1.23). t(1002) = 6.29, p < .001. Those who partially pooled their money fell in between (M = 5.77, SD = 1.03), showing greater relationship satisfaction than those who kept their money separate, t(1002) = 2.94, p < .001, and less relationship satisfaction than those who pooled all of their money together, t(1002) = 3.75, p < .001.

Study 3: Separate vs. Joint Accounts in the Field. Building on the correlational evidence of S1-2, we sought causal evidence in S3-4 by randomly assigning participants to view their money as joint versus separate. 181 participants (61.3% male, Mage = 41.63) in a committed romantic relationship were recruited on their way into a college football game on a university campus. All participants were given a plastic bag with $1 worth of nickels that they could use to buy a mug, and were randomly assigned to write their name on a sticker and place it on the plastic bag (separate condition), or write their name and their partner’s name on a sticker and place it on the plastic bag (joint condition).

On a subsequent survey, participants rated their degree of relationship satisfaction, in addition to completing demographic questions. Those who had been randomly assigned to think of their money as joint were happier in their relationship (M = 4.40, SD = .64), than those who had been randomly assigned to think of their money as separate (M = 4.18, SD = .67), t(179) = 2.25, p = .026.

Study 4: Separate vs. Joint Accounts in the Lab. For additional causal evidence, we conducted a lab study amongst 79 undergraduate couples (n = 158 participants). Participants sat with their partner at a computer to play the Lemonade Stand video game, which required them to make successive choices that determined the success or failure of the business. Participants were randomly assigned to run their own lemonade stand with separate money (separate condition) or to run a lemonade stand together with joint money (joint condition). After four rounds of the game, they each completed a follow-up survey, rating their degree of relationship satisfaction.

Among well-established couples (i.e., those who had been together for a year or more), those with joint money were happier in their relationship than those with separate money. In an ordinal regression with standard errors clustered at the level of the couple, those in the joint account condition reported being significantly happier in their relationship than those in the separate account condition (b = 1.22, SE = 0.55, z(59) = 2.23, p = .025).

These findings suggest that whether couples’ pool their money or keep it separate can impact their relationship satisfaction, as well as their likelihood to stay together. This work contributes to the burgeoning area of financial decision-making within couples (Dew 2007; Rick, Small, and Finkel 2011; Smock, Manning, and Porter 2005) by focusing on the downstream effects such decisions have on relationship well-being. These findings also speak to research on the disconnecting power of money (Mogilner 2010; Vohs 2015; Vohs, Mead, and Goode 2006) by showing that the way people manage their money can serve to disconnect (or connect) them from even their most loved.

Rituals and Nuptials: Relationship Rituals Predict Relationship Satisfaction

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Across three studies, we show that endorsement of relationship rituals is associated with greater romantic relationship satisfaction, and that increased commitment to the relationship mediates this positive association. Additionally, we document a critical facet that predicts the psychological impact of relationship rituals: that they are held consensually.

Rituals are pervasive in a myriad of social relationships: from religious gatherings to business meetings, rituals are central to social connection (Durkheim, 1912; Goffman, 1967). In sports, fans may engage in pregame rituals to send good vibes to their teams. In business, group members may develop their ritualistic activities to empower themselves before a long day at work. Whether through weddings or funerals, families also engage in rituals to wish happiness to newlyweds, or to pay their respects to lost ones. We empirically explore the potential benefits of rituals in another important social context: romantic relationships. We propose that couples who enact relationship rituals – from weekly date nights to cooking together to bedroom activities – experience greater relationship satisfaction, in part because commitment to enacting rituals manifests in commitment to the relationship. We test this prediction in three studies that examine the relationship between rituals and relationship satisfac-
tion and find that rituals boost commitment in turn leading to greater relationship satisfaction (Studies 1-3). Additionally, we show that consensual endorsement between partners about their rituals predicts relationship satisfaction (Study 2) and distinguishes rituals from routines (Study 3).

In Study 1, we examine whether engaging in relationship rituals is associated with greater relationship satisfaction (N=201; Mage=37.18 years, SD=12.10; 59% male). Participants completed a questionnaire that had two sections: a section asking them to report whether they engaged in a relationship ritual with their current most recent partner, and a section with a series of relationship quality measures (investment model scale - Rusbult; Martz & Agnew 1998; gratitude –Algoe et al. 2010; perceived partner responsiveness –Caprariello & Reis 2011; closeness – Aron, Aron, and Smollan 1992). Because asking about rituals could lead participants with relationship rituals to recall positive memories or feel regret if they do not have rituals, we randomly assigned participants to either describe their rituals first and then report relationship satisfaction, or the reverse.

We observe that rituals in romantic relationships are ubiquitous: 57% of participants reported engaging in rituals. More importantly, we find that participants with rituals reported greater relationship satisfaction (M=6.98, SD=1.80) than those without a ritual (M=5.93, SD=2.28; b=1.05, SE=.29, t(199)=3.64, p<.001). There was no effect of order of the sections nor was an effect of type of ritual, suggesting that having a ritual may be more important than the specific form that ritual takes. We also observe that participants with relationship rituals reported having fewer alternatives to the relationship, being more invested, more committed, more grateful, feeling closer to their partner, and perceiving that their partners were more responsive (all ps<.05); all effects hold when controlling for relationship length and marital status and when re-running analyses only with participants who were currently in a romantic relationship. Finally, we find that commitment mediates the relationship between rituals and satisfaction (ab=1.08, SE=.25, CI [.59, 1.59]).

Study 2 was identical to Study 1 with one key difference: we recruited one hundred and eight romantic dyads using Qualtrics panel data (N=216; Mage=56.48 years; SD=13.13; 48% male). We replicate findings from Study 1 and show that individuals who engaged in relationship rituals are more satisfied and that the relationship is mediated by commitment (all analyses involved actor-partner interdependence models: ps<.10). We then analyzed responses within-dyads and assessed partners’ agreement on whether they had a ritual: both members of the dyad reported having a ritual (n=55), both members of the dyad reported not having a ritual (n=33), and members of the dyad disagreed on whether they have a ritual (n=20). We created a score of dyad satisfaction by averaging relationship satisfaction ratings provided by both members; agreement within the dyad had a significant effect on relationship satisfaction (F(2, 105)= 3.97, p=.022). Bonferroni post-hoc tests revealed that couples that reported having a ritual were marginally more satisfied in their relationship (M=8.05, SD=1.23) than couples that reported not having a ritual (M=7.32, SD=2.06, p=.092) or couples that disagreed (M=7.11, SD=1.18, p=.058); the latter two groups did not differ (p>.250). These results suggest that the benefits of relationship rituals emerge only when both members of the couple agree on that ritual.

In Study 3, we investigate differences between relationship rituals and routines and show that rituals are conceptually distinct, and lead to psychologically different outcomes. Participants were asked to report whether they had a relationship ritual and a relationship routine, and after answered the same relationship quality measures (N=404; Mage=37.40 years, SD=11.36; 47% male). We observe that participants engaged in both activities: 74% reported having a relationship ritual and 81% reported having a relationship routine. We replicate our previous findings showing that participants who engage in rituals were more satisfied with their relationship (b=1.24, SE=.22, t(402)=5.76, p<.001), but found only a marginal effect for routines (b=.41, SE=.25, t(402)=1.66, p=.099). We then entered rituals and routines in the same model simultaneously predicting relationship satisfaction and found that rituals were significantly associated greater satisfaction (b=1.22, SE=.22, t(401)=5.51, p<.001) but routines were not (b=.11, SE=.25, t(401)=.44, p=.658).

Taken together, our results suggest that couples that adhere to relationship rituals – are more satisfied. Our work makes several contributions to research on shared experiences and interpersonal rituals. First, our findings contribute to prior research that demonstrates that shared experiences lead to greater satisfaction (Boothby, Clark, & Bargh, 2014), enhance social relationships (Gilovich, Kumar, & Jampol, 2015) and drive more coherent and positive retrospection of experiences (Ramanathan & McGill, 2007). We show that relationship rituals are associated with greater relationship satisfaction, especially when partners agree on their ritual, suggesting that sharing an experience (Belk, 2009; Caprariello & Reis, 2013; Kumar & Gilovich, 2015) is particularly important in making interpersonal rituals an effective social cohesion tool. Second, we identify the psychological mechanism that underlies the association between relationship rituals and relationship satisfaction by shedding light on the importance of greater commitment in relationships. Relationship rituals are effective because they amplify partners’ commitment to relationships, as with other research suggesting that rituals foster feelings of bonding with group members (Durkheim, 1912; Spoor & Kelly, 2004; Xygalatas et al., 2013).

REFERENCES

Paper 1


Paper 2

Paper 3

Paper 4
Does Face Orientation Affect the Perception of a Model and the Evaluation of Advertised Product?

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ABSTRACT

We report two experiments designed to demonstrate that a leftward (vs. rightward) facing model’s face increases the perceived trustworthiness of a model and subsequently the increased trustworthiness positively affect the evaluation of advertised products. The consumer’s level of emotional expressivity moderated the effect of face orientation on perceived trustworthiness.

ABSTRACT

We report a study demonstrating that, in advertising contexts, changing the direction in which a model faces (leftward or rightward from the viewer’s perspective) impacts perceived model trustworthiness and this subsequently carries-over to influence product evaluation. These results provide new insights into effective design of visual advertising cues.

INTRODUCTION

Painted and photographed portraits display more of the left side of the poser’s face than the right (Manovich, Ferrari, and Bruno 2017; McManus and Humphrey 1973). For instance, McManus and Humphrey found that painted portraits dating from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries show a significant leftward face bias (60% of 1474). Additionally, people tend to perceive the left side of a poser’s face as more emotionally expressive and aesthetically pleasing than the right (Blackburn and Schirillo 2012; Nicholls, Wolfgang, Clode, and Lindell 2002). This left cheek bias is thought to be derived from the right hemisphere dominance for facial expressions (Demaree, Everhart, Youngstrom, and Harrison 2005; Indersmitten and Gur 2003). Namely, because of the right brain specialization for emotion processing and the contralateral innervation of the facial muscles, emotions are expressed more intensely in the poser’s left hemiface than the right. The left cheek bias exists in various facial data in our daily lives and the left side of the face is perceived as more attractive than the right because of the left face’s superiority in facial expression.

Although previous research has confirmed the effect of the actual (left or right) side of the face on impression formation, it is still unclear whether the orientation of the image of the face affects people’s perception of a model when the face images actually happen to be identical. Thus, in the present research, we examined whether and how face orientation (FO) affects people’s perception of a model. More importantly, we also test whether the orientation of a model’s face can influence the evaluation of advertised products via perceived model impression.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Studies using eye-tracking have confirmed the left attentional bias, showing that viewers tend to make an initial fixation and look for longer at the left side of the poser’s face from the viewer’s perspective (VP) (Butler et al. 2005; Leonards and Scott-Samuel 2005). Additionally, and more importantly, studies of face processing show that faces presented in a left (vs. right) oblique view, which means that most of the features (i.e., eyes, nose, and mouth) are placed in the viewer’s left visual field, tend to be more easily recognized (Siéroff 2001; Yamamoto et al. 2005). For instance, Yamamoto et al. had their participants match either a left or right oblique view of familiar faces (e.g., a portrait of Gandhi) with names presented either before or after the faces. In both tasks, participants responded more rapidly to a left than to a right oblique view of the same face. These studies therefore suggest that a left (vs. right) view of a face receives more attention and has a superiority in terms of face processing.

Psycholinguistic studies demonstrate that the direction of reading/writing affects people’s preference for the object direction in viewing and drawing (Eviatar 1997; Vaid 1995). For instance, Vaid reported that most left-to-right readers draw human faces facing leftward from the VP (89.1%), whereas right-to-left readers do not exhibit any such tendency (45.2% leftward facing). These studies suggest that people who have a habit of scanning left-to-right perceive leftward (vs. rightward) facing model faces as more natural and prototypical.

Processing fluency, the subjective experience of ease with which people process information (see Alter and Oppenheimer, 2009, for a review), positively affects various judgments such as liking (Landwehr, Labroo, and Herrmann 2011; Reber, Winkielman, and Schwarz 1998), believability (Begg, Anas, and Farinacci 1992; Reber and Schwarz 1999), and subjective confidence (Novemsky, Dhar, Schwarz, and Simonson 2007). This is because high fluency is associated with error-free information processing, and successful stimulus recognition (Winkielman and Cacioppo, 2001; Winkielman, Schwarz, Fazendeiro, and Reber, 2003). Additionally, various prototypical (vs. non-prototypical) stimuli (e.g., average face, common geometric pattern) elicit more positive reactions because they are familiar and are thus processed more easily (Rhodes, Halberstadt, and Brjakovich 2001; Winkielman, Halberstadt, Fazendeiro, and Catty 2006).

The studies of face perception and psycholinguistics mentioned above suggest that a leftward (vs. rightward) facing face receives more attention, is processed more easily, and is perceived as being more prototypical. When these findings are put together with the literature on processing fluency, it can be assumed that a leftward (vs. rightward) facing model’s face from the VP will be processed more fluently and thus will lead to a more positive impression. Additionally, studies of social cognition indicate that people tend to judge not only attractiveness but also trustworthiness from a person’s face (Stirrat and Perrett 2010; Todorov, Pakrashi, and Oosterhof 2009). Therefore, we predicted that:

Hypothesis 1a: Perceived model attractiveness will be higher for a model facing leftward (vs. rightward) from the VP.

Hypothesis 1b: Perceived model trustworthiness will be higher for a model facing leftward (vs. rightward) from the VP.

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Attractiveness and trustworthiness are major dimensions of source credibility (Kelman and Hovland 1953) and these two endorser characteristics positively affect people’s attitudes toward persuasive messages and their evaluation of advertised products (DeSarbo and Harshman 1985; Ohanian 1990). Thus, we further predicted that:

**Hypothesis 2a:** A leftward (vs. rightward) facing model's face from the VP will lead to a higher evaluation of advertised products via increased model attractiveness.

**Hypothesis 2b:** A leftward (vs. rightward) facing model's face from the VP will lead to a higher evaluation of advertised products via increased model trustworthiness.

There are individual differences in the left cheek preference for emotional expression and perception (Harris and Lindell 2011; Nicholls, Clode, Wood, and Wood 1999). Indeed, according to Nicholls, Clode, Lindell, and Wood (2002), people with a higher level of emotional expressivity are more likely to adopt a left cheek pose. This implies that people with high (vs. low) emotional expressivity have repeated experiences of striking a left cheek pose and, thus may also perceive another person’s left (vs. right) oriented face as more natural and favorable. Therefore, it can be predicted that:

**Hypothesis 3a:** The level of emotional expressivity will moderate the effect of FO on perceived model attractiveness.

**Hypothesis 3b:** The level of emotional expressivity will moderate the effect of FO on perceived model trustworthiness.

**EXPERIMENT 1**

**Method**

One hundred Japanese participants (45 female; Mage = 40 years) were recruited online. Using a male portrait facing leftward and an image of spring water, we made two versions of fictitious adverts, with the only difference being the orientation of the model’s face (see Figure 1a).

The participants were randomly assigned to either version of the advert and rated the perceived attractiveness and trustworthiness of the model using 7-point scales (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree; “This model is attractive”, “This model is dependable”, respectively). Subsequently, they evaluated the advertised mineral water using three 7-point scales (good – bad; like – dislike; favorable – unfavorable; α = .86).

**Results**

t-tests were conducted first in order to examine whether the orientation of the face affected impression formation. No significant differences were found in terms of model attractiveness (M left = 4.56 vs. M right = 4.37; t (98) = .862, p = .391). Thus, H1a was rejected. However, as expected, perceived trustworthiness was significantly higher when the model faced leftward rather than when they faced rightward (M left = 4.75 vs. M right = 4.19; t (98) = 2.486, p = .015). Therefore, H1b was supported.

Two mediation analyses (Model 4 of PROCESS; Hayes, 2013) were then conducted in order to test whether the FO of the model affected product evaluation via perceived model attractiveness and trustworthiness, respectively. The results revealed that although perceived attractiveness positively affected the evaluation of the advertised spring water (b = .30, SE = .07, p < .001), FO (coded as 0 = rightward, 1 = leftward) did not significantly influence model attractiveness (b = .20, SE = .23, p = .391). The indirect effect of FO on the evaluation of the water also failed to reach significance (b = .06, SE = .08, 95% CI: [-.0678, .2374]). Thus, H2a was rejected.

Meanwhile, both the effect of FO on model trustworthiness (b = .56, SE = .22, p = .015) and of trustworthiness on product evaluation (b = .20, SE = .07, p = .008) were significant. Additionally, and more importantly, the indirect effect via model trustworthiness was also significant (b = .11, SE = .06, 95% CI: [.0184, .2704]). Therefore, H2b was supported.

The results of Experiment 1 revealed no significant effect of FO on perceived model attractiveness. However, a leftward (vs. rightward) facing model positively influenced people’s ratings of the model’s trustworthiness and their evaluation of the product itself. Given that the participants in Experiment 1 were presented with an advertising image in which the model’s faces and the mineral water were placed horizontally, any difference in the horizontal placement of those cues (i.e., placing a face (a product) on the left (right) side and vice versa) may have confounded the effect of FO on product evaluation. Thus, in Experiment 2, the effect of FO was again examined while avoiding this possible problem with horizontal placement.
** Experiment 2 **

**Method**

One hundred Japanese participants (28 female; M age = 43.8 years) were recruited online. Using an image of a male doctor facing rightward and toothpaste, two versions (face facing left vs. right) of a fictitious advert were made. The stimuli used in Experiment 2 were rather more realistic than those used in Experiment 1, and to avoid the problem of horizontal placement, the images of the model and the toothpaste were placed vertically (see Figure 1b).

The procedure was identical to that used in Experiment 1 with the exception that an additional emotional expressivity measurement was also administered. The participants were randomly assigned to either version of the advert. They rated the perceived attractiveness and trustworthiness of the endorser. Attractiveness was measured on a 7-point scale (as in Experiment 1). Trustworthiness was measured on three 7-point scales (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree; “This model is reliable”, “This model is dependable”, “This model is organized”; α = .93). Finally, the participants rated their own emotional expressivity with Kling, Smith, and Neale’s (1994) seventeen 7-point scales (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree; e.g., “I display my emotions to other people”; α = .92).

**Results**

t-tests revealed no difference in perceived attractiveness between the two conditions (M left = 4.04 vs. M right = 3.88; t (98) = .601, p = .549). However, a significant leftward preference was found in terms of perceived trustworthiness (M left = 4.75 vs. M right = 4.33; t (98) = 2.665, p = .009). Thus, once again, H1a was found in terms of perceived trustworthiness (M left = 4.04 vs. M right = 3.88; t (98) = 2.665, p = .009). Thus, once again, H1a was rejected while H1b was supported.

Next, two moderated mediation analyses were conducted using model attractiveness and trustworthiness as mediators, and the participant’s emotional expressivity as a moderator in both analyses (Model 7 of PROCESS; Hayes, 2013).

**Table 1. Summary of Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Experiment 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>Experiment 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attractiveness</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Attractiveness</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X: Face Orientation</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.862</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>-1.432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MO: Model Attractiveness</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>4.361 ***</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME: Emotional Expressivity</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.214</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>1.649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X × ME</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X: Face Orientation</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>2.486 ***</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>-1.633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MO: Model Trustworthiness</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>2.708 **</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>2.722 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME: Emotional Expressivity</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.206</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X × ME</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>2.462 *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With respect to H2 (indirect effect of FO on product evaluation), replicating the results of Experiment 1, the indirect effect via model attractiveness was not significant (b = .08, SE = .08, 95% CI: [−.0678, .2374]). However, as expected, the indirect effect via model trustworthiness was significant (b = .37, SE = .15, 95% CI: [.1088, .7043]). Therefore, H2a was rejected while H2b was supported.

With respect to H3 (emotional expressivity having a moderating role on the effect of FO on model impression), a non-significant trend for the moderating effect of emotional expressivity on model attractiveness was found (b = .67, SE = .40, p > .10), thus, H3a was rejected. On the other hand, as expected, emotional expressivity significantly moderated the effect of FO on model trustworthiness (b = .58, SE = .24, p = .016), thus supporting H3b. Moreover, the results of the conditional indirect effect revealed that the model’s face facing leftward (vs. rightward) significantly increased the participant’s evaluation of advertised toothpaste via model trustworthiness in those with high levels (+1 SD) of self-reported emotional expressivity (b = .70, SE = .23, 95% CI: [.2927, 1.1976]). However, this indirect effect was not significant in those participants with low levels (−1 SD) of emotional expressivity (b = .03, SE = .20, 95% CI: [−.3407, .4588]).

**Discussion**

The research outlined here was designed to examine whether the orientation of a model’s face would influence people’s perception of the model and their evaluation of products seen in an advertising context.

The results of both experiments revealed that a leftward (vs. rightward) facing model significantly increased the perceived trustworthiness of the model even though the images of the face were identical. Moreover, the leftward (vs. rightward) facing model also increased their evaluation of the advertised products via increased model trustworthiness. Furthermore, the participant’s level of emotional expressivity was also found to moderate the effect of facial orientation on perceived trustworthiness significantly (Experiment 2). In other words, a leftward (vs. rightward) facing model increased...
the trustworthiness of the model in those participants with high (but not in those with a low) levels of emotional expressivity.

These findings are the first to demonstrate that mere differences in the direction of a model’s face exert a significant effect on people’s perception of model trustworthiness and that this subsequently carries-over to influence their evaluation of those products seen in adverts. This research also suggests that a consumer’s level of emotional expressivity moderates the effect of facial orientation on model trustworthiness. Thus, our study provides new insights into the effect of the visual placement of advertising cues and source credibility on marketing communications. This research has clear managerial implications in terms of the visual design of advertising. When marketers plan to use a model in an advertisement, it is more desirable to present a model’s face facing leftward (vs. rightward) from the viewpoint in order to increase the perception of model’s trustworthiness and thus strengthen the consumers’ attitudes toward the products being advertised. Additionally, if we put together the moderating effect of emotional expressivity and the tendency for women to have higher emotional expressivity than men (Kring and Gordon 1998), the FO in advertisements may affect model impression and product evaluation in females more than males.

This study has several limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, although we expect fluency in face processing (induced by left oblique view superiority in face perception) to be the underlying mechanism of the FO effect on impression formation, this was not examined directly. Thus, the suggestion that processing fluency in face perception actually mediates the FO effect on the perception of impression formation should be tested. Second, we expected that the orientation of the model’s face would influence both the perceptions of attractiveness and trustworthiness. However, FO only affected rated trustworthiness. This may be related to the final limitation of the present research. Namely, that we only examined the effect of FO using male models. It might be that people make somewhat different personality attributions for females and males: the attributions of females mainly in terms of attractiveness, meanwhile, the attributions of males mainly in terms of trustworthiness. For example, Kleisner, Priplatova, Frost, and Flegr (2013) have reported that the shape of the face significantly affected perceived trustworthiness in male but not in female faces. Thus, in future work, we hope to examine whether the gender of the model influences the FO effect on the perception of model attractiveness and trustworthiness, respectively.

REFERENCES


Neural Similarity and Neural Activation Offer Robust Out-Of-Sample Predictions of Video Ratings

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ABSTRACT

In three functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) studies, involving 35 TV commercials and 18 movie-trailers, we uncover a robust way to extract neural information that predicts out-of-sample consumer ratings. Even when controlling for in-sample self-report ratings, neural information still explained additional variance in out-of-sample ratings across the three studies.

INTRODUCTION

Recent neuroscientific research has shown the possibility of uncovering neural signals that predict consumer preference and choice. Neural information from both electroencephalography (EEG; Barnett & Cerf, 2017; Boksem & Smidts, 2015; Dmochowski et al., 2014) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI; Berns & Moore, 2012; Falk, Berkman, & Lieberman, 2012; Genevsky, Yoon, & Knutson, 2017; Venkatraman et al., 2015) has been shown to be predictive of individual choice and preference for consumer products. Moreover, they also offer useful information about whether those products are well received or not at the market level, leading to the recent coining of the term ‘neuroforecasting’ (Genevsky & Knutson, in press).

Most fMRI studies linking brain signals to aggregate preference look into signal intensity within an individual, i.e., the magnitude of blood oxygenation level-dependent (BOLD) during exposure of stimulus. The type of stimuli being researched varies from music (Berns & Moore, 2012), TV commercials (Couwenberg et al., 2017; Falk et al., 2012; Venkatraman et al., 2015), microloending appeals (Genevsky & Knutson, 2015), online funding campaigns (Genevsky et al., 2017), to newspaper headlines (Scholz et al., 2017). In most studies, researchers have found that activation level at either nucleus accumbens (NAcc), ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC), or a combination of both, was predictive of market outcomes (in terms of song downloads, funding successes, or advertising elasticities).

On the other hand, a separate but relevant body of neuroimaging studies in recent years is concerned with signal consistency across individuals’ brains. Researchers found that dynamic natural stimuli – such as videos, narratives, or speeches – evoke similar neural responses across individuals in selective areas of the brain, not only at sensory cortices but also in more frontal areas of the brain (Hasson, Malach, & Heeger, 2010). Moreover, the extent to which neural responses are temporally similar across individuals is related to stimulus quality. For example, emotionally more arousing movie clips evoked higher neural similarity in the somatosensory cortices and visual and dorsal attention networks (Nummenmaa et al., 2012). Political speeches perceived to be rhetorically more powerful triggered more synchronized neural activity at superior temporal gyrus (STG) and vmPFC (Schmälzle, Häcker, Honey, & Hasson, 2015). Neural similarity at occipital, temporal and frontal areas was associated with experienced humoriness during watching of comedy video clips (Jääskeläinen et al., 2016). More importantly, two recent studies have shown that inter-subject neural similarity based on EEG activities predicted market-level responses, in terms of internet ratings (TV commercials), real-time tweet frequency (TV shows) and box office sales (movies) (Barnett & Cerf, 2017; Dmochowski et al., 2014).

These recent discoveries, exciting as they are, lead to several additional questions: Where in the brain can we find the relationship between neural similarity and population preference? And does neural activation and similarity contain information about aggregate preference? Lastly, do neural activation and similarity contain information about aggregate preference in addition to individual self-report evaluation? We aimed at answering these questions with three neuroimaging studies using fMRI. Guided by existing literature on neural processing of static and dynamic stimuli in consumer settings, we extracted as neural information both within-subject activation and inter-subject similarity. For activation, in line with previous studies, we expected that BOLD activities in brain areas involved in affective and reward processing would predict out-of-sample preference (Genevsky et al., 2017). For similarity, we noted that regions involved in the ventral sensory processing pathway were previously found to be associated with content quality of stimuli in the neural similarity literature (Dmochowski et al., 2014; Schmälzle et al., 2015). We then examined if (a) neural activation and similarity were distinct neural measures that each provided unique information about out-of-sample aggregate preference; and (b) whether they together explained additional variance in out-of-sample aggregate preference, in addition to the participants’ self-report evaluation.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

The first two fMRI studies involved the same set of 35 commercials (Study 1a and 1b), while the third involved 18 movie-trailers (Study 2), totalling 88 participants in the scanner and 213 participants as out-of-sample raters. In all three studies, participants inside the scanner watched audiovisual stimuli once in randomized order. The number of participants were 40 (Study 1a), 20 (Study 1b), and 28 (Study 2) respectively. After scanning, they rated the TV commercials with a 2-item, 7-point Likert scale: an overall good-bad rating, and an interesting-boring rating (Study 1a and 1b). Participants who watched movie-trailers rated on a 5-star scale, in half-star increments (Study 2).

For the out-of-sample rating of TV commercials (Study 1a and 1b), we collected responses from 117 individuals not involved in the fMRI scanning. They watched the commercials in randomized order, and rated them on the same 2-item scale. For the out-of-sample rating of movie-trailers, we collected responses from 96 individuals who watched the movie trailers in a randomized order and rated each movie-trailer on the same 5-star scale.

Neural similarity was calculated based on the average inter-subject pairwise Euclidean distances of spatiotemporal neural responses in a given time period and brain area. Neural activation was calculated based on the average magnitude of neural responses in a given time period and brain area across participants.

RESULTS

Our approach to the three studies was to (a) investigate in the first study (Study 1a) which brain areas were associated with out-of-sample ratings, and (b) test whether these findings replicated in the second study (Study 1b). After locating the relevant brain areas, we extracted neural information from these regions from all three...
studies (Study 1a, 1b and 2), and investigated to what extent neural information could explain variance in out-of-sample ratings.

Whole-brain analysis using a 2-voxel-radius searchlight revealed that neural similarity at bilateral temporal poles (TP), temporo-parietal junctions (TPJ) and cerebellum was positively associated with out-of-sample ratings. In other words, if participants showed more similar spatiotemporal neural patterns at those regions while watching a certain video, that video tended to be more highly rated by an external population. In addition, whole-brain analysis of activation using GLM modelling also revealed regions where stronger neural activation among participants was associated with higher out-of-sample ratings: bilateral medial temporal gyr, as well as precuneus and the left frontal lobe, around the language processing area (see Figure 1). In both analyses, these areas were largely replicated in Study 1b.

Next, we examined to what extent neural activation and similarity could predict out-of-sample ratings, and whether the findings were robust to stimulus type (TV commercials vs. movie trailers). Selecting the voxels in the overlapping areas of the two TV commercial studies (i.e., bilateral temporal poles [TP], temporo-parietal junctions [TPJ] and cerebellum for similarity; and superior temporal sulcus [STS] and precuneus for activation), we re-calculated neural similarity and activation, with the addition of a third dataset involving movie-trailers (Study 2). Across the three studies, neural similarity at TP/TPJ/cerebellum, and neural activation at STS/precuneus predicted out-of-sample ratings, controlling for stimulus length. Notably, the effect was robust for movie-trailers using the voxels identified for the TV commercials (partial correlations for neural similarity: .674, .624, and .514 for Study 1a, 1b and 2 respectively, all ps < .05; for neural activation: .603, .656, and .462 for Study 1a, 1b and 2 respectively, all ps < .06).

Finally, we tested whether neural information provided additional predictive power of out-of-sample ratings above and beyond the group’s own responses to the same questions. In a series of regression models (Table 1), we found that across the three studies, adjusted R² increased as neural similarity and activation were added as additional regressors. Importantly, the change in adjusted R² between the behavioral-response-only model and the combined model was significant across three studies, showing that neural activation and similarity contained unique information about aggregate preference in addition to the participants’ own self-report ratings.

### CONCLUSION

Across different participants, scanning settings, video lengths and video types, we uncovered neural information that predicted aggregate preference of real-world dynamic stimuli. Specifically, we found that the synchronized neural activity across participants at the temporal pole, TPJ and cerebellum was associated with highly rated stimuli. Given that these areas are known to be related to sensory and affective processing, inter-subject synchronization at those areas during video watching may indicate a heightened level of attention, which is a precursor of reward.

Contrary to our expectation, we did not obtain consistent relationships between ratings and activation at known reward processing areas such as NAcc or vmPFC; instead, only activation at STS and precuneus consistently predicted rating across stimulus type. Given that precuneus has been previously shown to be related to automatic valuation encoding while NAcc and vmPFC activations modulate depending on whether choice is involved or not (Grueschow, Polina, Hare, & Ruff, 2015), the current findings suggest that uncovering subjective value signals based on choice-related reward areas may not be suitable when dynamic stimuli are involved.

We also found that neural similarity and activation held unique information about aggregate preference in addition to the participants’ behavioral responses. While prior research demonstrated the link between neural similarity and consumer preference, findings of this study show for the first time that neural similarity holds ‘hidden’ information about aggregate preference that is not present in neither neural activation nor self-report measures.

In summary, across multiple studies we found that in addition to the conventionally-used neural activation, neural similarity seems to be another robust signal source in forecasting individual and aggregate preference.

### Table 1. Linear regression models with out-of-sample rating as dependent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Commercial (N = 35)</th>
<th>Movie-trailer (N = 18)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Study 1a</td>
<td>Study 1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>.289*</td>
<td>.312**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.243*</td>
<td>.245*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-sample rating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>.665**</td>
<td>.458**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.699**</td>
<td>.475**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>.198</td>
<td>.167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-sample rating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>.171</td>
<td>.252*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neural Similarity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.702</td>
<td>.776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neural Activation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.748</td>
<td>.702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>.685</td>
<td>.748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ΔR²F</td>
<td>5.04*</td>
<td>6.34*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .10; *p < .05; **p < .01
aggregate preference. The findings also add to the growing literature of neural prediction, which demonstrates that brain imaging provides additional predictive power on top of self-report measures (Berns & Moore, 2012; Genevsky et al., 2017; Venkatraman et al., 2015). Two major questions will have to be answered by future research. First, can neural similarity be applied in static stimuli (i.e., spatial instead of spatiotemporal similarity)? Recent advances in representational similarity analysis (Kriegeskorte, Mur, & Bandettini, 2008) allow researchers to apply this kind of analysis in studies involving consumers ratings or choosing products based on static stimuli. Second, beyond aggregate preference, can neural similarity predict actual choices made by consumers in the market (as measured by sales)? Further research is needed before we understand the potential and limits of neural similarity.

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Is Social Capital Context Dependent?
The Weight Watchers’ Online and Offline Brand Communities
Michelle Bergadaà, University of Geneva, Switzerland
Nada Sayarh, University of Geneva, Switzerland

ABSTRACT
This research investigates the social capital of two brand communities that communicate in face to face and online. We find that voluntarism, oriented altruism, reciprocity and social trust are expressed differently depending on the brand community communication context. These results can support strategies related to brand community management.

INTRODUCTION
Brand communities are a communication context that revolves around the relationship of consumers with their brands (McAlexander, Schouten, et Koenig 2002; Muniz et O’Guinn 2001). This form of community incorporates a social dimension to consumption that makes individuals establish reciprocal collaboration ties (Fukuyama 2001). This results in a social capital that binds members and becomes a source of support to individuals’ interest (Coleman 1988). It is constructed through social relationships based on dimensions such as voluntarism, reciprocity, social trust (Newton 1997; Mathwick, Wiertz, et de Ruyter 2008; Stewart Loane et Webster 2017). It increases brand capital in the “customer-based brand equity” sense (Aaker 2012).

From a classical communication perspective, social capital develops through face-to-face interaction of members that associate themselves with « their » brand. Internet has led to the emergence of new means of communication. Online communities offer a “protection” of the identity of the communicator since the individual can participate through the use of a nickname. This is not the case of face-to-face communication where disclosure is a mandate for participation to any communal activity (Lipiansky 1992).

When it comes to social capital generation, companies are looking to understand the added value that these online communities may bring to their brand (Schembr et Latimer 2016). Should they contribute to their development or invest in communities that self-emerge on the web? The objective of our research is to observe the expression of social capital of the same brand within two different communication environments (online and face to face). We explore two weight watchers communities within Switzerland. Weight Watchers is the biggest and most well-known business that offers weight loss programs worldwide (Heyes 2006). The first is centered around face to face weekly meetings of weightwatchers subscribers. The second one pertains to the Weight watchers online forum.

COMMUNITY, SOCIAL CAPITAL AND COMMUNICATION
For some researchers the community is « the communication of individuals, that can only exist as such through it » (Nancy 2011, 256). This definition seems undermining, as it does not incorporate the social dimension where individuals support each other. The boom of the web leads companies to look at online communities either from a “vertical” perspective, led by an e-manager and with few relationships between internet users, or as an idea generator with “horizontal” relationships between members (Benghozi 2010). Researchers have re-centered its definition away from its geographical anchoring and around a social representation of the « imagined » community (Werry 2000). In order to be able to compare these two communities, we have first identified six fundamental dimensions of the brand’s social capital, these are:

• A common consciousness: Social capital is rooted within the communal space where members share a common objective (Muniz et O’Guinn 2001). The shared experience raises a feeling of belonging that reinforces collective action and the group’s cohesion. Social capital is rooted within normative ties that portray the positive outcomes of sociability on the individual (Adler et Kwon 2002). Social capital, develops through communication between members who share a common consciousness (Bourdieu 1980).

• Ritualisation: Rituals act as boundary markers between those that are legitimate members of a community and those whose position within society remains unclear overall (Bourdieu 1982) and those who are tied to another community (McAlexander, Schouten, et Koenig 2002). Rituals and traditions are hence recurring practices. Members of a community take on habits associated with its own culture – informality in language is for example a tradition that highlights members’ proximity (Sainaulieu, Salzbrunn, et Amiotte-Suchet 2010).

• Participant’s voluntarism: This relates to the free engagement of individuals within communal groups. The strength of social capital comes from the voluntary engagement of its participants (Coleman 1988), and communication is its key element (Amado et Guittet 2009). Internet supports the expansion of voluntarism by giving the freedom of entering and exiting a group, which reinforces the culture of voluntarism (Portes 1998). In other words, members can show solidarity without fearing to become captive of the group. This is not the case of face-to-face communities (Balasubramanian et Mahajan 2001).

• Oriented altruism: Social capital lies within the interest people show to each other through the brand. This alterity (Weber 1971) lies within the coordination of conscious interest towards a common objective. The individual puts in place an organization that at the same time serves the community as well as its members. For this type of community « of destiny», a suitable environment is not enough. It requires active members to sustain it and give it its meaning and markers.

• Reciprocity norms: People get involved in helping others to get a « counter-gift » (Mauss 1923). Accepting to receive creates the obligation to give back. This social reciprocity is more relevant to the communal context where interactions are multiplied (McAlexander, Schouten, et Koenig 2002). Some claim that the strength of ties is related to the physical proximity of members (Kraut, Galegher, et Egidio 1987). For Newton (1997) reciprocity norms depend on the readiness of individuals to cooperate instead of perceiving each other as strangers, competitors or potential enemies. Virtual communities can become a reciprocity medium as it is based on values of cooperation put in place by members (Rheingold 1993).

• Social trust: social capital flourishes when trust becomes a support of the overall communication between members. Within traditional communities that are closed and homogeneous, trust lies within the solidarity that comes from intense and regular contact of individuals that have the same ethnic or tribal belonging (Newton 1997). According to this perspective, Internet is an

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inducer of weak links as it brings together perfect strangers that are geographically dispersed. The anonymity of the exchanges challenges the building of authentic trust bonds (Constant, Sproull, et Kiesler 1996).

**METHODOLOGY**

We gathered data in three complementary ways. First, through participant observation we were able to understand in a timely way, relationships between members as well as the rituals and habits of their interaction (Hammersley et Atkinson 2007). One of the authors has followed the weekly Weight Watcher’s program for 11 months. Second, trough long interviews we managed to induce the social representations of social capital (Bergadãoo 2006). Finally, using Netnography (Kozinets 2009) we sought to uncover how social capital manifested itself within the French forum of Weight Watchers Switzerland. We have observed this community for a period of one year. We have performed a systematic review of all the discussion threads and we have selected the twelve most relevant ones according to our research scheme that informed the six dimensions of social capital.

**RESULTS**

Our results explain that both weight watchers communities, offline and online, were similar regarding the first two dimensions of the community construct. However, there was a difference regarding the last four dynamic dimensions related to the nature of communication between members, which resulted in a different social capital. We found that both Weight Watchers communities that we researched share the same passion, the same destiny and revolve around the same brand. However, they do not generate a social capital of similar nature nor intensity.

Hence, both communities are complementary and sometimes opposed when it comes to the structuring dimensions of the social capital of the Weight Watchers Switzerland brand. Most of the authors see that communication generates a strong social capital in the face-to-face context where interactions happen on a regular basis (Wasko et Faraj 2005; Constant, Sproull, et Kiesler 1996; Kraut, Galegher, et Egido 1987). This is not what we observed in the case of Weight Watchers. The face-to-face environment is so structured that it does not allow members to take the initiative to support others, and show altruism only upon the request of the group moderator. Within this offline community, members are driven by a predominant individualism. They do not take the risk to offer support and their moral support remains artificial. Voluntarism and reciprocity are limited; because members are put in a receiver position and are the customers of Weight Watchers. However, the online community is filled with voluntarism where members come to find a spontaneous and natural help, which naturally leads to oriented altruism and reciprocity. Finally, we observed social trust in both communities. In the face-to-face community this did not happen between members but driven and channeled towards the group moderator.

Our netnography of the online forum allowed us to see that each request by a new member generates listening, advice, and a sharing of personal experience. There are some rituals, however, they are less formal than the offline community. The social trust is not based on physical proximity; rather it relies on the freedom of members to show realtime cooperation. This is not in line with the statement of Wasko & Faraj (2005) that say that members should share a common history to build a real social capital. However, there is no history on the Web but a series of spontaneous messages in a constantly renewed present. If we consider what Amado & Guittet (2009) said that « communication is a continuous process of social relationships », then both communication models should reinforce each other (Howard, Rainie, et Jones 2001). If our results regarding social capitals were validated, then other companies would be able to help managers reinforce their brand communities or also avoid consumer disengagement. This is easier in cases like Weight Watchers where the brand has a strong and established brand equity. Still, we are left to see whether a company whose brand equity is weaker would be able to develop trust on the web (Lemoine et Notebaert 2011). In fact, even within the forum, the participants discuss their relationship with the Weight Watchers’ program.

**DISCUSSION**

The objective or our research is to explore how a company can manage a strong social capital based on the communication from a face-to-face community and from an online community. In any case, nowadays, brands build and sustain themselves in two different environments that cannot be separated. They intrinsically generate social capital through two communication tools: the face-to-face and the online. Yet, there are some brands that only have an online presence, and not all the off-line brands hold weekly meeting nor regular consumer focus groups. Our future research would seek to find which forms and which attributions would make the job of « e-community manager » a developer of social capital and not a trends finder like it’s generally the case nowadays. Through applying both of these communication models (see figure 1), they should work in synergy to help generate and strengthen social capital.

Weight watchers has been so successful for the past decades because its members need its codes, rites and its mode of leadership. One should seek to use this online brand capital for the common

Table 1. Comparison of social capital dimensions of both communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of W.W's social capital</th>
<th>Off-line</th>
<th>On-line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Common consciousness</td>
<td>Community of a destiny: weight loss</td>
<td>Community of a destiny: weight loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ritualization</td>
<td>Instaured by the meeting moderator and is a point of reference for members.</td>
<td>Each contributes freely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The participant’s voluntarism</td>
<td>Low occurrence, members based on the prompting of the moderator.</td>
<td>Basis of the members’ interaction, encouragement, sympathy, cohesion, team spirit brought forward by the forum. Favoring mutual encouragement, compassion and care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Oriented altruism</td>
<td>Determined by a pragmatic individualism</td>
<td>Prone to opening on everyday life topics to help others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Reciprocity norms</td>
<td>We did not observe spontaneous reciprocity the exchange remains functional.</td>
<td>Strong trust due to the anonymity of the forum, which allows members to express themselves without fearing to be judged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Social trust</td>
<td>Trust induced by the WW appointed leader that often based on personal experience.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
good of the members. While social trust revolves around the institutional leader, the online community is an environment of natural trust (Bergadaà, Sayarh, et Trolliet 2010). In the case of the offline community, the leader instills a hierarchical structure of communication, which impacts the ties within the group (Amado et Guittet 2009). On the other hand, the online community generates an emerging leadership that strengthens the brand capital in a natural way (Mongeau et Saint-Charles 2005). The altruism of these « e-leaders » supports the motivation of members and influences them to reach a common goal. They do not seek to control the group but simply believe in the just and useful « cause ». The communication between members of the online community is hence more intimate which results in closeness and sympathy (Sias et Cahill 1998). Further research can observe the emergence of natural leaders within an online group. We have observed that there is no single leader but that leaders change depending on the topic or situation being discussed. Still, the same person may interact with many user names. Acquiring a deeper understanding of their characteristics can enable their support and hence have a positive impact on social capital.

However, new questions arise as brands would usually seek to put in place their own « e-leaders », generators of social capital. As the internet allows for anonymity, they would be able to enter a brand community through a forum such as the one we have researched or through creating a specific group on the internet through one of the current social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn…. The ethical issue arises when the « e-community manager » (that can direct many « e-leaders » and be one of them) would collect and interpret data through a « discrete » observation of members’ behavior. In this case, wouldn’t there be an ethical issue towards members especially that trust is one the fundamental dimensions of the brand’s social capital?

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46 / Is Social Capital Context Dependent? The Weight Watchers’ Online and Offline Brand Communities


ABSTRACT

Recent enthusiasm for assemblages of humans and things in co-shaping consumption has hidden the rise of things that increasingly control our lives. We analyze the rise of objects in contexts ranging from algorithms, the Internet of Things, and hyperobjects to GPS, self-quantification, and robots.

FROM OBJECT-ORIENTED TO OBJECT-DOMINANT ONTOLOGIES

In examining object-dominant causality (ODC), this paper shows that we are becoming more dominated by the objects that surround us. This is partly due to the “black box” technologies that we use, but whose working mechanisms cannot fathom; we are only concerned with inputs and outputs (Latour 1988). We once wrote computer programs; we now use apps. We only vaguely understand that our computer or smart phone or other digital device seems to perform actions like recommending a restaurant, showing relevant advertisements, or showing the Netflix offering of our choice because of tangle of circuits inside of it and the mysterious workings of the internet – another black box. We have forgotten that we invited friend requests and news updates by agreeing to end user license agreement, creating social media profiles, and mindlessly ticking boxes when we sign up. From a post-phenomenological (Sparrow 2014) perspective, these objects seem to be acting on their own. A different level of ODC is found in macro forces like climate change that can only be addressed by coordinated global consumer actions (Morton 2013). We also experience ODC in the rise of autonomous and semi-autonomous technologies like the Internet of Things, self-driving vehicles, and data analytics algorithms. Such developments suggest that we are beginning to shift from subject-dominant ontologies, past flat ontologies (Bajde 2013; Canniford and Bajde 2016), and are now moving toward an object-dominant challenge to both alternative ontologies.

After illustrating rising object-dominance in the home, we theorize the consequences of the shift toward ODC in greater detail, including both the problems and opportunities it presents. We acknowledge that black box technologies link us to objects through a complex web of other persons and things. This assemblage governs what these subjects and objects are able do together (Epp and Price 2008). Such connections are referred to in various ways. Latour (1996) and Morton (2013) add to intersubjectivities (“a collective consciousness between human subjects,” -- Hui 2016, 154) the concept of interobjectivities (comparable relations between objects). Hodder (2012) refers to dependencies between Humans (H) and Things (T)—starting with simple pairs—HH, TT, HT, TH, where the former is affected by the latter. And Bogost (2006, 2012) deals with Unit Operations in which persons and things interact in potentially complex assemblages. These perspectives recognize that both ODC and Subject Dominant Causality (SDC) are over-simplifications for a range of more complex causalities. But in order to highlight the shifting balance of power, we focus on the extremes of ODC and SDC. It is our contention that ODC is becoming more common and less extreme. An example of houses follows.

HOUSES

Houses Speak. We focus here on the architectural house rather that the assemblages of people and possessions that comprise a home (e.g., Cieraad 1999; Miller 2001; Morley 2000; Pink 2004; Rybczynski 1986). With a bit of anthropomorphism our houses have something to say to us and exert an important influence on our behavior (Lurie 2014). The house speaks to us in a non-verbal language. Like spoken language it speaks different languages in different cultures. Its age, design, colors, shapes and textures can differ in formality, complexity, and beauty. In the West, bilateral symmetry makes a house appear orderly, formal, and conventional, whereas an asymmetric house appears casual, impetuous, fragmentary, and organic (Lurie 2014). McCracken (1989) characterizes a “homey” house as one displaying warm colors like gold, green, and brown, warm materials like wood, stone, and brick, and plants and shrubs that encompassing the house. Features like paned windows, shutters, porches, and Gothic, Tudor, or gingerbread ornamentation also help to convey hominess in the eyes of the anthropomorphizing observer or resident.

Barbara Brown (Brown and Altman 1983; Brown 1985) examined exteriors of burglarized and neighboring non-burglarized houses and showed pictures of homes to burglars in prison, asking which houses they would target. She found that elements such as hedges, flower borders, and trees all deterred crime. A neat yard with flower borders was as effective as high fences and locks. Gated communities instead rely on guards, gates, and imposing walls or fences to thwart intruders. Though residents are part of a sharing community, they not only do not trust outsiders, but they are less likely to engage with their neighbors than those in adjacent un gated communities (Belk 2017; Fernandez 2015; Low 2003). Retail, government, and office spaces also invite, direct, or discourage trespass through their designs (Brodin 2007; Hansson 2007; Saunders 2005).

What Houses Say. House design can also make us happy or sad (Daum 2010; de Botton 2006) and entice us with promises of love, affection, and sex (Garber 2000). Bachelard (1958/1994) describes children’s drawings of houses are clues to their adjustment, wellbeing, and happiness.

[A happy house] is usually a square one- or two-story home with a peaked roof, a central door, and two or more symmetrically placed windows. There is often a chimney from which smoke rises, implying the building is warm and inhabited. Frequently the Happy House is surrounded by simple lollipop-shaped trees and/or outside flowers, and a big round yellow sun shines in the sky, which is indicated by a strip of bright blue at the top of the drawing. Unhappy or disturbed children will sometimes produce a version of this picture in which the strip of sky is black, and there is no sun. Their houses often have no windows, or only black squares implying that nobody can see in or out; bad things presumably go on in such a building (Lurie 2014, 6).

Claire Cooper Marcus (1995) had people draw a picture of their houses and have a conversation with it. Then she had them switch places and act as the house speaking back to its owner. Different people had different relations with their houses. One man related to his house as a symbol of a grandfather he loved; a woman grieved for a house lost in a fire as though it was a deceased lover; and a divorced woman loved her cozy new apartment, but hated the large house that her ex-husband had remodeled. When the remodelled house talked back to her it said that it was glad to see her go and never felt cared for she lived there. The perceived presence of house ghosts (Miller 2001) and the inflated prices of celebrity homes both testify to the contagious presence of former owners (Newman, Diesendruck, and Bloom 2011).
The Powerful House. Daniel Miller (2010, 108) argues that houses are powerful and make us feel comparatively powerless. “We have a sense that the house has its own powers and properties that lie beyond us – something that may be easier to comprehend if we give that power and history an anthropomorphic form” (Miller 2010, 94). While Miller, like Gell (1998), believes that humans are the primary agents who grant houses what may appear to be agency, he notes that despite this houses are still more powerful than their residents (c.f. Borgerson 2013).

If houses have such strong power, can shape our emotions and behaviors, and can speak so clearly, it is obvious that they have agency, even though we have anthropomorphically and subconsciously projected it onto them. The goal of object oriented ontologies is to try to understand objects from their perspectives rather than from the perspectives of humans. Therefore, object-focused ontologies turn away from a focus on meaning. But Bennett (2010), Bogost (2012), and Hoffman and Novak (forthcoming) argue that anthropomorphism may be the best way to get people to decenter themselves and attempt to take the perspective of the object.. In this sense, they are outliers in object oriented ontologies for not trying, for example, to understand the stoniness or a stone without the bias of our human understanding of stones (McFarland 2008).

The Smart House. Within the growing internet of things (IoT), Apple’s Siri, Amazon’s Alexa, Google’s Home, and Microsoft’s Cortana, as well as translation software like Google Translate, there is a great tendency to anthropomorphize these digital assistants. In the first year after Amazon introduced Alexa, half a million people had told “her” that they love her (Riley 2015) and two-hundred and fifty thousand asked Alexa to marry them (Murdoch 2016). Popular press references to “the smart home” give a common perception of how consumers tend to relate to such objects anthropomorphically, the devices creepy or feel they are being spied upon (Oremus 2016). One owner complained that “it didn’t feel like a private environment. More like I’m at home with a friendly stranger” (Mennicken, et al. 2016). Another was reminded to go to bed early and disparaged the device as “mom.”

Children often try to identify with or test these devices by asking them asking them biographical questions, as if they were people (Druga, Breazeal, Williams, and Resnick 2017). Others regard the devices as being adult-like and as being smarter than they are (McReynolds, et al. 2017). Thus, such smart devices may also only influence our self-perceptions through comparison. It is not surprising that the entity with the answers is perceived as smarter than the one asking the questions or giving commands. But Alesich and Riggby (2017) found that because devices like Alexa and Cortana have female gendered voices this helps to reinforce gender stereotypes of females as secretaries, cleaners, concierges, child minders, companions for the elderly, and homemakers. Another study in Singapore found that people preferred a male gendered security robot, but a female-gendered house cleaning robot (Tay, Jung, and Park 2014). The design of IoT AI can not only influence consumer anthropomorphic perceptions of the technologies, but also the way we think about ourselves, our gender, and our intellect. Consumer research can help to guide the positioning for both consumer acceptance of these technologies and for their potentially pro-social effects. Since consumers tend to relate to such objects anthropomorphically, the use of projective anthropomorphic measures of responses is critical.

CONCLUSION

Hyperobjects like the environment and social media as well as less visible objects like viruses and algorithms increasingly promise or threaten to dominate us. This may make our lives easier as we have found with smartphones, computers, and online banking. But as recent scandals with social media privacy, digital information hacking, and election meddling suggest, there is a sinister side to these affordances as well. As ODC grows more powerful and pervasive, we need to try to anticipate its potential consequences and what we can do to help assure that they are positive. Consumers need to be aware that we will likely find it increasingly difficult to understand and tame the black box technologies that we are coming to rely upon.

The ODC instances are only some of those we can expect to encounter. Self-driving vehicles, data mining algorithms, and genetic medicine are among the others we can anticipate. There are no doubt others that we do not fully anticipate. We might also consider how the quantified self, the second self, and the commoditized self may

Figure 1, James Thurber’s House

rafsky and Martin 2014; Kassan 2017). Multi-layered digital neural network processing and deep machine learning make the responses increasingly conversational, but the devices are still unable to “understand” us. One reason is the embodied nature of human feelings and language. The algorithms can suggest synonyms, antonyms, paraphrases, definitions, and appropriate uses for a concept like pain, but they cannot know what it is like to feel pain feels (Kassan 2017). Our GPS doesn’t “know” where we are and our smart thermostat can’t feel heat or cold.

But the lack of human consciousness, self-awareness, and subjectivity don’t stop the conversational IoT devices from convincing-ly acting human. Whatever they lack in humanity and personhood is often made up for by our anthropomorphizing them. If we can accept the largely female voices that respond to us from these devices as truly helping us, we seem to be willing to infer that the voice also has a personality, intellect, and a desire to help (Lindley, Coulton, and Cooper 2017). While some owners of IoT devices feel that these devices are friends who care about them (Wilcox 2016), others find the devices creepy or feel they are being spied upon (Oremus 2016). One owner complained that “it didn’t feel like a private environment. More like I’m at home with a friendly stranger” (Mennicken, et al. 2016). Another was reminded to go to bed early and disparaged the device as “mom.”

Children often try to identify with or test these devices by asking them asking them biographical questions, as if they were people (Druga, Breazeal, Williams, and Resnick 2017). Others regard the devices as being adult-like and as being smarter than they are (McReynolds, et al. 2017). Thus, such smart devices may also only influence our self-perceptions through comparison. It is not surpris-
fare in these contexts. Finn (2017, 135) suggests that these selves suggest that we are moving away from the extended self and toward the extended object, and that people: “are, in a very literal sense, humans functioning as mere technical extensions of computational culture machines.” This is not quite the science fiction plot of robots rebelling against the humans that created them to be “slaves,” but it does suggest that there are often unintended consequences to technological inventions (Tenner 1996).

Humans have long dreamt of creating humanoid objects that are brought to life, sometimes to our pleasure as with Pygmalion’s statue, and sometimes to our peril as with Frankenstein’s monster. Emerging technologies promise ‘new forms of object dominant causality. Consumer research can no longer assume that objects are simply inert passive commodities and that we alone are the subjects. This paper warns that this is no longer the case. But the fact that objects are becoming dominating subjects does not mean that we must shift from consumer research to object research. Because consumers are the key link in our interaction with objects, we must still focus on the consumer. The difference is that with the rise of objects, we must be ever more aware that we create objects and then they create us. This is a paraphrase of Winston Churchill, Father John Culkin, and Marshall McLuhan that is generally taken to mean that by adapting to the technologies we invent they not only change our lives, but our selves as well. But with ODC there is also the additional concerns that arise from the primary agency of objects. Imagine if military robots are allowed to become autonomous killing machines, for instance. Although that might eliminate human error, would we trust them with the protection of our lives? Such turn-about require the full attention of consumer research.

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Self-Gifting in Interdependent Cultures: Lonely Mothers and Self-Compassion
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ABSTRACT
Self-gifting consumer behavior, due to its nature of focus on self, its compatibility with interdependent cultures had always been questioned. Still, self-gifting is now prevalent in many interdependent cultures. This paper illuminates that self-gifting plays an important role of self-compassion for Japanese mothers feeling isolated from their family members.

As demonstrated in its name and characteristics, one of the predominant aspects of self-gift consumer behavior (SGCB) is the focus on self. Hence, Mick and DeMoss (1990a) suggested that SGCB may depend on an individually-centered view of self, and questioned its existence in cultures dominant with a group-centered view of self. Thus, the investigation of SGCB in non-Western cultures has become to be one of the research agendas in the self-gift research. However, only very recently, the initiatives of exploring SGCB in the Eastern cultures have begun (e.g., Joy et al. 2006; Suzuki 2011; Tynan et al. 2010). Using the data gathered from the Japanese mothers on their SGCB, we explore how self-gifts play a role in interdependent cultures.

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS
Self-Gifting Consumer Behavior (SGCB)
Consuming goods or services for oneself has been recognized as a common consumer behavior in the Western cultures and is noted by multiple consumer behavior researchers (e.g., Levy 1982). Mick and DeMoss were the forerunners in the self-gift research and built its theoretical foundation. They conceptualized self-gifts as “personally symbolic self-communication through special indulgences that tend to be premeditated and highly context bound” (Mick and DeMoss 1990a, p. 328). Self-gifts can be “products, services, or experiences and that they are partly differentiated from other personal acquisitions by their situational and motivational contexts” (Mick and DeMoss 1990b, p. 6). They are distinguished from other personal acquisitions partly on their relationship with self which may be among the strongest of relationships involving the self and personal acquisitions.

Incompatibility of Self-Gifting in Interdependent Cultures
SGCB’s focus on self questions the compatibility of such behavior in interdependent cultures including Japan. North Americans views the self as autonomous and independent. It motivates people to identify positively valued internal attributes of the self. In contrast, Japanese views the self as interdependent with others (Markus and Kitayama 1991). The normative imperative is to maintain this interdependence among individuals. The self becomes most meaningful and complete when it is cast in the appropriate social relationship (Lebra 1976). People are motivated to find a way to fit in with others. Furthermore, in Japanese culture, acting in accord with personal opinions is regarded as childish (Hamaguchi, Kumon and Creighton 1985). Self-expression is not viewed as being authentic, but instead as being immature (Markus and Kitayama 1991). Japanese culture emphasizes self-discipline (Heine et al. 1999) and places importance on restraining the internal attributes that could potentially interfere with the cohesion of the group (Hamaguchi et al. 1985).

The above discussions suggest that self-directed behavior such as SGCB may not be appropriate in the Japanese culture. The evidence from newspaper article supports this proposition. In 1990, To-kyo Yomiuri Shimbun, a newspaper with largest circulation in Japan, has given a critical comment towards self-rewarding: “I don’t like this word [self-reward] because there’s a sense of untruthfulness in it. […] Isn’t a ‘reward’ something that we should be receiving from ‘others’?” (November 21, 1990). However, with time, SGCB gained legitimacy and today, SGCB is a common practice in Japan (Suzuki 2011). It is beyond the scope of this paper to answer why SGCB was accepted in Japan. Instead, we aim to explore what important roles self-gifts play for Japanese consumers.

Self-Compassion
This paper argues that, for Japanese mothers, self-gifting is a way to show self-compassion. Self-compassion is defined as responding to suffering or personal failure with self-kindness rather than self-judgment. It involves showing oneself support and warmth in the face of setbacks and disappointments (Neff 2003; Neff, Kirkpatrick, and Rude 2007).

The origins of self-compassion concept is Eastern philosophical thought, Buddhism in particular (Neff 2003). Buddhism psychology believes that it is essential to feel compassion for oneself as it is for others. It acknowledges that suffering, failure, and inadequacies are part of the common human experience; all humans are imperfect and make mistakes. Thus, all people including oneself are worthy of compassion.

Self-gifting appears to help Japanese mothers accept their sufferings, failures, and inadequacies and to maintain well-being. The role of self-gifting as self-compassion is particularly important for Japanese mothers because there is not much recognitions and complimenting behaviors from the family members (Barnlund and Araki 1985; Matsuura 2004). Japanese don’t offer compliments to their family members who are uchi (inside) versus soto (outside) of their collective self (Bachnik 1994). Just as self-appraisal is not seen as appropriate in the Japanese society, appraising family members—who are part of themselves—is not culturally appropriate. However, motherhood entails many hardships, and many mothers hope to be acknowledged and appreciated. We illustrate that Japanese mothers are self-gifting to be kind to themselves, to feel that they’re not isolated but are part of the larger human experience, and to hold their painful thoughts and feelings in balanced awareness—self-compassion (Neff 2003).

METHODOLOGY
This study employed a phenomenological interviewing (Schouten 1991; Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989; Suzuki and Akutsu 2012; Suzuki et al. 2016). This research method allows us to delve into the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of informants and to capture the social and situational contexts of those phenomena. In-depth interviews with ten Japanese mothers were conducted. To recruit appropriate informants, we asked their self-gifting experience within past one year and what they had bought. We selected ten informants based on the age (our sample was composed of various age groups from late twenties to fifties) and the richness of SGCB (see Table 1 for the summary of informant profiles). The long-interviews lasted between 60 to 90 minutes and were audiotaped. All were semi-structured; questions included their most memorable self-gifting experiences, why they bought self-gifts, how they felt when they bought self-gifts, and the meanings of self-gifts for their self. The informants were paid 8,000 yen (about $80) for their participation. The
Self-Gifting in Interdependent Cultures: Lonely Mothers and Self-Compassion

The self-gifting process took place from April to June, 2017. All interviews were conducted in the local language (Japanese). Data used in this paper is a part of the large project on Japanese women’s SGCB.

We analyzed the text, moving from a discussion of the part to the whole (Thompson et al. 1989). We discussed each theme extensively before reaching a consensus, seeking to be open to possibilities afforded by the text (Thompson and Tambyah 1999).

FINDINGS

Cultural Disdain for the Role of Mother

Hiroko. They—raising children or nursing the elderly—may not be huge achievements. But, there are small parts where I want to be complimented.

This theme highlights the cultural meanings of motherhood in Japan expressed by our informants. In Japan, traditionally, raising children and nursing the elderly were women’s normal jobs. It was natural for women to retire from work and assume the social life of full-time housewife upon marriage (Goldstein-Gidoni 2012). Once she has children, she was to pursue full-time motherhood:

Saki. Now I have a child, so I should be only doing child-raising...

Husbands often think that it’s normal for wives to do housekeeping and child-raising:

Ryoko. My husband thinks it’s natural that I raise kids. […] He also thinks that if I’m not going to work outside, then it’s natural that I do housekeeping.

Furthermore, housekeeping jobs are considered as a free service:

Ryoko. My husband has allowance; but I don’t. […]

Interviewer. [Housewives] should receive allowance too (laughs).

Ryoko. It would be nice (laughs). I really think so. I’m working so hard with the housekeeping every day.

This manifestation is also expressed by Keiko, who describes that child-raising is not highly evaluated others. In Japanese society, there is a general belief that housekeeping and child-raising is normal for women to pursue; house-guarding is women’s role. It is not something that deserves special recognition or payment.

Japanese Women’s Limited Agency to Express their Dissatisfaction with Negligence

Keiko. Honestly speaking, I want to be (highly) evaluated. If this were inside the company, someone will evaluate for contributing to the company; but there is no mechanism for evaluating child-raising.

This theme illuminates Japanese women’s desire to be recognized. Our informants acknowledge that housekeeping and child-raising are not special and are not worthy of being praised. Still, they work hard for their family and desire to be appreciated by the family members.

Ryoko. If you’re a housewife, it might sound awkward, but you don’t get recognition. No one praises you.

Japanese husbands and children often do not praise mothers. This is closely related to the Japanese cultural view of uchi versus soto (Bachnik 1994). Japanese often consider family members as miuchi (insider) and feel that compliments are not necessary for insiders (Matsuura 2004). However, Japanese mothers sometimes feel isolated and ignored because there is not much recognitions and compliments from the family members (Barnlund and Araki 1985; Matsuura 2004).

Interviewer. How often are you praised in your daily lives?

Aya. None. I don’t get praised.

[...]

Interviewer. You mentioned that you don’t get praised, but in your honest feeling, do you want to be praised?

Aya. Yes. If someone praises me or says something similar, I would probably be happy.

The negligence is also reflected in the lack of consideration for birthdays. Many of our informants narrated that her birthdays are not
celebrated or remembered by her family. For instance, Aya feels that birthday is a day to thank mothers and describes birthday gift as a symbol of “being considered by others.” Thus, when her son didn’t give her the birthday gift, she was very sad. She felt ignored by her son.

Nonetheless, Aya cannot ask her son to celebrate her birthday or praise her for the good housekeeping:

Aya. I’m thinking that I’m working hard. But, others may not think the same way. Thus, other’s evaluation would make me happier than my own evaluation.

Interviewer. But, you can’t ask others to “praise me” (laughs)? Aya. (Laughs). No, I can’t ask.

Although mothers feel strong desire to be appreciated for what they’re doing every day for the family, they cannot voice that to the family or to the society.

Self-Gifting as Resistance to Cultural Marginalization

Kumi. I was doing only child-raising until now, so I put the meaning of “good job” and bought things I wanted where my husband was not present. […] When my husband is there, he says things like “isn’t it expensive,” “don’t you already have similar clothes,” “you already have many clothes.”

Third theme of self-gifting represents the agency of marginalized mothers. Spending money on themselves grants mothers the power to care about themselves. Because there is no evaluating-mechanism for mothering in the society, mothers created the mechanism themselves—namely, self-gifting:

Keiko. Evaluating child-raising myself may sound funny, but I deal with my feelings myself. There were many twists and turns, but somehow I arrived here. […] It doesn’t matter how others see [my self-gifting]. It is one of my own evaluations within my heart.

Self-gifting has several functions for marginalized mothers. First, it allows mothers to accept their hardships and to maintain well-being:

Interviewer. When you bought shoulder-bag for yourself, did your feeling change? Saki. It changed. I was able to switch my feeling. […] I was able to think “let’s do my best again from tomorrow.”

Interviewer. Really. Why was that? Saki. I think it’s because I bought something for me, I had my own time, and I was able to spend money as I like.

Other informants also mention the similar role of self-gifting in their lives, namely healing and recharging marginalized mothers:

Tomoe. I feel motivated and I can work hard again. […] My feelings are healed, and I can feel that I need to work hard. […] I tell myself—for me; to the thing I wanted: I bought something that is quite expensive, so I shall work hard.

Because self-gifts are self-centric, they also allow mothers to be selfish. Japanese mothers are normally prioritizing others (e.g., husband, children) than themselves; thus being selfish is uncommon. When Tomoe is asked to describe her self-gift as a person, Tomoe answered that she cannot because if it’s person, she would pay attention to that person’s needs:

Tomoe. I can’t compare it with person. [With self-gift,] it’s like I want to stay alone. For example, if I compare self-gift to my mother, well, I can’t relax. I consider about her. So, there is no one who I can feel I’m healed. Basically, with people, you pay attention. Any person. Even if you’re really close. Thus, I cannot compare [self-gift] with person.

Finally, self-gifts allow mothers to escape from reality:

Hiroko. I become excited just by watching [my self-gift].

Interviewer. Why? Hiroko. Why? Well… I can taste the feeling that I can escape from reality a bit.

Escape from reality is related with self-compassion:

Interviewer. What does self-gifting mean for you? Hiroko. Meaning? What would it be… I think there is a sense of comforting my own feelings.

SGCB is incompatible with traditional Japanese values; however, it is purposely used by Japanese women to resist the cultural marginalization of mothers. It is important to note that this is a passive resistance. Mothers resist the cultural disdain for the role of mother; however, they do not challenge to change the cultural role or society. Rather, they choose to self-gift and accept the negligence. It is interesting because by choosing to self-gift, mothers are acting to go against the traditional Japanese values.

DISCUSSION

The current study has illuminated that self-gifting plays an important role of self-compassion for Japanese mothers. Across the three hours long in-depth interviews with ten Japanese mothers, the narratives about their hardships appeared many times. Japanese mothers are working hard for their family; however, Japanese husbands and children often do not praise mothers. Thus, they self-gift to be kind to themselves, to feel that they’re not isolated, and to hold their pain in balanced awareness.

SGCB as self-compassion is different from self-gift as self-therapy (Mick and DeMoss 1990a). Whereas SGSB as self-therapy focuses on changing negative mood to positive mood, SGSB as self-compassion involves accepting and forgiving one’s suffering. Japanese society traditionally possesses gender ideals of caring mothers. Thus, many of our informants felt guilty when they were stressed from motherhood or faced by their incompleteness as an ideal mother. They self-gifted in order to accept their inadequacies and to move on with their life.

Also, many of our informants felt isolated from their family members—husband and/or children. In interdependent cultures, self is connected with others (Markus and Kitayama 1991). Thus, when mothers are ignored from their close others, they find incompleteness in their self and become emotionally unstable. Self-gifts serve to fill a sense of missing-self.

This study only assessed Japanese mothers, which is the major limitation. We need to further explore SGCB of mothers in other interdependent cultures such as China and Korea. Nonetheless, this paper extends the past research on SGCB by providing a new role dimension of SGCB in consumers’ lives.
REFERENCES


Trying to Fit In: How Consumers Change to Embody Marketplace Aesthetics

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Abstract

This research explores how consumers come to view their bodies as destabilizers of their practices. Drawing from a netnography and interviews exploring women’s experiences with breast augmentation, I uncover the processes by which consumers change their bodies and better align their practices with marketplace aesthetics.

Practice theory calls attention to practices as an important concept for ordering social life and consumption. Practice theory theorizes that human activities are embodied, mediated by marketplace materials and are based on an implicit know-how (Schatzki 2001; Schau et al. 2009). Practices therefore provide insight into how consumers engage with their social environment, and the meaning that they make out of this engagement. In light of this, consumers have a desire to align their practices with their social environments. Doing so creates a sense of fit or stability that allows consumers to engage smoothly with their social world (Phipps and Ozanne 2017; Sandikci and Ger 2010). Nevertheless, this alignment is not always stable and consumers have to work at maintaining their stability, such as when consumer needs aren’t being met within the market.

Consumers will circumvent practices that are blocked as they seek out this alignment. For instance, Sandikci and Ger (2010) show how routinization of wearing a stigmatized veil enables consumers to become comfortable with a deviant practice. Women drew from marketplace values related to aesthetics and beauty to personalize their veils, mixing colours and designs as a way to turn veils into a fashionable and ordinary clothing routine. This approach allowed women to move veiling from a restrictive practice to an embodiment of culturally acceptable tastes.

Further, past research finds that when consumers’ routines are blocked, their practices are often destabilized. Phipps and Ozanne (2017) show how consumers sought to re-anchor their routines during a drought by reworking their practices, such as redirecting shower water into the garden, to regain a feeling of security in water usage. Nevertheless, many consumers encountered obdurate materiality in this process whereby materials, such as old washing machines, limited their ability to conserve water. Often, consumers were forced to create new routines in order to regain stability within their domestic practices. This indicates that materials may destabilize consumer practices, and that consumers will work around them in order to re-align their practices.

Finally, prior research has shown how the body must also align within consumer practices (Woermann and Rokka 2015). For instance, consumers’ creative costuming is mediated by their physical appearance. Seregina and Weijo (2017) found that as consumers became more experienced within the cosplay community, they were more likely to dress like characters they can convincingly embody. Here, the body functions as an obdurate material, meaning that consumers have to continuously trade-off between their bodies and fantasy in order to create a meaningful, playful experience. Thus, consumers are likely to re-work bodies and materials that are misaligned.

What these studies share is they examine how consumers experience roadblocks on the way to alignment and the smooth performance of practices. When aligning their practices, consumers are motivated to move around blockages, whether this is to gain inclusivity from the market, or due to disruption of their daily routines. Even when consumers are unsuccessful, as in the case of the Fatshionistas who were unable to gain inclusivity in a mainstream market, they worked around the lack of fashionable clothing and formed a parallel market online (Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). This research draws attention to how consumers find work-arounds when materials or even marketplace tastes or bodies are viewed as obdurate.

This research builds upon this theoretical foundation by exploring how consumers may come to view their own bodies as unaligned and disruptive of their routines and practices. This research theorizes that body modification is used by consumers as a way to remove the blockage from their practices, rather than working around them. Through this process, consumers come to embody an aesthetic of beauty that is normalized within the marketplace, one they perceived they previously could not.

To explore this phenomenon, I selected the context of breast augmentation among younger women. Breast augmentation is the most popular cosmetic procedure for women aged 19-34 (ASPS 2017). Within this age group, women are opting for smaller breast implants (Stagnone, 2016), favouring a more natural appearance and moving away from an ‘obviously augmented’ aesthetic (Gimlin, 2013). I conducted a netnography, tracing three types of online communities: YouTube recovery videos, online forums, and Instagram communities (Kozinets, 2015). Cosmetic surgery often functions as a temporary space for many consumers (Schouten 1991). For this reason, women often use these networks while they are researching, awaiting and recovering from surgery before leaving these forums. Data collected from these online communities was supplemented with in-depth consumer interviews.

My findings suggest that consumers experience their bodies as misaligning simple routines, such as getting dressed or buying fashionable clothing. Consumers used three approaches to deal with the misfit of their bodies. First, emotional distancing from the marketplace refers to internalization of shame and anxiety informants experience about their bodies. These feelings typically come to light during simple practices like getting dressed or shopping. Women have access to many options within the market that are their size and within their price-range, yet they detail the psychological barriers they place on certain clothing because they did not look right on their bodies. Rather than experiencing anger or frustration towards clothing manufacturers (Scaraboto and Fischer 2013), informants will typically internalize the blame, considering themselves unable to fit in and were more likely to engage in exclusion practices, such as missing out on events. Modifying to fit the marketplace relates to viewing the body as a plastic entity which can be shaped for the market. Pre-operatively, this is related to informants use of padded bras to shape the body into a market-conforming aesthetic. Post-operatively, modifying also relates to the experience of being in a body which informants perceive is equipped for the market. Here, women feel their practices become aligned when they have freedom of choice for the first time. Last, embodying the marketplace relates to the transformative effect that surgery has on aligning the body to marketplace aesthetics of what is considered attractive. Here, the modified body no longer blocks practices but works to facilitate them, as women view their post-operative bodies as ‘like them’ or ‘real’.
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Practice theory calls attention to practices as an important concept for ordering social life and consumption. Practice theory theorizes that human activities are embodied, mediated by marketplace materials and are based on an implicit know-how (Schatzki 2001; Schau et al. 2009). Practices therefore provide insight into how consumers engage with their social environment, and the meaning that they make out of this engagement. In light of this, consumers have a desire to align their practices with their social environments. Doing so creates a sense of fit or stability that allows consumers to engage smoothly with their social world (Phipps and Ozanne 2017; Sandikci and Ger 2010). Nevertheless, this alignment is not always stable and consumers have to work at maintaining their stability, such as when consumer needs aren’t being met by the market (Scaraboto and Fischer, 2013).

Consumers will circumvent practices that are blocked as they seek out this alignment. For instance, Sandikci and Ger (2010) show how routinization of wearing a stigmatized veil enables consumers to become comfortable with a deviant practice. Women drew from marketplace values related to aesthetics and beauty to personalize their veils, mixing colours and designs as a way to turn veils into a fashionable and ordinary clothing routine. This approach allowed women to move veiling from a stigmatizing or restrictive practice to an embodiment of culturally acceptable tastes.

Further, past research finds that when consumers’ routines are blocked, their practices are often destabilized. Phipps and Ozanne (2017) show how consumers sought to re-anchor their routines during a drought by reworking their practices, such as redirecting shower water into the garden, to regain a feeling of security in water usage. Nevertheless, many consumers encountered obdurate materiality in this process whereby materials, such as old washing machines, limited their ability to conserve water. Often, consumers were forced to create new routines in order to regain stability within their domestic practices. This indicates that materials may destabilize consumer practices, and that consumers will work around them in order to re-align their practices.

Finally, prior research has shown how the body must also align within consumer practices (Woermann and Rokka 2015). For instance, consumers’ creative costuming is mediated by their physical appearance within the cos-play community. Seregina and Weijo (2017) found that as consumers became more experienced within the cos-play community, they were more likely to dress like characters that they can convincingly embody. In this context, the body functions as an obdurate material, meaning that consumers have to continuously trade-off between their bodies and fantasy in order to create a meaningful, playful experience. Thus, consumers are likely to rework bodies and materials that are misaligned.

What these studies share is they examine how consumers experience road blocks on the way to alignment and the smooth performance of practices. When aligning their practices, consumers are motivated to move around blockages, whether this is to gain inclusivity from the market, or due to the disruption of their daily routines. Even when consumers are unsuccessful, as in the case of the Fatshionistas who were unable to gain inclusivity in a mainstream market, they worked around the lack of fashionable clothing and formed a parallel market online (Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). This research draws attention to how consumers find work-arounds when materials or even marketplace tastes or bodies are viewed as obdurate.

This research builds upon this theoretical foundation by exploring how consumers may come to view their own bodies as unaligned and disruptive of their routines and practices. This research theorizes that body modification is used by consumers as a way to remove the blockage from their practices, rather than working around them. Through this process, consumers come to embody an aesthetic of beauty that is normalized within the marketplace that they perceived they previously could not.

METHODS

Context

The context of this research project is breast augmentation surgery. Breast augmentation is the most popular cosmetic procedure for women aged 19-34 (ASPS 2017). Within this age group, women are increasingly opting for smaller breast implants that fill out clothing and swimsuits (Stagnone, 2016). This suggests that women are favouring a more natural appearance and moving away from an ‘obviously augmented’ aesthetic (Gimlin, 2013).

The popularity of breast augmentation is significant for two reasons. First, the rise in popularity for younger consumers is linked to the normalisation of cosmetic surgery (Abdifar 2016). Cosmetic surgery can be viewed as a legitimate way for consumers to pursue change, which makes it a novel yet literal context to study how consumers might change themselves in order to better embody marketplace tastes. Second, the popularity of the procedure for younger women means that there are a number of users participating in online networks, for instance, the website realself.com features 23,000 reviews on breast augmentation alone. As younger consumers are more likely to engage in online networks, the way that these procedures are discussed, shared, and experienced can be traced online.

Data Collection

Data collection was mainly focused on online communities. The majority of consumers participating in these online groups are either considering, awaiting, or have previously had breast augmentation surgery. Cosmetic surgery often functions as a temporary space for many consumers (Schouten 1991). Given this, these online spaces are typically liminal in terms of individual activity, comprised of women who participate actively for short periods of time. I traced three different types of online communities, YouTube videos, online forums, and Instagram communities. Data collected from these online communities is supplemented with in-depth consumer interviews.

FINDINGS

The findings of this research suggest that informants did not feel confident with their small breasts, resulting in frustration, embarrassment and insecurity which emerged particularly during routine practices, such as shopping or trying on clothing. This misalignment between the body and marketplace tastes and materials, in the form of clothing, offers insight into how consumers work to change themselves to better fit with market tastes and materials. My results suggest that this process occurs in three stages. First, consumers will emotionally distance themselves from the marketplace, by problematizing their appearance in comparison to market offerings. Second, consumers engage in modification for the marketplace; and finally, following surgery consumers embody marketplace aesthetics through via their transformed bodies.

Emotional Distancing from the Marketplace

For informants, the motivation to change is preceded with internalised feelings of insecurity or embarrassment. Informants describe their dissatisfaction with their body following a memorable experience shopping, such as buying a wedding dress, clothes for a party, or buying bathing suits that they could not fill out. These events often occur as signposts which cement to informants that their bodies are misaligned to bodies with marketplace offerings or values. Consider informant Poppy (25):
Given the misalignment between bodies and the market, many informants turned to market offerings such as stuffed bras or shape-wear which could give them a more aesthetically valued appearance. They often internalized this blame, rather than blaming the materials, and were more likely to engage in exclusion practices, such as missing out on events, which prompted a need to change.

**Embodying the marketplace**

Relates to the transformative effect that surgery has on aligning the body to marketplace aesthetics of what is considered attractive. Women view their post-operative bodies as ‘like them’ or ‘real’, materialized in self-acceptance practices. Informants detail the effect that their body has on materials.

After many years of engaging in these market-conforming practices many informants noted that this choice was not always easy or appropriate because the materials could malfunction or fail. One informant recounted her embarrassment when she exposed herself to a table of people when her push-up bra pulled away from her chest while she extended her arm to take a selfie. Informants conceded that materials like push-up bras, which allow them to conform to their post-operative breasts smaller…. [Even] a few weeks prior to surgery I would not wear anything without a bra because I was very insecure. To the point where sometimes I wouldn’t even leave my house sometimes because I couldn’t find anything that looked cute.”

This quote demonstrates how consumers compare themselves to marketplace offerings, often leading to feelings of body misalignment with the marketplace (Thompson and Haytko 1995). Yet, rather than experiencing anger or frustration towards clothing manufacturers (Scaraboto and Fischer 2013), informants will typically internalise the blame, considering themselves unable to fit in. Although consumers have access to bras or clothing, they perceive them to be unavailable or inappropriate for them. Informants rejected the idea that they should simply find another dress that better compliments their body shape. It makes more sense to stay home rather than to go out feeling unattractive. This motivated informants to seek change.

**Modifying for the marketplace**

Relates to viewing the body as a plastic entity which can be shaped to align to the market. Pre-operatively, this refers to padded-bras to shape the body into a market-conforming aesthetic. Post-operatively, modifying also relates to the experience of being in a body which they perceive is equipped for the market. Here, women’s practices are aligned to the market as they are confronted with unrestrained choice for the first time.

“I would wear a spanx suit every single day, and if you’ve ever worn one, very uncomfortable, but anything to make them (her breasts) smaller…. [Even] a few weeks prior to surgery I would not get comments. I was a woman in London just prior to surgery and, mm, one of the dresses I was wearing was a Bardot so the neckline was off here (her shoulders), and I felt really nice in it and then all of a sudden a guy went ‘excuse me, your boobs have fallen’. (Becca, vlogger, 20’s)

“It’s never owned a lace bra in my life, I’ve owned padded bras with lace on top of it, like lace covered, but you know those lingerie lace bras where it’s just a piece of lace like holding your breast, I’ve never even looked at those in stores… but now, how cute!” (Melisa, vlogger, 33)

“I haven’t even had to go shopping cos everything gets a second chance, it does not look the same at all anymore like it really just brings life to your outfits” (Denise, 27)

Trying on clothes is no longer a burden (sic) everything I put on looks good because I can finally fill it out… I never wanted boobs to be the only sexy thing about myself I just wanted to add to what I already had. And I think I’ve finally achieved that. (Carla, 24)

**Emotional distancing from the marketplace**

Refers to the feelings of embarrassment, shame and anxiety that informants recount experiencing during routine practices like shopping or trying on clothing. While women have access to many options within the market, they detail the psychological barriers they place on certain clothing because they did not look right on their bodies. Informants often internalized this blame, rather than blaming the materials, and were more likely to engage in exclusion practices, such as missing out on events, which prompted a need to change.

“[i]t all started when I went wedding dress shopping with my mom... and I noticed that I was looking really flat chested, I had no definition in my chest area, it just didn't really look as feminine as I wanted it to look in my wedding dress” (Hayley, vlogger, 24)

“I think a lot of times when trying on clothes it always felt like a frustration to me, I always had to consider ‘oh how are my boobs going to look? Oh it’s going to make me look so flat – a ‘guy’ were always some of the thoughts in my head and I would have to buy clothes always around that because it was my personal insecurity… swimsuits was kind of a big one too… like going to the beach, going to the waterpark I would always admire women that had breasts and I felt like in my mind to me I looked like how I looked when I was a very young girl, like 11 or 12 years old” (Danika, informant, 27)

“Ting dressed even more problematic. Surgery was deemed an easier substitute for real breasts. Often, this exacerbated the problems they wished to resolve about their own bodies, making routines like getting dressed even more problematic. Surgery was deemed an easier way to remove the blockage between consumer practices and the market rather than utilizing these ineffective materials.

This act of modification for the marketplace is also apparent post-operatively. Informants describe their relief in giving themselves permission to gain access to new materials that would never have been considered as appropriate to them before. These included garments like unlined bras or bikinis. Access to materials is an immediate outcome of resolving the blockage, allowing women to stabilize their previously fragmented routines. This phenomenon is most clearly evidenced in the *haul* videos that many vloggers film documenting the new bras they purchased either prior to, or mere
days after surgery out of excitement for dressing their new body. In this sense, informants feel as though they are confronted with unrestrained choice for the first time, and are no longer burdened with their self-imposed barriers to market.

**Embodying the Marketplace**

Following the experiences of unrestrained choice, women are able to resolve some of the tensions they experience between their bodies and the market offerings. Months or years after their augmentations, informants often describe feeling like a true version of themselves. Women explain that their pre-operative bodies, which were shaped with padded bras, are ‘fake’ or ‘not mine’. This included informant Sarah (26) who said that she feels like her post-operative body is her real body and she does not remember what her old body felt like, nor the difficulties she had with it. Augmented breasts provide informants the freedom of no longer having to use materials, such as clothing and makeup to conform their bodies. Instead, the post-operative body becomes a literal embodiment of market aesthetics. Once the blockage is removed and women gain choice for the first time, they are also reaping the transformative rewards of a body that they believe to be better, more attractive, and real. Often, these feelings materialized in self-acceptance practices. Informants were able to describe the effect that breasts had on the rest of their body, allowing them to like other parts of their figures for the first time, and wanting to show off their bodies.

Beyond the excitement of choice within the market, and the impact that this had on women’s motivations to change, informants were also able to ruminate on the effect that their bodies have on materials. This was explained by Denise (27) who says “it (her new breasts) just really brings life to your outfits”. Others described their joy in filling out a simple t-shirt, and clothing sitting better because it hugged their bodies. Here, the modified body no longer blocks practices, but works to facilitate them. There is a flow between materials and the body which they had not experienced before.

**EMERGING IMPLICATIONS**

Consumer practices are often destabilized by materials, markets or bodies (i.e., Phipps and Ozanne 2017; Seregina and Weijo 2017). The findings of this study suggest that bodies may act to destabilize consumer practices. Yet rather than working around them, consumers will engage in a process of change to better align themselves to market offerings.

One implication stemming from this research is that change can be considered an embodied response to the market. Prior consumer research has often focused on how consumers may work to align markets or materials to themselves (i.e. Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). This research suggests that focusing on consumer change may yield insights related to identity, practices and choice within the market. There are already examples within consumer research related to this, for instance when Botox branding shifted in response to contestations, informant narratives often shifted with it. This included informant Betty, who’s reason for using Botox changed over time which may be interpreted as an embodiment of changing brand narratives (Giesler 2012). The findings may have broader implications for understanding the way consumers might act to transform themselves and seek (re)inclusion from the market.

**REFERENCES**


Riches to Rags to “Riches” – Consumers’ Identity (Re-) Construction after Having Overcome a Spell of Poverty

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how German consumers who have overcome a poverty spell draw on and integrate their past selves in different ways into their altered post-poverty transition identities and lifestyles. It identifies two post-poverty archetypal narratives: the ‘redemptive selves’ and the ‘critically reflexive returnees’.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer researchers have explored “the fruitfulness of exploring (...) experiences of the individual or group in flux and evolution” (Cody & Lawlor, 2011:208). Especially, consumers’ first-time encounters of marketplace restrictions and concomitant mismatches between one’s identity and a lower status position – for example, due to sudden and forced life transitions (e.g. job loss), that trigger a downward life trajectory - have been brought to the fore (Roberts, 1991; Elliott, 1995; Hamilton and Catterall, 2006; Ulver-Sneistrup and Ostberg, 2011; Chen and Nelson, 2017). However, studies on subsequent upward mobility, identity (re-) construction and related consumption implications are largely absent from consumer research. Given sociological research’s emphasis on the transient nature of relative income poverty in Euro-American societies (Bane and Elwood, 1986; Leisering and Leibfried, 1999; Vandecasteele, 2010), this oversight becomes particularly important for consumer research. We believe that such a lopsided account of the social mobility equation, solely emphasising downwardly mobile consumer experiences, undermines a more integrated understanding of consumer identity construction and processes of consumer identity change. In keeping with the tradition of viewing consumers’ identities as structured in terms of coherent narratives (Ahuvia, 2005), this paper aims to consider how consumers’ self-concepts and lifestyles after overcoming a poverty spell are interconnected with 1) their lives before slipping into poverty and 2) their experiences while living in poverty. Thence, by looking at the cumulative impact of multiple transitions over time (i.e. transitions into and out of poverty) we respond to recent calls to study how consumers undergoing major disruptions in their assumptive worlds, make use of different past selves in order to construct their present and/or future identities (Schau, Gilly and Wolfenbarger, 2009; Rojas Gaviria and Bluemelhuber, 2010). The experiences of temporary income poor consumers in Germany serve as the empirical context for this paper.

Identity strains of the downwardly mobile.

In light of increased (downward) social mobility (Bauman, 2001; Gabriel and Lang, 2008), culturally-oriented researchers (Ulver and Ostberg, 2014) have suggested the proliferation of mismatches between one’s identity and status positions. More precise, self-identities developed through upbringing, educational attainment or through a middle-class consciousness in a corresponding lifestyle may not live up to shifting personal economic conditions and its consequences, such as being forced to give up accustomed lifestyles or entering new consumption and social fields (e.g. when being forced to moving to a less affluent neighbourhood, Saatcioglu and Ozanne, 2013). Such intragenerational mobility dynamics (Vandecasteele, 2011) and associated identity strains have been reflected in the social tribe of the ‘downwardly mobile’ (Newman, 1999) and ‘the new poor’ (e.g. Ulver-Sneistrup and Ostberg, 2011; Chen and Nelson, 2017), that is those who plunge down the social ladder every year due to job loss, global recessions, divorce, and other experiences of financial hardship.

A growing number of consumer studies has taken such downward movements in light of forced life transitions and related identity transformations into account. In the context of UK lower middle-class families’ transitions into relative income poverty, Hamilton and Catterall (2006) advance understandings of coping with forced dispositions of possessions and consequent detrimental effects on identity construction. These researchers stress that for some newly impoverished consumers, material possessions may no longer play a pivotal role in identity construction. Following this reasoning, self-identity may become subject to change, which may surface through questioning one’s own pre-transition lifestyle and privileging instead immaterial assets, such as health, social connections (Hamilton and Catterall, 2006; Wendt, 2011; Schreurs, Martens and Kok, 2012) or newly acquired traits (Barrios, Piacentini and Salcicuviene, 2012). By contrast, researchers have also suggested that consumers who have taken an economic and social downhill journey may “grieve their former good life” (Ulver-Sneistrup and Ostberg, 2011:226) and be reluctant to identify with less well-off lifestyles and social spheres (Saatcioglu and Ozanne, 2013). Here, consumers may envision self-defining consumption practices consistent with their pre-transition lifestyles, aim to preserve former selves through consuming objects, which symbolise the past (Ulver-Sneistrup and Ostberg, 2011) or are in congruence with their accustomed upper-class taste (e.g. by purchasing “small luxuries”, such as a Burberry branded scarf on sale instead of an overcoat, Chen and Nelson, 2017:9).

Little is known, however, about how consumers respond to subsequent movements out of poverty and (re-)construct their identities (Wendt, 2011). One explanation why researchers may have shied away from such a consideration of multiple transitions over time, is the inherent temporal and longitudinal dimension of identity transformation (Ourahmoune, 2016). Hence, a shortcoming of the aforementioned theories on identity-status mismatches and identity strain during downward mobility may be that they cannot fully capture the whole spectrum of identity change processes. Consequently, a rather bleak picture of ‘new poor consumers’ and their ongoing identity-status incongruences (Ulver-Sneistrup and Ostberg, 2011; Ulver and Ostberg, 2014) due to being deprived from a reasonable hope of upward mobility (Chen and Nelson, 2017) has been painted. Given sociological research’s emphasis on biographic approaches to poverty, thereby acknowledging the transient nature of relative income poverty (e.g. Leisering and Buhr, 2012), this research follows the suggestion of Shankar, Elliott and Goulding (2001:28) who claim that a “narrative perspective would ideally be suited to a longitudinal study of consumption behaviour”. Following this train of thought, Schau et al. (2009:273) argue that consumers create “identity tapesries” by moving between “the past, the present, and the future in a nonlinear, iterative way”. This weaving of life narratives across time considering important (multiple) ‘turns in the road’ (McAdams et al., 2013) may also apply to consumers’ retrospective accounts of transitions into and movements out of poverty.
Thus, in this paper we recognise the transient nature of poverty and explore the role of past selves in the integration of post-poverty identities, thereby extending snapshot-type theoretical approaches. We therefore advance understandings of the distinct role of former selves during (forced) life transitions and how these influence identity change processes.

**METHODS**

Considering a biographic approach to poverty and narrative identity construction during important turning points in life, a qualitative, two-tie narrative approach to data collection was deployed. Following others who have drawn consumption insights from analysis of autobiographic work (Brown, 2005; Turley and O'Donohoe, 2012; Klein, Lowrey and Otnes, 2015), first, a purposive sample of five (self-) published autobiographies was analysed. These included two bestselling books, authored by German consumers, who tell their life stories and recent experiences of routes into and out of precarious income conditions. Analysis was particularly based on consumption-related content from the books.

Preliminary findings from this method informed the second phase of the research in which long interviews (McCracken, 1988) with 16 respondents (including four of the book authors) were conducted between 2014 and 2016. Interviews took place in respondents' homes, public places or over Skype and telephone calls and ranged from 90 minutes to over 150 minutes. Interviews were transcribed into 450 single-spaced pages of text. Respondents were recruited in two major German cities (Berlin and Hamburg) via newspaper advertisements and snowball sampling and had predominately (lower) middle-class social backgrounds. They have dealt with both temporary (between a few months and a few years) and recurrent phases of substantial drops in income. Data was analysed using the techniques proposed by Spiggle (1994), with key themes considered within and across informantas, and across data and autobiographic data.

**FINDINGS**

Analysis of consumers' autobiographies and life stories obtained from the interviews concerning routes into and out of poverty distilled two dominant post-poverty archetypal narratives: the 'redemptive self' and the 'critically reflexive returnee'. In the sections that follow we reveal how consumers draw on and integrate their past selves in different ways into their altered post-poverty identities and lifestyles.

**'The Redemptive Self' Narrative**

'The redemptive self narrative' emerged as the most prominent theme from our data. The term “redemptive self” has been borrowed from McAdams (2006) stating that negative life passages may lead to positive outcomes as they trigger a process of growth, fulfilment from McAdams (2006) stating that negative life passages may lead to positive outcomes as they trigger a process of growth, fulfilment

Eventually, Ulla managed to move out of her spell of relative income poverty by starting her own business and becoming a successful entrepreneur. In retrospect, she describes the temporary break-down of her middle-class existence as:

“(...) a catharsis. It was a chance to get rid of certain aspects of my former self and maybe also to come out of it in a cleaned way. Although it was really tough at that time. Now reflecting upon this time is much easier I guess. During that particular moment, if there had been a wise person sitting at my table and telling me: Ulla, look! It’s a catharsis! “I am pretty sure I would have thrown this person out of my home. When you find yourself in in such a situation it’s just like, you just want to survive somehow.”

In referring to a “catharsis”, she has embraced her temporary experience of downward mobility and forced loss with the benefit of hindsight, further buttressing that it has brought about something positive in terms of a “truly personal development”. This self-change has become reflected in her deep disdain for her pre-poverty self and consumption lifestyle, which she describes as “unreflective.” In a similar manner, she self-critically sums up her pre-poverty consuming identity as a mother of four who “went to the KADEWE” wearing high-heels and paying with a golden customer card for a set of cocktail glasses”. By contrast, Ulla perceives her present self as “emancipated” from her pre-poverty-transition middle-class housewife identity that was characterised by “extravagance”, “lavishness” and “unhappiness”. She actively rejects this aspect of her pre-transition self by pursuing a “simplified” and less conspicuous lifestyle, although being in a “comfortable financial situation again”. Currently, Ulla lives in a small rented flat with less, yet well-selected “aesthetic and high quality” material objects. Ulla’s poverty experience has brought about her current humble lifestyle that rejects exaggerating the meaning of possessions and instead puts more emphasis on self-restriction, self-authenticity and social relationships as illustrated by the following interview excerpt:

Ulla: “It is crazy, if you’re forced to give up things, it’s pretty easy to do without stuff later on (...) My relationship with possessing stuff has entirely changed. I’m not attached to anything anymore. I have found back to my inner core, spending time with family, work and friends (...)”

Corroborating with other researchers (e.g. Hamilton & Catterall, 2006; Schreurs et al., 2012; Barrios et al., 2012), the above case equally charts the poverty experience as a mainly positive one in that it has contributed to self-growth, gratitude for possessions and immaterial assets, such as health or social relations. However, these authors mainly focus on consumers’ downward movements and identity changes. Yet, they cannot explain why such an experience of relative income poverty may have “provoked changes that continued even when the financial position improved” (Schreurs et al., 2012:199-200). Considering the role of past selves in the integration of our respondents’ post-poverty identities adds to existing theories of self-change in the poverty context in that pre-poverty selves are actively rejected, whereas identities emerging during poverty are embraced.

**The critically reflexive returnee narrative**.

Identity narratives of the ‘critically reflexive returnees’ bear resemblances to ‘redemptive self narratives’ in that consumers have experienced a partial shift in perspective relative to their pre-poverty lives. In this sense, respondents reported that they questioned aspects of their past identities concerning optimistic life prospects of unbridled upward social mobility. Consequently, respondents have

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1 The “KADEWE” is one of the largest department stores in Europe located in Berlin being renowned for selling luxury goods.
developed a ‘resentful’ post-poverty transition self, which is disillusioned with the notion of hard work and education equalling stability and constant upward movements in life.

Against this background, they refuse to fully identify with the ideologies of the consumer society, which advocates prestigious affiliations with consumer goods as signs to pursue social status or image (Baudrillard, 1998). Julia (44), who had lived on benefits for 14 months, points out that, due to her poverty experience, she has become more aware of the “absurdity” of consumption in promising social differentiation:

Julia: After coming from the job centre for the first time in my life and being in a desolate mood, I saw in that [premium retailer’s] window that they’re now offering organic bread and it was like €5.20 for a loaf and I was thinking “Fuck [sic]” I mean, I don’t want to condemn those people who go there and I am not saying that all people visiting the store are terrible, but I began to really understand how it all works. You begin to understand when you don’t have access to this kind of store anymore (…).

Ulrike: “After getting out of Hartz IV [unemployment benefits] I fulfilled my long-term wish to have a car again (…) it gives me an incredible feeling of freedom and independence. This freedom to just sit in it and drive wherever it takes me. This month my friend and I spontaneously went to the Legoland Germany [theme park] with our two sons, it was really wonderful”.

We reveal that this is not unique to older consumers. For some consumers (re-) construct their identities and lifestyles quite differently after having moved into and out of poverty. Through the use of a narrative theoretical lens (McAdams, 1993) we can trace how consumers draw on and integrate different past selves from their lives before slipping into poverty and while living in it into their altered post-poverty transition identities. Schau, et al. (2009:273) suggest that older consumers create “identity tapestries” by moving between “the past, the present, and the future in a nonlinear, iterative way”. We reveal that this is not unique to older consumers. For some consumers, past selves are rejected and identities emerging during poverty spells seem more dominant and enduring (see ‘redemptive self narratives’). For others, the return to aspects of their pre-transition consumer identities regarding personal consumption is highly appreciated (see ‘reflexive returnee narrative’).

Table 1. Table of Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Themes</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Participant Data</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘The Redemptive Self’</td>
<td>Respondents with this life narrative reject aspects of their pre-poverty transition selves, whereas identities emerging during poverty spells, are more dominant and look likely to endure.</td>
<td>Christian [talking about his pre-poverty self]: “I wanted to earn more money, be more successful, get more social approval and material pleasures. (...) I was so attached to all the stuff I possessed and even didn’t possess”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The Critically Reflexive Returnee’</td>
<td>Respondents forming part of this life narrative both reject and draw on aspects of their pre-transition identities. On the one hand, they have become more critical of the marketplace ideology in terms of its promise to provide signs for social distinction and public communication. On the other, they highly appreciate the return to aspects of their pre-transition consumer identities regarding personal consumption.</td>
<td>Ulla: It was an awakening, a truly personal development, which I wouldn’t have taken, if everything had stayed just as it was (...) it was a stroke of luck that it all went so rapidly downhill. That’s crazy! But it was my chance and I have taken it.</td>
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CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Consumer poverty research is replete with consumption experiences of static and long-term financially deprived groups of people (e.g. Hill, 1991; Hutton, 2016) as well as those that have taken a ‘rocky downhill journey’ in socio-economic status. However, subsequent routes out of financial strain have not been considered thus far (Wendt, 2011). This study advances our understanding of consumer poverty dynamics and shows that poverty transitions are a particularly useful context to explore disrupted identity narratives, because of the inevitable impact on consumption practices. It reveals that consumers (re-) construct their identities and lifestyles quite differently after having moved into and out of poverty. Through the use of a narrative theoretical lens (McAdams, 1993) we can trace how consumers draw on and integrate different past selves from their lives before slipping into poverty and while living in it into their altered post-poverty transition identities. Schau, et al. (2009:273) suggest that older consumers create “identity tapestries” by moving between “the past, the present, and the future in a nonlinear, iterative way”. We reveal that this is not unique to older consumers. For some consumers, past selves are rejected and identities emerging during poverty spells seem more dominant and enduring (see ‘redemptive self narratives’). For others, the return to aspects of their pre-transition consumer identities regarding personal consumption is highly appreciated (see ‘reflexive returnee narrative’).
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How to Influence Consumer Food Waste Behavior: Effects of Temporal Distance and Providing Nutritional Information on Consumption Choices and Disposal Behavior

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Jenny van Doorn, University of Groningen, The Netherlands
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
One-third of all edible food for human consumption is wasted. Consumers are the largest contributors, suggesting a mismatch between consumers’ predicted and actual consumption. This paper examines how the temporal distance between consumption decisions and actual consumption influences food waste. Moreover, we investigate the effects of nutrition labelling on disposal.

This research examines how the temporal distance between a consumption decision and the actual consumption moment affects not only consumption choices but also subsequent disposal behavior. Temporal construal theory posits that with temporally distant events, consumers use abstract mental models that lead to higher-level construals (Trope and Liberman 2000, 2003). For instance, consumers focus on long-term health goals and make more virtuous choices (i.e., fewer calories) for future consumption compared to immediate consumption (Milkman, Rogers, and Bazerman 2010; VanEpps, Downs, and Loewenstein 2016). In contrast, when the outcomes of decisions are realized soon rather than in the future, consumers behave more impulsively in response to desires for immediate pleasure (Bazerman, Tenbrunsel, and Wade-Benzoni 1998). These impulsive decisions increase the likelihood of indulgent vice choices (Read, Loewenstein, and Kalyanaraman 1999; Wertenbroch 1998). This conflicting interplay between deliberatively opting for virtues and impulsively opting for vices can be viewed as one of the antecedents that drives food waste.

We propose that when making decisions for future consumption, impulsive vice decisions cause virtue food waste. Although consumers tend to prefer virtuous choices in the long-term, research demonstrated that consumers tend to switch from virtues towards vices as consumption approaches, because consumers start to overemphasize short-term vice benefits relative to the long-term benefits of virtues (Kirby and Herrnstein 1995; Read et al. 1999). Stated differently, preferences become inconsistent at different points in time. These inconsistencies—particularly present with larger distances between decision and consumption moment—increase the gap between planned and actual consumption, resulting in that acquired virtue foods will not be consumed and thus end up wasted. The fact that the majority of food waste consists of virtues (WRAP 2012) provides anecdotal evidence for this theorizing.

Furthermore, we examine whether providing nutritional information influences consumption and disposal. Presenting nutritional information supports consumers in making healthier choices (Roseman et al. 2017). One way to implement such information is by providing traffic light labels that mark healthy food “green” and unhealthy food “red” (Koenigstorfer, Greppel-Klein, and Kamm 2014). Increasing the salience of the (un)healthiness of food items could reduce impulsive switching behavior from virtues to vices. This should decrease the gap between planned and actual consumption, resulting in less food waste.

STUDY 1
The influence of temporal distance on consumption choices was assessed among 213 students (56% male) that were asked to choose lunch. In the future consumption condition, participants walking through the hallway of a Dutch University between 09.30–10.45 a.m. chose lunch for 2-3 hours later, while participants walking by between 11.30 a.m.–12.45 p.m. chose lunch for immediate consumption. The menu included three virtue (i.e., multigrain roll ham, muesli roll cheese, fruit bowl) and three vice foods (i.e., sausage roll, cheese roll, croquette in a bun).

The data were analyzed using a repeated-measures full-factorial ANCOVA with one within-participant factor (virtue and vice calories). As expected, participants ordered fewer calories for future consumption (644 vs. 778, F(1,209)=4.381, p=.038). The interaction with type of food (p.017) revealed that more unhealthy vice calories were chosen for immediate consumption (442 vs. 329, F(1,209)=6.774, p=.010).

These results support past work, demonstrating that more virtuous choices are made for future consumption. However, these pre-determined choices can cause difficulties when being offered additional food during consumption, as desires for immediate gratification arise. The results thus support part of our theorizing, yet lack actual consumption and disposal behavior.

STUDY 2
To investigate the effects of consumption decisions—planned and impulsive—on disposal, a controlled experiment representing a 2 (temporal distance: future vs. immediate consumption) x 2 (possibility to impulsively take food vs. not) between-subjects design was performed. A free lunch was offered to 197 students (57% male). The menu was similar to the one in Study 1a. The fruit was exchanged for a vegetarian wrap. The final set of items was selected based on a pretest in which 146 students rated the vice and virtue nature of these items. During filling the lunch bags, the researcher asked half of the groups whether they liked any additional items (from the menu). Waste was manually weighed.

Again, fewer calories were ordered for future consumption (591 vs. 654, F(1,194)=2.998, p=.085). As predicted, more participants that ordered in advance impulsively took extra—predominantly vice—food (87% vice vs. 58% vice, F(1,97)=3.064, p=.083).

A repeated-measures full-factorial ANCOVA (controlling for gender, hunger, satisfaction) reveals that food waste (calculated as percentage calories wasted relative to calories ordered) was higher for participants allowed to impulsively take food (6.5% vs. 0.8%, F(1,190)=18.823, p<.001) and those participants indeed wasted more of their virtue order (9.2% vs. 3.9%, F(1,190)=8.609, p=.004).

STUDY 3
To examine the effects of nutritional labels, we again offered lunch to 281 students (59% male) and allowed all to impulsively choose food, in a 2 (temporal distance: future vs. immediate consumption) x 2 (traffic light labelling vs. not) between-subjects de-
sign. Nutrition labels were included on the menu and on the food shelves in the room.

Participants again ordered fewer calories for future consumption (588 vs. 671, F(1,275)=7.154, p=.008). The interaction between nutritional labelling and temporal distance (p=.010) revealed that the effect of temporal distance only holds in the absence of nutritional information (F(1, 275)=14.920, p=.001). Providing labels suppresses the effect due to a (virtue) calorie increase for participants ordering for future consumption (F(1,275)=4.423, p=.036).

Consistent with Study 2, a higher percentage of participants that ordered in advance impulsively took extra food (89% vs. 38%, F(1,273)=18.496, p <.001). Participants provided with nutritional labels impulsively chose more virtues (F(1,273)=4.737, p=.030).

Concerning disposal, the interaction between nutritional labelling and temporal distance (p=.048) reveals that participants that ordered for future consumption while being provided with labels wasted most food ($M_{\text{future+noinfo}}$ = 7.2 vs. $M_{\text{future+noinfo}}$ = 2.3%, F(1,268)=6.475, p=.012).

**CONCLUSION**

Our studies reveal that the ability to impulsively acquire additional food drives food waste. Providing nutritional labels was expected to suppress impulsive switching behavior, ultimately leading to less waste. Providing nutritional information—surprisingly—increases waste when ordering in advance, as it makes consumers acquire (too) much healthy food while impulsively acquiring even more, eventually ending up not consuming all.

**REFERENCES**


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In-home food waste has become a global concern in recent years, and multiple methods have been proposed to measure this. This study empirically compares five methods: diaries, general survey questions, photo coding, kitchen caddies, and week-based survey questions. Results indicate which measures are more appropriate to assess in-home food waste.

Food waste has become a global concern in recent years, especially the in-home food waste that is generated in the developed world. Given its high relevance, understanding of the drivers of food waste and of the effectiveness of interventions is needed. To gain such understanding, food waste needs to be measured in a reliable and valid way. Yet, to date, only a small share of publications uses primary data collection to assess food waste (Xue et al., 2017), and more standardized methodology to estimate consumer food waste is urgently required (Porpino, 2016). Multiple methods to measure in-home food waste have been proposed, but little is known about their validity. In the current study, promising existing and novel methods to measure in-home food waste at the household level are examined and empirically compared.

In-home food waste has been assessed in various ways in prior studies, each with advantages and disadvantages. Diaries in which respondents report the type and amount of food that they waste over a period of several days are commonly used to report food waste (e.g., Gray, 2009; Koivuporu, 2012). The task of keeping a food-waste diary is considerable (Langley et al., 2010), which implies not only difficulties in recruitment and high dropout rates, but also the potential risk of self-selection and poor data quality (Sharp et al., 2010). Various questionnaires have also been used in prior studies (Parizeau et al., 2015; Setti et al., 2016; Young et al., 2017; Aschemann-Witzel et al., 2017; Graham-Rowe et al., 2015; Secondi et al., 2015; Stancu et al., 2016; Stefan et al., 2013; Visschers et al., 2016). Because food-wasting behaviours result from multiple routinized behaviours, underreporting is likely for these measures (Hebrok & Boks, 2017). Alternatively, in waste-composition analysis, food waste of individual households is collected, physically separated, weighed and categorized (Dahlén & Lagerkvist, 2008; Lebersorg & Schneider, 2011). Waste-composition analysis focuses on the waste put out for collection, which implies that the researcher is unable to observe food waste that was disposed of by other means (e.g., sink waste disposal units, home composting, animal feed) (Parizeau et al., 2015). A few studies have asked people to collect and turn in their food waste separately (Wenlock et al., 1980; Gutiérrez-Barba & Ortega-Rubio, 2013). Finally, in-home observation holds potential for improving the accuracy of measurements while lowering the burden for respondents. For instance, trashcan cameras have been used as an influencing tool (Comber & Thieme, 2013), but could also be applied to measure food waste.

Based on literature review and expert consultation, we chose to empirically examine and compare diaries, survey (both questions about food-waste behaviour over a longer period of time and week-based survey), photograph coding, and kitchen caddies. Waste composition analysis is not included due to cost and logistical issues, but the kitchen caddies provide an alternative as both are based on collecting and weighing the actual food that is wasted. In an experiment, participants were asked to assess their food waste during two weeks, using some or all of these methods depending on condition. Methods were assessed by examining the extent to which the measures are correlated and in terms of absolute amounts and variance in food waste measured. Participants were members of a consumer panel.

Results show that the highest amount of food waste in grams is estimated using a combination of caddies and diaries, whereas the lowest amount results from the survey measure of weekly amounts. Diaries, photo coding, and caddies are in-between. Overall, the general survey questions appear to be less appropriate, as these lead to relatively lower levels of reported food waste and low variance in reported food waste across household compared to other measures. Moreover, the general survey questions correlate weakly with the other measures. The results further show that the other methods are more highly correlated. The survey about food waste in the past week appears to be a useful measure for large-scale measurements, and is able to differentiate households according to the amount of food waste. Yet, this method underestimates the amount of food waste, which could be an issue for studies that aim to describe the absolute amount of food waste correctly. Underestimation as such does not necessarily invalidate research findings for studies assessing whether interventions affect food waste, or for studies investigating the effects of household characteristics on food waste, assuming that underestimation is relatively constant across participants and over the course of measurement. Both these assumptions need future research attention. Kitchen caddies and photo coding seem to be valid methods and for small samples provide feasible alternatives to food diaries, which have been more commonly used.

In conclusion, due to the relatively high correlations between methods, most of the methods are appropriate measurement tools for determining the relative amount of in-home food waste from different households, with the exception of the general survey questions, which appear less appropriate in comparison. For large-scale surveys, the method that was developed in this study, based on food waste in the past week, has been shown to be a good alternative.

REFERENCES


Same Same but Different – Using Anthropomorphism in the Battle against Food Waste
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In this research we propose the use of anthropomorphism (adding human characteristics) in a point-of-purchase display as an intervention to reduce food waste and promote the sale of misshapen fruits and vegetables. Findings indicate that applying anthropomorphism to a product positively affects sensory perception, and in turn increases purchase intention.

With approximately 30%–50% of edible produce never reaching supermarket shelves, at a total annual cost of US$400 billion, food waste represents a dire threat to global sustainability (Gustavsson et al. 2011; Naughton 2015). In response, policy makers have sought solutions, such as when the European Commission designated 2014 the “Year Against Food Waste” or the UN included “halving world food waste by 2030” among its 2015 global development goals (UN 2015). Despite relaxed EU rules regarding the sale of misshapen fruits and vegetables, farmers still complain that they regularly must discard produce that does not meet “aesthetic requirements” (Swinford 2013); an estimated 25% of fruit and vegetables get discarded because they fail to meet retailers’ exacting standards for their physical appearance (FAO 2013; Kummu et al. 2012).

Over the past few years, a handful of large retailers (e.g. Intermarché, Delhaize . . .) have sporadically launched initiatives to offer misshapen produce (Suzuki 2015). Most initiatives however, limit themselves to positively reframing atypicity under an “ugly fruits and vegetables” campaign and/or to offering sizeable price reductions. Drawing from evolutionary influences and categorization theory, we argue that misshapen produce presents a deviation from existing schema and can automatically evoke risk perceptions (Campbell and Goodstein, 2001). In turn, these might influence other quality perceptions (mostly taste), resulting in lower purchase intentions. Current practices such as highlighting the atypicities of the produce and offering price reductions could unintentionally be contributing to consumers’ aversion for misshapen produce by signaling poor quality (Grewal et al. 1998) and do not reduce perceptions of risk.

The objective of this project is twofold; (1) we aim to get a better insight in the principal reason why consumers are reluctant to buy misshapen produce, (2) building on this insight, we propose and investigate the use of anthropomorphism (i.e., attributing human characteristics to nonhuman objects) in point-of-purchase (POP) displays as an alternative intervention to help increase consumers’ intentions to purchase misshapen fruits and vegetables. Knowledge about human agents is readily accessible, because this knowledge is acquired early in human development and is deeply embedded (Epley, Waytz and Cacioppo 2007). Therefore, adding positive humanlike elements to a misshapen produce in POP stimuli might activate a human schema, rather than the (incongruent) produce schema.

Across four studies, we demonstrate that increased risk perceptions lead to inferior taste perceptions, thereby driving consumers’ aversion to purchase misshapen produce. Next, we demonstrate that using anthropomorphism can evoke positive feelings by activating knowledge about a positive human scheme. In turn, these positive emotions signal safety (rather than risk) and lead to more favorable taste evaluations and purchase intentions. Further, environmental concern is introduced as a moderator and findings reveal that for consumers who are less (vs. more) concerned about our environment, the beneficial effect of anthropomorphism on purchase intentions is more pronounced. Finally, actual behavior is captured in a laboratory setting of a mock grocery shop, whereby the presence of a poster of an anthropomorphized misshapen product, significantly increases the choice of misshapen products.

With this research, we provide an alternative strategy to price reductions or unit promotions, with the benefit that it does not trigger overpurchase and subsequent waste (Waste and Resources Action Program 2012), nor does it signal inferior quality to consumers. The use of anthropomorphism in POP displays could promote the sale of misshapen produce instead of having to offer sizeable price reductions. The current intervention also offers an approach that could promote sustainability, without creating price pressure towards farmers in the fruit and vegetable category. This research further contributes to our understanding of how consumers respond to the promotion of healthy foods when creative techniques that are usually reserved for hedonically tempting foods are applied (Bublitz and Peracchio 2015). For healthy products, marketing communications generally tend to focus on informing consumers of the nutritious nature of the product or the health benefits of consuming the product, thus providing information which is more cognitive in nature. This research provides evidence that consumers can respond positively to the use of creative advertising appeals for healthy food products. In practice, some supermarkets and organizations are already attributing human characteristics to abnormally shaped fruits and vegetables in advertising campaigns, but scientific evidence on the effectiveness of this approach was lacking. The present findings thus provide retailers with evidence for an alternative intervention to sell misshapen produce besides offering price reductions. As a result, it offers not only an opportunity that is beneficial to consumers by encouraging them to consume healthy snack options, but also one that serves growers or commercial entities in achieving profitable successes.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Selling food which has become ‘imperfect’ for lower prices allows reducing food waste, but little is known about the factors explaining consumer choice behavior. We show the perceived signaling value of choosing perfect/imperfect food through ascriptions to others and analyze the role of store context, communication and individual factors.

Food waste has received increasing attention throughout the past years. With around a third of the world food supply wasted, the topic is a problem which needs tackling in the scope of sustainability efforts. Businesses in the food and agricultural supply chains have turned to food waste avoidance actions in order to act as socially responsible companies. To support such endeavors, consumer behavior research is called for in order to explore the factors underlying consumer food waste behaviors. The consumer behaviors causing food wastage are regarded as complex. Consumer food waste behavior might occur in the sequential stages of store acquisition, household consumption and disposition, and it is impacted by consumer’s motivation, the perceived goal conflicts, and consumer knowhow and capabilities. Of a particular crucial role is the retailer-consumer interface in the food supply chain, given that a retailer’s decisions can have far-reaching and powerful consequences on both the waste in the supply chain and the subsequent waste in the consumer household. Recently, attempts have been made by business to market so-called ‘imperfect’ or ‘suboptimal’ food otherwise wasted in the supply chain. However, the way these foods are presented differ, for example in terms of where it is sold and how it is communicated. It is under-researched which factors are underlying consumers choice for such food.

We assume that consumer’s point of purchase choice for such food will be driven by their motives of choice, in particular self-centered motives versus others-centered, and individual consumer characteristics. Furthermore, the store context, communication and product specifications determine choice. We hypothesize that 1) communicating the self-centered (budget saving) or others-centered (food waste avoidance) benefit of choosing imperfect food increases choice likelihood, and 2), that this is particularly found when the consumer in question holds the respective self- vs. others-centered values. Furthermore, we hypothesize that 3) consumers perceive others choosing imperfect food as a) responsible and b) price sensitive, and 4) that this holds in particular when the consumer in question him- or herself indicates to be concerned about the environment or to be particularly value conscious in purchase.

The hypothesis are tested through a representative online experimental survey of 3098 consumers of five European countries. Consumers indicated their choice likelihood for price-reduced suboptimal food items over optimal ones under varying communication as well as different conditions of product category and purchase location. Furthermore, individual consumer variables are surveyed. In addition, consumers express their perception of others seen to purchase optimal or suboptimal food items, in terms of how responsible or price sensitive they regard the other purchaser. ANOVA and simple moderation analysis is used for analysis.

We find that choice likelihood was significantly higher in the conditions with a message compared to the control (supporting H1), but the choice likelihood did not differ for the type of message of budget saving or food waste avoidance, thus not indicating that one or the other motive in the communication has a generally greater effect. No interaction between the communication and the individual value orientation is found (thus not supporting H2). Participants’ responsibility perceptions of another person were positively influenced if the person was described as purchasing suboptimal (vs. optimal) food, and this effect was particularly powerful among participants scoring high (vs. low) on environmental concerns. Similarly, participants’ price sensitivity perceptions of another person were positively influenced if the person was described as purchasing suboptimal (vs. optimal) food, and this effect was particularly powerful among participants scoring high (vs. low) on value consciousness. Thus, both H3 and H4 are supported.

The results of the present study indicate that a benefit communication accompanying the suboptimal food offer has a favourable effect on choice, but that the type of message does not appear to make a difference, nor is there an interaction with the respective consumers’ value orientation. Consumers perceive others choosing the imperfect suboptimal food as responsible and price sensitive. This holds in particular when characterised by environmental concern or value consciousness. Thus, the purchase signals for them what they would apply as own motives for purchase.

In sum, the results indicate that the act of purchasing suboptimal food seems to ‘tell’ the observer that the respective person buying such food is more responsible and price sensitive; that is, both others-centred in terms of environmental and social motives for purchase, and self-centred in economic motives for purchasing such items. In both cases, the assessment is enhanced when the observer is more environmentally concerned or value conscious him- or herself. Thus, people apply their own motives when assessing others’ behaviours of choosing and consuming suboptimal foods.
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

When and why do high-status individuals adopt things associated with low-status groups? We propose a trickle-round theory of fashion and demonstrate that high-status poach from low-status groups to distinguish themselves from the middle-status. Further, consistent with our signaling approach, this effect depends on the presences of multiple signaling dimensions.

Conspicuous consumption and trickle-down theories suggest that fashions start with high-status individuals and move their way downwards (Simmel 1957; Taylor 1974; Veblen 1899/2007). But a number of examples seem to contradict these approaches. Jeans were originally worn by miners and factory workers before celebrities adopted them and famous chefs use commercial junk food in their sophisticated dishes. When and why do high-status individuals sometimes adopt tastes associated with low-status groups?

This article proposes a trickle-round theory of fashion that explains why high-status individuals sometimes adopt items clearly associated with low-status or marginalized groups. Field and lab studies in a variety of identity-relevant contexts (e.g., food, clothing, and a stylized signaling game) demonstrate that high-status individuals adopt downscale tastes, in part, to distance themselves from the middle-status. Because emulating low-status groups is too risky and costly for middles, it grants distinction to the elites.

Importantly, this strategy hinges on the presence of multiple signaling dimensions. Rather than trying to be seen as completely low-status, high-status individuals mix-and-match high and low signals (e.g., Lobster Mac ‘n Cheese or wearing a trucker hat with Prada loafers) as a way of distinguishing themselves from middles.

Study 1 provides a test of our trickle-round theory in the field and examines the dishes offered by different restaurants in a dataset of more than 137,000 menu items scraped from menupages.com. The analysis consists of three main steps. First, we systematically identify 51 traditionally lowbrow dishes (e.g., Hot Dogs and Mac ‘n Cheese). Second, we examine the distribution of these lowbrow items across different restaurant tiers. Consistent with our theorizing, we find that high-end restaurants are likely to offer these lowbrow dishes, despite the downscale connotation of these items (β = .92, p < .001). Third, textual analysis shows that, as predicted, when offering lowbrow items, high-end restaurants mix-and-match them with highbrow ingredients (e.g., Kobe Beef Sliders, White Truffle Pizza) (M_high = 8.4% vs. M_middle = 4.0%, χ² = 95.69, p < .001).

Study 2 (N = 410) uses a more controlled design in the lab to test whether high-status individuals (with high cultural capital in fashion) are more likely to prefer downscale fashion products. Specifically, we compare the product choices of fashion-savvy respondents (i.e., high-status) to the choices of people with lower fashion knowledge. We selected four pairs of products, three of which (i.e., two bags, hats, shoes) were pretested so that one option was seen as significantly more downscale than the other, and one pair (i.e., two glasses) perceived equivalently in terms of status. In addition to an effect of status (Wald χ² = 14.47, p < .001), results revealed the predicted interaction between product and respondents’ status (Wald χ² = 7.74, p = .005). As expected, for choice pairs where one option was more downscale, both status (β = .12, t(1,240) = 4.37, p < .000) and its squared term (β = .06, t(1,240) = 2.0, p = .046) were significant predictors. Compared to middle-status people, high-status people were more likely to choose downscale products (M_high = 47% vs. M_middle = 37%, Wald χ² = 7.56, p = .006). In categories where the two options were neutral, however, there was no effect of status on choice.

Studies 3 and 4 test the proposed mechanisms using a novel signaling paradigm. In study 3, lab participants (N = 301) imagine a society with three types of people (highs, middles, and lows) where signaling occurs exclusively along two dimensions: shape and color. Each status grouping is associated with a certain shape and color combination (high-status people are yellow-triangle, middle-status are red-square, low-status are blue-circle). To reduce demand effects, there are also neutral shapes and colors (green-rectangle), not associated with any group. All participants are assigned to high type and are told that told they will play a number of rounds of a signaling game, in which they can choose one of four colors and one of four shapes as a signal to send to an observer. If the observer correctly identifies their high status, they will win extra compensation (S1).

To test our proposed mechanism, we manipulate between rounds whether high-status signals are co-opted by the middle-status group. As predicted, while almost no one selected low-status associated options in the first round (M_high-first = 1%), in the second round, when faced with imitation from middles, a significant percentage of people switched to low-status associated options (M_high-second = 18%, Wald χ² = 26.5, p < .001).

In addition to examining the hypothesized process through manipulation, in this study we also measured it. Compared to participants who made other choices, participants who picked one of the high-low combinations reported a great interest in distinguishing themselves from middles (M_high-low = 5.81 vs. M_other = 4.79, t(296) = 3.37, p = .001).

To follow-up on study 3, we also conducted a replication and a number of variants (study 3b-d) to rule out alternative explanations (e.g., need for uniqueness).

Finally, study 4 (N = 169) tests in the lab the role of multiple signaling dimensions in these effects. We use the paradigm from study 3 and manipulate the number of status signaling dimensions available. Half the participants imagine the same society as study 3, where two dimensions (i.e., shape and color) are available, while the other half imagine a simpler society, where signaling occurs exclusively along one dimension (i.e., shape). As predicted, the adoption of low-status associated guises in the second round (M_dim = 29%) is significantly reduced when the ability to express status is confined to one signaling dimension (M_dim = 11%; z = 3.12, p = .008). Finally, we measure our hypothesized underlying process of distinction and find that it mediates the effect of condition on choice of low-status associated signals (indirect effect = .57; 95% C.I. = .07 to 1.15).

In conclusion, this work deepens understanding of signaling dynamics, support a trickle-round theory of fashion, and shed light on alternative status symbols.

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The Unspeakable Dark Side of Status:
Low Color-Value Signals Status, unless You Mention It
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Lower color-value (i.e., darker) products are perceived as providing more status than, and thus are preferred to, higher color-value (i.e., lighter) ones. These effects are attenuated for high-status individuals, and seem to be implicit; they disappear when participants are explicitly asked to consider color-value before status evaluations. Individuals often project status through products (Veblen, 1899), and their visual cues (Han et al., 2010). Color (Hoegg, Alba & Dahl, 2010), and specifically, color-value—the degree of a color darkness (i.e., low-value) or lightness—is a visual cue with important signaling properties (Mahnke, 1996). When can color-value also signal status?

Both status (Dubois et al., 2012; Fiske & Berdahl, 2007; Rucker & Galinsky, 2008) and low color-value (i.e. dark colors; Amhirst & Reed, 1986; Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994) relate to power. Thus, although darker products could project higher status than lighter ones, we sustain that this relationship is not so straightforward.

Strong status signals are costly or difficult to obtain (Berger, & Ward, 2010; Han et al., 2010; Veblen, 1899). Color-value is neither, and thus is a weak status signal. Yet, we argue that color-value can signal status, and thus preferences (Han, et al., 2010) under specific circumstances. First, for individuals seeking status, because they tend to actively look for status signals (Han et al., 2010).

Hypothesis 1: Individuals seeking status will prefer lower color-value (darker) over higher color-value (lighter) products. This effect will not hold for individuals high in status.

Second, if color-value is a weak status signal, explicit considerations of color-value during status evaluations may discount its impact. Still, like other effects of color (Mahnke, 1996), when color-value is not considered explicitly, it could be impactful. Thus,

Hypothesis 2: Perceptions of status mediate this relationship.

This suggests that low color-value can implicitly signal status.

Hypothesis 3: Individuals seeking status who do not explicitly consider color-value before making status evaluations will prefer lower color-value products over higher color-value products. This effect will not hold for individuals high in status.

Hypothesis 4: Perceptions of status mediate this relationship.

Four studies tested these hypotheses. Study 1 provided evidence for the relationship between color-value and status, and supported the managerial relevance of our research. We tracked consumers’ preferences (best-selling rankings) at an online replica, versus original handbags store, assuming that consumers of the former are likely to seek status (Wilcox, Kim, & Sen, 2009).

Regressions considering store and color-value of bags as our independent variables, and best-seller ranking as our dependent variable, revealed a significant color-value x store interaction effect ($p<.001$). For the replica store, lower color-value handbags were selling better ($p<.04$). For the originals’ store, color-value had no effect ($p>.62$). Thus, in the marketplace, only individuals seeking status, but not those who don’t, prefer darker products. Interestingly, the product portfolio of the two stores did not differ in terms of color-value, suggesting that companies do not consider color-value when offering status products to consumers.

Study 2 showed in the lab that status-seeking state increases preferences for lower color-value (darker) products. 118 participants were primed either with low or high-status (Dubois et al., 2012). Then, participants chose one of six pens (3 white, 3 black pens; same design, and price), which was theirs to keep. Pen choice was our dependent variable.

A logistic regression with status as independent variable and choice as a dependent variable revealed that participants primed with low-status preferred the black pen more than participants primed with high-status (84% vs. 37%; $\chi^2(1)=19.55, p<.001$). However, when asked later, 58% of participants believed that color-value is unrelated to status. Thus, we tested next whether low color-value can implicitly, but not explicitly, signal status.

Study 3 showed that lower color-value (darker) products projected higher status than higher color-value (lighter) products, but that these perceptions were attenuated when color-value is considered explicitly. 131 participants were assigned to a 2 (low vs. high color-value) x 2 (non-explicit vs. explicit considerations) x 4 (product: handbag vs. shoulder-bag vs. scarf vs. hat) mixed-design, with product as a within-participant factor. Participants saw either four low color-value products or four high color-value products. In the non-explicit condition, participants just evaluated these products. In the explicit condition they did the same, but considering the color-value of the product. Participants assessed perceptions of status of each product by answering four questions (Drèze & Nunes, 2008).

A repeated measures ANOVA with color-value and explicit considerations as between-subjects factors, and product as a within-participants factor revealed a significant interaction between explicit considerations and color-value on perceptions of status ($p<.05$). Perceived status was higher for low color-value ($M=4.36$) than for high color-value products when color-value was not considered explicitly ($M=3.74, p<.04$). This effect was non-significant for the explicit condition ($p>.46$). Moreover, explicitly considering color-value decreased the perceived status of low color-value products ($p<.04$). This suggests that low color-value can implicitly signal status.

Study 4 tested our full model: the indirect interaction effect between status seeking and explicit consideration of color-value on preference for lower color-value products, via perceptions of status. 222 participants chose and evaluated perceptions of status of a pair of either hats or scarfs, either explicitly considering color-value or not. We measured Status consumption to capture status seeking tendencies (Eastman, Goldsmith & Flynn, 1999). Perceptions of product status were measured on six-point comparative scales, with the lighter and darker products as anchors.

A moderated mediation analysis showed a significant interaction effect between Status Consumption and explicit considerations on status perceptions ($p<.02$) and of status perceptions on preference ($p<.001; 95\%$). The CI of the index of this moderated mediation excluded 0 (-.9878 to -.0035, index=-.46). The CI of the conditional indirect effect for participants explicitly considering color-value, also excluded zero (95% CI: .0968 to .7029). In the non-explicit...
condition, higher status seeking increased perceptions of status ($Y_{\text{hat high}}=4.59$ vs. $Y_{\text{hat low}}=3.95$, $\beta=.22$, $t=2.63$, $p<.01$). Higher perceptions of status, subsequently, increased preference for low color-value products ($p<.001$). In the explicit condition, Status Consumption did not affect perceptions of status ($p>.58$).

We contribute to theory by showing that status signals that are not costly, such as color-value, can covertly project status. Lower color-value increases products’ status perceptions and preferences when consumers seek status, and do not explicit consider color-value in their status judgments.

REFERENCES

Reciprocal Altruism as a Motivation for Sharing: Sharing Up verses Sharing Down
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
This research focuses on social comparison and reciprocity expectations in sharing. In four studies we show that due to expected reciprocity, people are more willing to share their possessions with a high-performing (vs. low-performing) others. However, this preference to share-up (vs. share-down) diminishes when the possibility of reciprocation is removed.

The consumer literature on sharing views it as a social phenomenon, and focuses on sharing with close others such as family and friends, portraying it as an altruistic, pro-social behavior with no expectations of reciprocity (Belk’s presentation). However, little is known about what drives people to share important possessions with acquaintances and strangers.

Our research explores the role of social comparison and reciprocity expectations in sharing. Social comparison theory (Festinger 1954) postulates that people compare themselves to others who are either superior to them (upward comparison) or inferior to them (downward comparison) on dimensions such as intelligence, appearance, or status. Upward (vs. downward) comparison is often motivated by assimilation needs (Mussweiler 2003).

The extant literature suggests that when considering with whom to share, individuals may have conflicting motivations. On the one hand, individuals may prefer to share up due to reciprocity expectations. While sharing up and sharing down are both strategies that will result in reciprocal altruism, sharing up should be seen as more beneficial, because it has the potential to result in a larger amount of reciprocity. On the other hand, individuals may prefer to share down due to feeling better off, feeling empathy toward the target, or wanting their resources to go a longer way. Under normal conditions, we expect reciprocity concerns to be stronger than altruistic concerns, making people more likely to share up than to share down. However, under conditions in which reciprocity is less likely, we expect altruistic concerns to be stronger than reciprocity concerns, making people more likely to share down than to share up. In four studies, we demonstrate that due to expected reciprocity, individuals are generally more likely to share up than to share down. However, when expected reciprocity is removed from the equation, pure altruism takes over, and individuals become more likely to share down than to share up.

Study 1 investigated the effect of social comparison on the willingness to share, utilizing a 3 (comparison target: upward, downward, neutral) between-subject design with 501 business students. The participants read a scenario about Michael/Michelle, who was a very successful (upward comparison), very unsuccessful (downward comparison) or average (neutral) business student in the same class as the participant (Mussweiler et al. 2004). The gender of the target and the participants were matched to control for the effects of mating motives. Next, the participants read another scenario about the same person approaching them and asking them to share a possession relevant to the academic domain (class notes or a computer) with him or her, and indicated their willingness to share the items with Michael/Michelle. Participants were more willing to share-up versus down (M_upward = 5.01 vs. M_downward = 3.25), with neutral in the middle (M_neutral = 4.25; F(2,497) = 48.86, p < .001).

Study 2 explored why people prefer to share up (vs. down) by examining the mediating role of expected reciprocity (i.e., expected gain), using a different social comparison scenario (a hypothetical workplace situation) among a sample of mTurk workers. Study 2 replicated the results of Study 1. Additionally, participants had greater expected reciprocity from sharing with an upward target than from the other targets (M_upward = 4.33 vs. M_neutral = 3.97 vs. M_downward = 3.43; F(2, 319) = 14.78, p < .001). Furthermore, their reciprocity expectations mediated the relationship between social comparison and sharing (95%; CI = .227 to .509).

Study 3 investigates the possibility that people are also motivated to share with a downward comparison target, because they regard this person as needing more help. Specifically, we tested a competitive mediation model in which the two mediators (i.e., the dual motivations) exert effects in the opposite direction (Zhao et al., 2010). We used a 2 (social comparison: upward vs. downward) between-subject design with 748 students and the same procedure of Study 1. Again, participants were willing to share-up versus down (M_upward = 4.93; M_downward = 4.16; t(746) = 6.17, p < .001). Similarly, they had greater expected reciprocity from sharing with an upward target than a downward target (M_upward = 4.17; M_downward = 3.88; t(745) = 3.59, p < .001). Participants also perceived downward target as needing more help than upward target (M_upward = 5.18; M_downward = 4.67; t(746) = 4.65, p < .001). Finally, mediation analysis showed a positive indirect effect of social comparison on sharing through expected reciprocity (95% CI = 0.05, 0.17, as in Study 2, and a negative indirect effect through helping (95% CI = -0.08, -0.02). However, a comparison of the two indirect effects, Δb = 0.16, SE = 0.3, (95% CI = 0.10, 0.23), indicates that expected reciprocity is a significantly stronger motivation to share than perceptions of helping.

Study 4 tests the boundary condition of our findings by varying the comparison target’s repayment opportunity, as reflected in the degree of which the comparison target was related to the participants’ academic major. We reasoned that a comparison target who has the same college major would be much more likely and capable of reciprocating in the future. We used 2 (social comparison: upward vs. downward) x 3 (repayment opportunity: high- business major; moderate- biology major taking one business course; low- biology major taking no classes in common with the sharer) between-subjects design with 656 business students. The results revealed a main effect of social comparison, with greater intentions to share up (M_upward = 4.96 vs. M_downward = 3.85; F(1, 650) = 70.02, p < .001). However, this main effect was qualified by a significant social comparison X repayment opportunity interaction (F(2, 650) = 11.07, p < .001). In the high and moderate repayment opportunity conditions, participants were more likely to share up vs. downward (M_high_repayment_upward = 5.39 vs. M_high_repayment_downward = 3.62; M_moderate_repayment_upward = 4.89 vs. M_moderate_repayment_downward = 3.59), replicating our previous findings. However, in the low repayment opportunity condition, there were no significant differences between the social comparison conditions (M_upward = 4.61 vs. M_downward = 4.35).

Taken together these studies suggest that expected reciprocity motivates people to share up versus down. However, in the absence of such motivations, people’s sharing decisions become more altruistic.

REFERENCES

The Influence of Power on Preference for Anthropomorphized Brands Depends on Perceived Competence

Extended Abstract

This research shows that the causal relationship between power and preference for anthropomorphized brands depends on consumers’ perceived competence. When perceived competence was high (vs. low), power drove preference for servant brands. However, when perceived competence was low (vs. high), power holders avoided partner brands.

Consumers are often told that they have power regardless of whether or not they actually have any kind of control over the marketplace or the various aspects of their lives. Yet, not everyone may feel confident enough to yield power, that is, to endorse the belief that they control the states of others—person or corporation—according to their own will (Rucker, Galinsky, and Dubois 2012). How then does variation in people’s confidence affect how they behave toward those over whom they have power?

Addressing this question is important for marketing practice in the context of the humanizing of brands. Anthropomorphized brands may facilitate consumer-brand relationships by providing quasi-social experiences (Fournier 1998). As such, they may prompt consumers to extend the hierarchical structure differences that govern social relationships to the realm of brands (Kim and McGill 2011). Given that states of high power foster the expression of dominant acts over others (Rucker et al. 2012), we contend that power drives consumers’ preference for anthropomorphized (vs. objectified) brands as a catalyst of congruency between consumers’ higher hierarchical position and the use of humanlike auxiliaries.

However, people may doubt their abilities to meet the demands of the leadership situation and thus failed to display the self-assertion and self-expansion associated with power (Fast and Chen 2009). Consequently, we hypothesize that individuals in a high-power mind-set are more likely to choose an anthropomorphized brand over an objectified brand when their sense of competence is high but not when it is low (H1).

Furthermore, we propose that the social role assumed by brands drives the interactional effect between consumers’ power and perceived competence on preference for anthropomorphized brands. While some brands may assume the role of a partner—i.e., one who works with the consumer as an equal toward goal attainment—others may assume instead the role of a servant—i.e., one who works for the consumer (Kim and Kramer 2015). Given that power activates expectation of verticality in social relationships, we expect that when perceived competence is high (vs. low), power should drive preference for anthropomorphized (vs. objectified) brands when they foster a master-servant (vs. partner) relationship (H1A).

In contrast, we propose that power holders whose sense of competence is threatened might relinquish the prospect of social interactions with partners who are, by definition, on the same hierarchical level. Thus, when perceived competence is low (vs. high), power should drive rejection of anthropomorphized brands when they foster a partner (vs. master-servant) relationship (H1B).

In Studies 1 to 3, we seek initial support for our main prediction (H1) that power drives preference for anthropomorphized (vs. objectified) brands when perceived competence is high but not when it is low. In Study 4, we test our two derivative hypotheses H1A and H1B to account for the moderating effect of brand role (servant vs. partner).

In Study 1 (N=103), we provided initial evidence for our main prediction (H1) by measuring power and perceived competence as chronic individual characteristic. In doing so, we aimed to show that, while correlated, power and perceived competence were different concepts due to their nonlinear relationship (VIF=1.9<10). Participants started the study with the dependent variable which consisted of five pairs of real anthropomorphized versus objectified brands among five fillers. Using a floodlight analysis (Spiller et al. 2013), we found that the effect of power on preference for anthropomorphized brands was significant (p ≤ .05) among participants whose competence was high (b=.25, SE=.13) but not below that threshold. Below this point, the effect of power on preference of anthropomorphized brands became non-significant.

Study 2 (N=260) further examined our prediction by manipulation state of power and thus consisted of one manipulated factor (power: high vs. low vs. neutral) and one measured factor (perceived competence). Participants first completed an ease-of-retrieval manipulation to prime feeling of power. Then, they completed the same DV and measure of perceived competence we used in Study 1.

Study 3 (N=280) consisted of one manipulated factor (power: high vs. low) and one measured factor (perceived competence) and replicated our findings in the controlled environment of a lab using a fictitious pair of anthropomorphized versus objectified brands.

Study 4 (N=550) consisted of three manipulated factors (power: high vs. low, perceived competence, high vs. low, and brand role: servant vs. partner) to account for the moderating effect of brand role. Using the consumption-relevant context of car rental, our manipulations and measurements were portrayed as different steps of the car renting procedure. The first step was a driving test and served as our manipulation of perceived competence by providing encouraging or threatening feedback. The second step consisted of the renting procedure and served as our manipulation of power. The third step consisted of a choice between two car insurance companies for the duration of the rental and served both as our manipulation of brand role and our dependent variable. After receiving positive feedback following the driving test (i.e., high perceived competence), high-power participants preferred the anthropomorphized brand over the objectified brand when it appeared as a servant (b=.87, SE=.40, Z=2.19, p=.028), but not a partner (b=.39, SE=.33, Z=1.16, p=.245). This suggests that high power mind-set drives preference for anthropomorphized brands only when such brands display submissiveness (H1A). Moreover, we found that, after receiving negative feedback following the driving test (i.e., low perceived competence), high-power participants preferred the objectified brand over the anthropomorphized brand when it appeared as a servant (b=.63, SE=.34, Z=.86, p=.063) but not a partner (b=.30, SE=.37, Z=.82, p=.411). This is consistent with our theorizing that when consumers are placed in a high-power mind-set but feel incompetent, they prefer to avoid interacting with their social peers, and therefore, with partner brands (H1B).

In conclusion, this research examines how consumer’s power influences their responses to servant versus partner brands. Importantly, it emphasizes the moderating role of perceived competence.
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The Friluftsliv Effect: The Benefits of Organic Design Aesthetics in Consumer Settings

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In three studies we show that constructed environments rich in organic design aesthetics can elicit benefits similar to natural settings: the friluftsliv effect. Organic consumer settings enhance place pleasantness, place affiliation, and create a sense of reverence, which in turn lowers consumer psychic costs.

INTRODUCTION

Since medieval times, doctors have prescribed exposure to nature as a cure for ills of the body and soul (Gerlach-Spriggs et al. 1998). However, the importance of nature for consumer experience has received little attention in the marketing, retailing, or services literature. While certain services are literally rendered outdoors (e.g., recreational services), most services occur indoors. Past research suggests that atmospherics (e.g., music, color, lighting) can affect patronage intentions and evaluations of service attributes (Baker et al. 2002; Donovan and Rossetter 2002), as well as emotions (Bitner 1992; Harris and Ezeh 2008). However, the gestalt of the environment (i.e., the total configuration of the stimuli) drives the strongest responses to the environment (Bell et al. 1978; Ittelson et al. 1974; Holohan 1982) and thus may have a particularly significant impact on the psychic costs consumers incur in such spaces. Based on environmental psychology, immersion in a natural environment elicits a response we dub the friluftsliv effect [free-lufts-leave]. The Norwegian term “friluftsliv” literally translates to “free air life”. It captures the benefits of natural settings (Gelter, 2009). Past research has compared exterior scenes of nature to urban environments, but little research has actually examined how constructed interior environments rich in organic (i.e., quoting nature) design impact consumer responses. Similar to natural outdoor settings, we propose that constructed environments rich in organic design evoke this friluftsliv effect, a positive response to and sense of affiliation with place, which in turn enhances consumers’ emotional reactions by eliciting a mix of pleasure and reduced anxiety (dubbed friluftsliv feelings).

We test these hypotheses through a series of experimental studies, including a field experiment, that span three different consumer contexts and compare built consumer environments rich in organic design aesthetics to built consumer environments lacking in these design aesthetics.

PILOT STUDY: FIELD EXPERIMENT

The field experiment (N = 50; M_H = 21; 60% male) consists of a 2-cell (built environment: rich in organic design aesthetics, lacking in organic design aesthetics) between-subjects experimental design in which participants entered an actual built environment to complete the study. The goal of this study was to test whether a built environment rich in organic design aesthetics elicits more positive responses than one lacking in organic design aesthetics. As expected, the built environment rich in organic design aesthetics was rated higher on the index than the built environment lacking in organic design aesthetics (M_H = 3.74, M_L = 2.64, t(48) = 3.99, p < .001). The built environment rich in organic design aesthetics elicited more positive responses than the built environment lacking in organic design aesthetics (M_H = 4.82, M_L = 3.78, t(48) = 2.86, p < .01).

STUDY 1: AIRPORT SETTING

Study 1 (N = 60; M_H = 3.43; 63.3% male) consists of a 3-cell (environment: built consumer and rich in organic design aesthetics, built consumer and lacking in organic design aesthetics, outdoor natural) between-subjects experimental design. It tests how built consumer environments rich (vs. lacking) in organic design aesthetics elicit a positive response to and sense of affiliation with place (i.e., the friluftsliv effect). We found that built consumer environments rich in organic design aesthetics have similar impacts to natural settings and are distinct from environments lacking in such design elements (M_H = 6.50, M_L = 3.16, t(39) = 9.57, p < .001; M_Rich = 5.72, M_Lacking = 3.16, t(37) = 6.09, p < .001). This study features an airport setting as the context.

STUDY 2: RETAIL SETTING

Study 2 (N = 79; M_H = 3.48; 65% male), preceded by a pretest, consisted of a 2-cell (built consumer environment: rich in organic design aesthetics, lacking in organic design aesthetics) between-subjects experimental design. It provides additional support for the friluftsliv effect in a retail setting (M_H = 4.86, M_L = 3.98, t(77) = 2.48, p < .05), and extends the previous study by examining the emotional reactions elicited by the friluftsliv effect. Specifically, Study 2 shows that a built consumer environment rich (vs. lacking) in organic design aesthetics generates friluftsliv feelings, a mix of peak and flow emotions which result in an emotional reaction characterized by a combination of positive affect and calm (M_H = 5.33, M_L = 4.61, t(77) = -2.68, p < .01), and that the friluftsliv effect mediates these friluftsliv feelings (95% CI = -.94 to -.08). Further, Study 2 established that the design of a retail setting has an effect on perceptions of the consumer experience in the environment. Specifically, retail environments rich (vs. lacking) in organic design aesthetics reduce psychic costs related to consumers making evaluations and decisions (M_H = 3.35, M_L = 4.31, t(77) = -2.62, p < .05), which was mediated by the friluftsliv effect and friluftsliv feelings that emerge in these environments (95% CI = .01 to .58).

STUDY 3: SERVICE SETTING

Study 3 (N = 250; M_H = 22.12; 43.6% male), preceded by a pretest, consisted of a 2-cell (built consumer environment: rich in organic design aesthetics, lacking in organic design aesthetics) between-subjects experimental design. In a new built consumer environment (i.e., service setting: dentist), Study 3 shows that built consumer environments rich (vs. lacking) in organic design aesthetics generate friluftsliv feelings, a mix of peak and flow emotions (M_H = 5.30, M_L = 4.75, t(248) = 3.44, p < .01). Study 3 also provides additional support for the proposition that the built consumer environment can impact perceptions of the consumer experience in a service setting in a context in which the consumer has less control over the consumer experience. Specifically, we found that a service environment rich (vs. lacking) in organic design aesthetics reduces psychic costs (M_H = 3.90, M_L = 4.35, t(248) = -2.50, p < .01).

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This research develops, proposes and tests a conceptual model that addresses how the gestalt of built consumer environments can cue nature through organic design aesthetics, and its impact on con-
conver responses to the environment (the friluftsliv effect), emotional reactions (friluftsliv feelings), and perceptions of the consumer experience (psychic costs). This research has important theoretical contributions and actionable managerial implications.

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Matte Packaging and its Effect on Perceived Naturalness of a Product
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Two experiments show that consumers use package mattedness as a cue for product naturalness. Package-induced perceptions of product naturalness, in turn, increase expected tastiness and purchase intentions. The effect is moderated by inherent product category naturalness such that the effect is especially pronounced among products low in inherent naturalness.

A package’s surface is its exterior boundary (Merriam-Webster Online, 2017) and hence one of the first features consumers come into contact with. One major trend in the field of packaging is the use of matte, i.e. dull or lusterless, as opposed to glossy surfaces. We aim to shed light on why this trend may arise at a time at which natural products and ingredients seem to experience a renaissance (Bezawada & Pauwels, 2013).

The theoretical lens we apply is the lens of packaging as an external cue for the product itself (Richardson, Dick, & Jain, 1994). Especially when consumers cannot or do not want to gather information about a product (e.g. in the case of groceries), they tend to rely on external cues that are more easily accessible and require less processing than internal cues such as ingredients (Richardson et al., 1994).

We propose that matte package surfaces serve as a cue for content naturalness. This is because mattedness entails physical characteristics, i.e. inhomogeneity within the surface and diffuse reflections of light, that are indicative of organic substances (Karana, 2012; Nayar & Oren, 1995). Through this allusion to nature packaging mattedness is proposed to signal that the package contains a more natural, or less artificial, product. Given that consumers associate naturalness in food with superior quality we, moreover, propose a downstream effect on perceptions of tastiness. Importantly and because artificial products stand to gain the most, we also propose that the effect of packaging mattedness becomes especially pronounced among products low in inherent naturalness.

To test our propositions we conducted two laboratory experiments in which we manipulated packaging mattedness of grocery products.

Situated in a context of competitive product presentation (Sillayoi & Speece, 2004), study 1 tested for the proposed effect of packaging mattedness on perceived product naturalness and a subsequent effect on perceived tastiness. In addition, it explored whether haptic experiences enhance these effects. This yielded a 2 (packaging mattedness: matte vs. glossy) x 2 (touch: yes vs. no) between-subjects design. Each of the 136 participants (female=49%, M age=21.8) was randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. We asked respondents to evaluate the drink contained in the package and assessed perceived naturalness (1=artificial, 7=natural), expected product tastiness (1=not at all tasty, 7=very tasty) and included purchase intention as an additional managerially relevant downstream consequence (1=very unlikely, 7=very likely).

As expected, the iced tea was perceived to be more natural (M=3.34, SD=1.45) than the soft drink (M=2.59, SD=1.33, F(1,236)=17.28, p<.001, η²=.07). In addition, we found the anticipated interaction effect of mattedness and product type on perceived naturalness (F(1,236)=4.11, p=.044, η²=.02) though there was no main effect of mattedness (F(1,236)=0.59, p=.444). The soft drink in the matte package was perceived as more natural (M=2.84, SD=1.32) than the one in the glossy package (M=2.34, SD=1.29, t(114)=2.06, p=.042). No such difference was observed for the natural product, i.e. the iced tea. Moderated mediation analyses likewise only confirmed a downstream effect on tastiness and purchase intention for the artificial soft drink but not for the more natural iced tea.

Results support our novel proposition that products in matte packaging are perceived to be more natural than products in glossy packaging. Furthermore, we show that the effect is moderated by the inherent naturalness of the product category such that the effect is especially pronounced among products low in naturalness. Emphasizing the importance of the effect we also find that it can render the perception of products in matte packages as more desirable. Via perceived naturalness, package mattedness translates into better perceptions of expected taste and higher intentions to purchase. Further highlighting the practical relevance, we find that the effect emerges regardless of whether consumers merely visually examine a package or actually touch it. This suggests that it emerges in in-store settings where consumers visually inspect many more packages than they touch. On the one hand package mattedness can be used to stress actual product benefits that consumers fail to perceive; on the other hand it may bear the risk of consumer deception.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Contrasting with previous research showing that people prefer shiny objects, the present research shows that the use of glossy packaging may backfire. Specifically, we find that consumers may perceive the use of glossiness in packaging as an attention-grabbing tactic which activates persuasion knowledge and reduces trustworthiness of the brand.

Compared to matte objects, glossy ones excel in drawing attention, and people respond to shiny things as almost as automatically as they do to lights (LaBonte 2009). There is little research examining the impact of glossiness, but recent research suggested that human preference towards glossy object stems from evolutionary needs to fresh water (Meert and Ginter 1995; Chandon et al. 2009), and to positively influence choice (Atalay et al. 2012; Pieters and Warlop 1999). On the other hand, the persuasion knowledge literature argues that efforts to grab attention can backfire, as consumers can regard it as a marketing tactic. For instance, consumers negatively evaluate a brand once they realize it is trying to influence them with any marketing tactic, since they feel such practice is unfair (Campbell 1995; Campbell and Kirman 2000). Despite our evolutionary preference for glossiness (Meert et al. 2014), we propose that its use can backfire in a product packaging context. Perceived attention-grabbing of a brand can activate negative inferences about credibility, and lower consumers’ purchase intention.

In Study 1, participants (N = 121) were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions where Brand A is glossy (and B is matte) or vice versa. To be conservative, no graphical information was given in Study 1, yet a brief description was provided, that both brands had the same flavor but came in different packages. Participants indicated their choice of product and trustworthiness (1 = definitely Brand A; 4 = indifferent; 7 = definitely Brand B). As predicted, ANOVAs on both product choice (F(1, 119) = 5.08, p = .026) and perceived trustworthiness (F(1, 119) = 4.44, p = .037) yielded a significant result, where participants preferred cereal with a matte package. More importantly, mediation analysis (Hayes 2013) confirmed that the effect of package glossiness on product choice was fully mediated by trustworthiness (indirect effect 95% CI of BC 5.000 [–.7223, –.0299]).

In Study 2, the effect was replicated with graphical representations of product packages and with two different products. The second experiment also assigned participants (N = 121) to two counterbalance conditions and asked them to choose a package and rate trustworthiness. An ANOVA on product choice revealed consistent results for both chocolate (F(1, 119) = 60.22, p < .001) and granola (F(1, 119) = 9.54, p = .003), where matte package was preferred for both of the products. The same pattern was observed for perceived trustworthiness (chocolate: F(1, 119) = 34.71, p < .001; granola: F(1, 119) = 5.13, p = .025). Mediation analyses showed that trustworthiness successfully mediated the effect respectively (95% CI for chocolate [.8262, 1.9525]; granola [.0804, 1.0570]).

The following two experiments investigate the underlying mechanism: inferences about tactics to grab consumers’ attention. Study 3 introduced a moderator, brand prestige, and showed the effect is attenuated for prestigious brands that presumably do not need to resort to attention-grabbing tactics. Participants (N = 234) were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions: 2 (counterbalance) x 2 (brand quality: prestige (Chanel) vs. generic (a fake brand)). After evaluating brand trustworthiness, participants indicated their inferences regarding the use of a glossy package (i.e., persuasion knowledge). Before the analysis, we recoded trustworthiness into a scale that higher values denote the matte version. A regression analysis using PROCESS (Hayes 2013) was conducted with brand quality, persuasion knowledge, and the interaction term of the two on brand trustworthiness. Following up the interaction effect using the Johnson-Neyman technique identified the region of significant moderation effect at a value of 6.80. This indicates that consumers’ tendency to evaluate a brand with glossy package as less trustworthy was attenuated when a brand has a signal of high quality or premium value, especially for the ones who had an inference about glossiness as a marketing tactic.

Study 4 intended to demonstrate that package glossiness leads to the lower level of trustworthiness, and this is based on consumers’ negative inferences towards immediate attention-grabbing, as they perceive it to be a marketing tactic. Participants (N = 252) were randomly assigned to the two counterbalance conditions and indicated perceived trustworthiness. More importantly, the participants indicated how strongly the two packages captured consumers’ eyes immediately and how strongly held attention for long. Finally, participants evaluated likelihood of consumers’ purchase intention. An ANOVA on purchase intention and perceived trustworthiness revealed the same pattern of the effects from the previous studies. As predicted, participants indicated that the glossy package was more likely to grab consumers’ attentions immediately (M_A-is-glossy = 3.83 vs. M_B-is-glossy = 4.41, p = .034), but the pattern was reversed for long-term attention (M_A-is-glossy = 4.47 vs. M_B-is-glossy = 4.02, p = .063). For the next step, we tested a series of mediation analyses. A competing mediation model with both attention-grabbing measures supported our hypothesis. The indirect effect showed that the package glossiness effect on trustworthiness perception was mediated by immediate attention (95% CI of [–.3920, –.0283]), but not by long-term attention (95% CI of [–.0008, .3920]). Furthermore, a serial mediation on purchase intention with immediate attention and trustworthiness as mediators was also significant (b = –.14, 95% CI of [–.2903, –.0200]). In sum, the results support our proposition that negative effect of package glossiness is caused by consumers’ negative inferences to immediate attention-grabbing, but not by long-term attention-grabbing.

Across four experiments, the results consistently support our theorization that all that glitters is not gold, by showing that the use of a glossy finish can activate consumers’ persuasion knowledge, thereby reducing the credibility of a brand that does so. With these findings, we successfully extend previous research of glossiness, and demonstrate the two-sided aspects of attention-grabbing triggered by design. By showing that drawing attention is not always the best solution to appeal to consumers, we provide an evidence that a too obvious solicitation can harm the brand.

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Gender Differences in Response to Visual Harmony: Why and When?
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Across five studies, we explored how and when gender impacts the attractiveness evaluation of marketing visuals varying in harmony. Consistent with self-referencing theory, female genders prefer harmony in design more than males. However, this effect varies with how gender is defined, how gender is assessed, and with the consumption context.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND
Conceptualizing consumer reactions to visual design, Bloch (2011) posits that designers create visual appearance by combining basic design elements such as shapes and colors, with the aim of forming a unified aesthetic whole. One important generic factor of design and, additionally, a major driver of a design’s attractiveness is visual harmony which is defined as a congruent pattern or an arrangement of parts that combines symmetry and balance (Henderson et al. 2004). Conceptually, the reasons for a positive evaluative outcome of visual harmony are not fully understood yet (Hekkert and Leder 2008). However, recent research suggests that the influence of harmony on a stimulus’ attractiveness may not be as universal as previously thought. For instance, sex is thought to be a key discriminator in consumer response to visual design (Moss 2009). In practice, sex is one of the most commonly employed variable for segmenting consumers markets (Wolin 2003) with marketers and advertisers spending millions on designing offers which visually appeal to male or female consumers (e.g., Coca Cola) (Meyers-Levy and Loken 2015). Moreover, in an era where traditional gender identities (as opposed to sex) are becoming more fluid with females being stronger and more dominant and males being more sensitive and caring (Fugate and Phillips 2010), it is important to understand if design preferences are sex- or identity-related. In addition, only a few studies have explored the underlying mechanism through which such differences in design response occur. To address these gaps, the presented five studies shed light on the role of gender (biological vs. identity) in the harmony-attractiveness relationship. Furthermore, adopting a self-referencing perspective and in line with marketing visuals serving as cues to symbolically position oneself with, we test self-congruity as a possible process mediator in the harmony – attractiveness relationship. Additionally, this work explores if sex and identity-related effects hold true when employing an implicit measure (i.e., IAT) and when varying the consumption context (i.e., public vs. private).

EMPIRICAL STUDIES
Study 1 and Study 2 aimed at testing the main effect of visual harmony on attractiveness and the moderating role of respondent sex. Therefore, in Study 1, 78 students responded to various visuals (typefaces, logos, and kettles) by rating stimulus attractiveness, visual harmony, and indicating their sex. ANOVA results indicated that design harmony had a significant positive main effect on attractiveness. Furthermore, the interaction between sex and harmony was significant with females preferring harmonious designs more than males. Study 2 (n=212) confirmed the main effect of harmony on attractiveness evaluation as well as its interactive effect with respondent sex.

To better understand the workings of design harmony from a more social-oriented perspective, Study 3 focused on self-congruity as possibly mediating the relationship of design harmony on attractiveness evaluation and explored the role of gender identity. A survey presented 91 students with three stimuli (typeface, logo, and kettle) before they submitted ratings on attractiveness, visual harmony, masculine and feminine appeal, their gender identity and sex. As hypothesized, results of moderated mediation analysis demonstrated that self-congruity mediated the harmony-attractiveness relationship. The strength of this intermediary process was influenced by the extent to which an individual identified him- or herself as feminine, such that the indirect effect was stronger at high levels of feminine identity. In contrast, respondent sex had no impact.

To shed light on the role of social expectations in gendered responses towards visuals, Study 4 investigated implicit associations with visual harmony and explored gender differences. Because research on explicit measures is based on the assumption that people are aware of their identity and/or willing to share their opinion, past research nominated the implicit association test (IAT) as a powerful procedure for assessing automated attitudes (Greenwald et al. 1998). 60 participants completed four IATs and a questionnaire. As expected, IAT results indicated that harmony was implicitly associated with attractiveness, femininity, and the self. Correlation analysis revealed that attractiveness was significantly related to harmony identity. In contrast to explicitly assessed findings, results of MANOVA revealed neither identity nor sex effects on implicit attractiveness and harmony identity. This points out that systematic differences in explicitly measured preferences for visual (dis-)harmony could be traced back to social desirability and expectations.

Building on these results, Study 5 aimed at exploring the role of social expectations in gendered design responses by manipulating the social context (public vs. private) and controlling for effects of social desirability. After reading a vignette (Zhang et al. 2006), participants (n=246) viewed a wine package and submitted ratings on attractiveness, harmony and personal information such as their gender identity and sex. Results of moderated moderated mediation analysis confirmed the main effect of harmony on attractiveness as well as the mediating role of self-congruity. As expected, findings indicated sex and social context to moderate this effect. More precisely, females preferred harmonious designs in social setting, and males in private settings. Consequently, as individuals seem to construct their gender in social interactions, consumption context is an important boundary condition for gender differences in aesthetic preferences.

IMPLICATIONS
In sum, this work extends theory in several ways and has important implications for marketers interested in implementing gender differences in their designs. Based on findings on the mediating role of self-congruity, managers and designers can significantly improve the effectiveness of their visual design by matching the visual to the self-image of target audiences. Furthermore, because present studies indicate that gender differences in design preferences still exist, the concept of gender, especially the identity-based part, remains an important organizing construct for firms. Thus, practitioners may find the insights provided useful not only for creating designs that appeal to a specific biological gender but perhaps more so for creating designs that appeal to individuals with specific (feminine) personality traits. Taken together, in an era where traditional gender roles are
being challenged and gender identities are becoming more nuanced, this research provides a first step towards a deeper understanding of the aesthetic preferences of males and females. For practitioners, it is particularly beneficial to know why gender differences occur and when which gender-related factor is activated.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This study takes an ethnographic approach to explore how the ordinary, routine processes and practicalities of doing allotmenteering interrelate and overlap with conceptualisations of environmentally responsible consumption. Using a practice-theoretical lens, our ethnographic findings reveal how, through practising allotmenteering, allotmeentees engage in environmentally responsible and sustainable consumption patterns unintentionally.

In recent years, we have witnessed a growing number of studies that pay close attention to ordinary, routine, inconspicuous and often taken-for-granted forms of consumption (Coupland 2005; Dant 2005; Epp and Price 2010; Moltoch and McClain 2008). This subfield of consumer research demonstrates the importance of routines in consumption practices as well as acknowledging materiality in the performance of everyday life. In doing so, these studies unveil everyday occurrences and experiences of consumption that would otherwise be hidden from view in the light of dominant perspectives that focus on either the individual consumer and their self-interests, desires and motivations (Friedman 1957) or the spectacular and extraordinary aspects of consumption (Baudrillard 1998; Douglas and Isherwood 1979).

An increasing number of studies into ordinary consumption are inspired by the (re-) emergence of theories of practice or what has been described as ‘the practice turn’ in contemporary social theory (Schatzki, Knorr Cetina and von Savigny 2001). Theories of practice represent a body of diverse, yet interrelated theoretical perspectives about social life. The pre-eminent ideas, espoused by Schatzki (1996) and, more recently, Reckwitz (2002) endorse the understanding that social life is composed of a multitude of social practices, which are reproduced and transformed in the performance and flow of everyday life. Each practice comprises of particular doings and sayings, which include different ways of understanding and know-how, material resources and meanings (Reckwitz 2002; Schatzki 1996). This theoretical approach is gaining in popularity in the field of environmentally responsible consumption wherein previous research has focused predominantly on the rationality of individual (and to a lesser extent collective) action or the political and socio-symbolic significance of consumption (Black and Cherrier 2010; Connolly and Prothero 2003; Kilbourne and Beckmann 1998; Lang and Gabriel 2005), since it allows us to bring less visible aspects of ordinary, routine consumption into view. These practice-based studies of ordinary consumption call attention to the ways in which resource-intensive forms of consumption (e.g. showering, heating/cooling the home, laundering, freezing food and driving) are in fact embedded within the workings of everyday life (Shove 2003; Shove and Southerton 2000; Shove and Walker 2010). This is significant because it allows us to recognize how and why environmentally-damaging consumption patterns transpire in the performance of everyday life and consider how we can establish less resource-intensive ways of living.

This research therefore adopts a practice-theoretical approach. Taking the practice of allotmenteering as the focus of this study, this research moves debates about consumption forward by demonstrating how more routine, everyday forms of consumption can help us to advance our understanding of environmentally responsible consumption. Drawing from the work of Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012), we employ a conceptual framework composed of three interrelated elements; forms of competence, materials and meaning.
Practising Sustainability Unintentionally; an Ethnography of Allotmenteering

sumption patterns embedded in the practice of allotmenteering, this research shows how practices can establish and shape more environmentally responsible consumption patterns.

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Hedonism: A Phenomenological Study of Pleasure and Pain in Everyday Ethical Consumption
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Deirdre Shaw, University of Glasgow, UK

EXTENDED ABSTRACT
This research reveals hedonism as interplay between both pleasure and pain, a neglected consideration within everyday, and ethical consumption. This gap is addressed by exploring how, when and why ethical consumers experience hedonism during a new consumption project journey.

This research explores how consumers experience hedonism as the outcome of a relationship between experiences of both pleasure and pain within the context of every day, and ethical consumption. Sensorial and psychological pain experiences arise over time from the difficulties and challenges faced during individual efforts to ultimately realize greater pleasure and achievement of a transformative ethical consumption goal.

The phenomenon of hedonism as an interplay between experienced pleasure and pain is illuminated through depth interviews, journals and observations; revealing how, when and why ethical consumers experience hedonism during a personal journey of preparing for, embedding, and reflecting upon a new ethical consumption project.

HEDONISM IN EVERYDAY ETHICAL CONSUMPTION
Counter to lay perspectives of hedonism as solely pleasure (Weijers, 2012), the philosophical doctrine of hedonism with its origins in Greek Philosophy is grounded in a dynamic between both pleasure and pain, where it is argued that maximisation of pleasure and minimisation of pain motivates behaviour (Bentham 1996; Feldman 2004, Heathwood 2013; Jantzen et al. 2014; Moore 2013; O’Keefe, 2010; Rawls 2009, Singer, 2013). This study subscribes to a phenomenological perspective on hedonism characterised by experiences which are intrinsically pleasurable or painful and furthermore, that this is subjectively felt and interpreted by the individual (Alwood 2017; Crisp 2006; Meerwijk and Weiss 2011; Labukt 2012, Shneidman 1999).

The term pleasure is applied here in its broadest sense encompassing all pleasant feelings and desirable emotions including contentment, delight, elation, enjoyment, euphoria, excitement, gratification, happiness, joy, love, satisfaction, pride, hope and so on (Dube and Le Bel 2001, 2003; Leighton 1982; Moore 2013; Rook 1987; Russell 2003). Pain, on the other hand, embraces all unpleasant feelings and largely unwanted emotions, such as, annoyance, anxiety, despair, discomfort, disgust, distress, embarrassment, fear, guilt, helplessness, hurt, sadness, shame and remorse (Meerwijk and Weiss 2011; Leighton 1982; Moore 2013; Rook 1987; Russell 2003; Mee et al.2006; Shneidman 1999; Vetlesen 2009).

The discourse within Marketing is inclined towards the pleasure dimension of hedonism, in consumption terms “fantasies, feelings and fun” (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982, 132). Studies have focused on pleasure derived from emotionally charged, high involvement, infrequent ‘extraordinary’ consumption experiences (Bhattacharje et al 2014; Sussman and Alter 2012) for example, white-water rafting trips (Arnould and Price 1993), illicit drug taking (Goulding et al.2009) or ethical holidays (Malone, McCabe and Smith 2014). The few studies which reveal any interplay between pain and pleasure remain within the realms of extreme consumption practices, for example watching horror movies (Andrade and Cohen, 2007), “high-risk” skydiving (Celsi, Rose and Leigh 1993:1), Tough Mudder events 1 (Scott, Cayla, and Cova 2017) and sadistic consumption (Fitchett 2002) or within mainstream but isolated behaviours, such as running as “pleasurable escape” from the monotony of everyday life (Kerrigan et al. 2014, 161).

Within the context of ethical consumption, the relationship between pleasure and pain has been understood differently in relation to hedonism. Connolly and Prothero (2003, 203) described such consumption as a metaphorical “dark and cold place”, where ethical alternatives are perceived to be constraining and compromising (Malone, McCabe and Smith 2014; Szmigin and Carrigan 2005). Such a view of ethical consumption as pain runs contrary to the emergence of pleasure as feeling good by doing good (Freestone and McGoldrick 2008, Szmigin and Carrigan 2005). Indeed, Soper (2007, 2013) uses the term ‘Alternative Hedonism’ to focus on the pleasures of consuming differently along environmental and social lines. Nevertheless whilst experiential pain and pleasure is revealed in ethical consumption there is a lack of consideration of the dynamic between them, arguably where you might expect to see it; for example in growing produce with its likely successes and failures, or cycling instead of driving which could take longer but improve well-being.

Whilst Kerrigan et al. (2014) advocated further research to explore the ‘tension’ between pleasure and pain, particularly when consumers seek to experience and achieve a transformative goal (163), research to date fails to explore how this dynamic plays out. Furthermore this interplay is disregarded within the context of comparatively mundane, everyday activities which constitute the majority of our consumption experiences, for example, preparing meals, shopping, relaxing or commuting (Caru and Cova 2003; Csikszentmihalyi 1997; Featherstone 1992; Kleine, Kleine, and Kernan 1992). Finally, exploration of hedonism in ethical consumption has arguably been hampered by a continued focus on rationality in choice (Carrington, Zwick, and Neville 2016; Deviney, Auger, and Eckhardt 2010) and there remains a dearth of insight into how individual ethical consumers experience hedonism as interplay between pleasure and pain.

THE STUDY AND MAJOR FINDINGS
Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin 2009) was used to explore the lived experiences of hedonism (Chevrier 2005; Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) of self-identifying ethical consumers (Harrison, Newholm and Shaw, 2005; Malone et al. 2014; Young et al. 2010) who were considering or just about to make further changes to their consumption to address ethical alternatives are perceived to be constraining and compromising (Malone, McCabe and Smith 2014; Szmigin and Carrigan 2005). Indeed, Soper (2007, 2013) uses the term ‘Alternative Hedonism’ to focus on the pleasures of consuming differently along environmental and social lines. Nevertheless whilst experiential pain and pleasure is revealed in ethical consumption there is a lack of consideration of the dynamic between them, arguably where you might expect to see it; for example in growing produce with its likely successes and failures, or cycling instead of driving which could take longer but improve well-being.

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Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin 2009) was used to explore the lived experiences of hedonism (Chevrier 2005; Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) of self-identifying ethical consumers (Harrison, Newholm and Shaw, 2005; Malone et al. 2014; Young et al. 2010) who were considering or just about to make further changes to their consumption to address their ethical concerns. A purposive heterogeneous sample of twelve females and six males, who varied in age from 19-56 years were recruited and whose new ethical consumption goals included becoming vegan or vegetarian, growing produce, commuting by bike, reducing meat consumption, donating to ethical causes and making a financial contribution to an ethical organisation. The few studies which reveal any interplay between pain and pleasure remain within the realms of extreme consumption practices, for example watching horror movies (Andrade and Cohen, 2007), “high-risk” skydiving (Celsi, Rose and Leigh 1993:1), Tough Mudder events 1 (Scott, Cayla, and Cova 2017) and sadistic consumption (Fitchett 2002) or within mainstream but isolated behaviours, such as running as “pleasurable escape” from the monotony of everyday life (Kerrigan et al. 2014, 161).

Within the context of ethical consumption, the relationship between pleasure and pain has been understood differently in relation to hedonism. Connolly and Prothero (2003, 203) described such consumption as a metaphorical “dark and cold place”, where ethical alternatives are perceived to be constraining and compromising (Malone, McCabe and Smith 2014; Szmigin and Carrigan 2005). Indeed, Soper (2007, 2013) uses the term ‘Alternative Hedonism’ to focus on the pleasures of consuming differently along environmental and social lines. Nevertheless whilst experiential pain and pleasure is revealed in ethical consumption there is a lack of consideration of the dynamic between them, arguably where you might expect to see it; for example in growing produce with its likely successes and failures, or cycling instead of driving which could take longer but improve well-being.

Whilst Kerrigan et al. (2014) advocated further research to explore the ‘tension’ between pleasure and pain, particularly when consumers seek to experience and achieve a transformative goal (163), research to date fails to explore how this dynamic plays out. Furthermore this interplay is disregarded within the context of comparatively mundane, everyday activities which constitute the majority of our consumption experiences, for example, preparing meals, shopping, relaxing or commuting (Caru and Cova 2003; Csikszentmihalyi 1997; Featherstone 1992; Kleine, Kleine, and Kernan 1992). Finally, exploration of hedonism in ethical consumption has arguably been hampered by a continued focus on rationality in choice (Carrington, Zwick, and Neville 2016; Deviney, Auger, and Eckhardt 2010) and there remains a dearth of insight into how individual ethical consumers experience hedonism as interplay between pleasure and pain.

THE STUDY AND MAJOR FINDINGS
Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin 2009) was used to explore the lived experiences of hedonism (Chevrier 2005; Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) of self-identifying ethical consumers (Harrison, Newholm and Shaw, 2005; Malone et al. 2014; Young et al. 2010) who were considering or just about to make further changes to their consumption to address their ethical concerns. A purposive heterogeneous sample of twelve females and six males, who varied in age from 19-56 years were recruited and whose new ethical consumption goals included becoming vegan or vegetarian, growing produce, commuting by bike, reduced or more mindful consumption choices.

A longitudinal research design spanning four months to one year incorporated depth interviews, participant journals and observations 1 “Tough Mudder a particularly gruelling adventure challenge involving a series of approximately 25 military-style obstacles to overcome in half a day” (Scott et al. 2017, 1)
enabling access to experiences of behaviour change from multiple perspectives (Cresswell 1994, Logie-Maclver, Piacentini, and Eadie 2012). IPA revealed six key themes which uncover how participants experienced an interplay between pleasure and pain on their journey of preparing for, embedding and reflecting upon a new ethical consumption practice influenced by macro-infrastructures, time, affordability, interpersonal relationships and an internal values hierarchy. The themes are “Taking control versus being controlled”, “Ideology versus reality”, “Proactive versus reactive”, “Mindful versus immediate gratification”, “Enlightened versus resicient”, “Belongingness versus stigmatization”.

THE CONTRIBUTION

This research is theoretically important as it makes three critical contributions towards repositioning the concept of hedonism in consumer research. Firstly, it reveals that hedonism is not solely about pleasure, but its relationship with pain; to date this duality has been a neglected consideration in the Marketing literature more generally and ethical consumption specifically. Secondly, it temporally frames hedonism in everyday, ordinary consumption and this has previously been overlooked in research dominated by studies of extraordinary or one-off experiences. Finally, hedonism is illuminated through phenomenological first person accounts considered within the context of ethical consumption practices; more specifically what hedonism feels like and means to an individual within the context of their everyday lives.

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Unpacking the Lunchbox: Surveillant Assemblages, Mothering and Social Class
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Using the concept of surveillant assemblages we illustrate mothers localised and classed practices of resisting the school’s normalising gaze through their provision of packed lunches. We reveal the complex network of surveillance that is in operation between mothers and children, but also between mothers and schools, and between mothers themselves.

Using the concept of biopedagogies this paper explores how lunchboxes operate as a key object within wider surveillant assemblages which seek to shape and construct the healthy child. We reveal how school surveillance is both internalised and resisted by mothers at the individual level, not only discursively but through practical strategic choice of food for their child’s lunchbox. We also find these strategies differed significantly by social class involving differing emphases on food as display and differing distinctions between home food and school food. Findings document localised and classed practices of resisting the school’s normalising gaze, but by focusing on surveillant assemblages we also find that the gaze is not only top down but is also much more dispersed in its effects with parents and children frequently surveilling and monitoring one another.

LITERATURE
Mothering and Classed Food Practices
The way mothers feed their children inside and outside the home is integral to understanding the relationship between food work and gendered and classed identities. From De Vault’s (1991) seminal work on Feeding the family to the most recent work on food and mothering we know that feeding children is still largely seen as a mother’s domain, (Cairns and Johnston 2015, May 2008). We also know that food and eating practices don’t happen in a vacuum, but are entangled with classed ideals of good mothering, childrearing and putting the children’s needs first (O’Connell and Brannen 2016).

Lunchboxes, Biopedagogies and Surveillant Assemblages
We use the concepts of biopedagogy and surveillant assemblages to explore the role that lunchboxes play within wider networks of surveillance in particular through school surveillance of children’s bodies. Biopedagogy originates from Foucault’s concept of ‘biopower’, which is ‘the governance and regulation of individuals and populations through practices associated with the body’ (Wright 2009: 2). Accounts of biopedagogies describe how practices, technologies and devices - disseminated via formal and informal education, and the related processes of subjectification (Leahy 2009) - ‘work to instruct, regulate, normalize and construct understandings of the physical body and the virtuous bio-citizen’ (Wright and Halse 2014: 838).

As McCahill and Finn’s (2010: 288) observe, ‘there is no such thing as a “unitary surveyed child”’. Haggerty and Ericson (2000) coined the notion of a “surveillant assemblage” to show the variety of technologies, practices and sources of surveillance responding to different and sometimes contradictory notions, norms and imperatives around the construction of the healthy subject. We argue that the lunchbox plays a significant role in surveillant assemblages. Indeed lunchboxes have acted as a lightening rod for wider debates around childhood nutrition, healthy eating and obesity.

Research Methods
Parents with children aged 9-11 were recruited. The sample consists of 19 middle-class and 11 working class women, aged between 27 and 50. Apart from a widow and a lone mother, all participants were married and living with their husbands. Participants were interviewed twice. In the first interview participants were invited to give an overall description of how food was managed in their family. At the end of the interview mothers were asked to take photographs of a week of packed lunches, these photographs were then discussed in a second interview. The three focus groups of between 5-7 participants enabled participants to discuss packed lunches in a group setting. A thematic data analysis of the interview transcripts (Silverman 2006) began after the first interview and was ongoing throughout the two studies.

Summary of Findings
Our findings identify two key groups of mothers. For the first group of mothers putting the children’s needs first seems to be a matter of controlling their children’s body, thus feeding them with food understood as healthy. Food forbidden by the school, and associated with laziness, overindulgence and uncaring mothering, is consumed as reward in domestic settings. This approach frames the child as an individual developmental project (Haldén 1991; Tomanovic 2004). As such the children’s successes and failures and physical appearance are understood as mothering outcomes, rather than something to be attributed to the child, genes or other factors such as socioeconomic status. The child is therefore seen as incapable of making their own decisions, and as such needs to be more heavily monitored (Tomanovic 2004). Mothering is seen here as the future-oriented application of middle class enterprise skills (Backett-Milburn et al. 2006), the cultivating of various capitals and the avoidance of the risk of failures, such as having an overweight child.

The second group of mothers putting their children’s needs first is a matter of providing gratification through food in the school and home settings, avoiding the risk of providing challenging food for their children. Our findings have shown how these women plan their children’s diet around the household’s financial constraints, thus preferring to purchase food that they know will be appreciated and not wasted. They know that food that has been tried and tested at home will certainly be eaten at school. Thus food consumed at home easily crosses the domestic borders to enter in the school settings, with very little negotiation to accommodate the school’s requests. Unhealthy items are not reserved for family occasions, but they are part of ordinary public and private meals and snacks. Many of the working class mothers seem less concerned about their relationship with the school and more interested in accommodating their children’s food preferences. Here mothering is seen less as a matter of managing a project, these women relate to their children as beings that can be trusted and that can autonomously make their own food choices following their own preferences (see also Haldén 1991; Tomanovic 2004; Willis et al. 2011).

CONCLUSION
Our findings confirm that the school exercise of surveillance is not totalising and thus fails to generate passive and obedient subjectivities. As studies on biopedagogies (Harwood 2009, Wright 2009)
remind us, surveillance produces resistance, as individuals activate localised strategies to escape the normalising gaze. Our findings reveal how mothers respond to the school’s scrutinising gaze of their packed lunches, activating different resisting techniques which are framed with the unquestionable mothering principle of putting the children’s needs first (McCarthy et al. 2000). We have identified two positions that mothers occupy in relation to school scrutiny, which also echo their broader understanding of good mothering (May 2008).

REFERENCES
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In a series of experimental studies, we show that less human-like (vs. ultra-realistic) avatars induce greater product liking and compliance with persuasive message. This effect occurs because less human-like avatars’ stimulate cognitive elaboration, resulting in greater compliance. Our findings contribute to understanding human interactions with artificial human-like objects.

Growing literature points that avatars - human-like digital portrayals - lead to greater consumer satisfaction and purchase intentions (e.g., Holzwarth, Janiszewski, and Neumann 2006). Marketers echo this scholarly enthusiasm (Waters 2016). For example, IKEA launched the avatar-assistant Anna, and airports introduced avatars – hologram human-like projections – to assist passengers (Easen 2012). Behind these trends may be the belief that exact human-like avatars would be more persuasive than less human-like ones.

In contrast to the above, we propose and show that less (vs. exact) human-like avatars can be more persuasive than ultra-realistic, exact human-like avatars (e.g., high-resolution photographs). Because less human-like avatars are more schematic, they may stimulate a feeling of “being deprived of information” and thus observers’ curiosity (Loewenstein 1994). This would provoke thorough processing of information presented with the avatar, leading to greater compliance with the persuasive message (Petty and Cacioppo 1986).

This theorizing leads to a counterintuitive phenomenon: Less human-like avatars may be more persuasive than ultra-realistic human-like ones. Three experimental studies demonstrated this effect by presenting participants with less human-like or exact human-like avatars (i.e., high-resolution photographs). Studies 1 and 2 show that less human-like avatars (vs. photographs) enhance product liking. Study 3 demonstrates that less human-like avatars (vs. photographs) provoke greater compliance with a persuasive message, and provides evidence for the underlying mechanism.

Study 1 randomly assigned 132 participants from an online panel to one of two experimental conditions (avatar vs. photograph). They saw a picture of tea packaging, featuring either a less human-like avatar or a photograph of tea’s producer. The photograph was taken from the Chicago face database (Ma, Correll, and Wittenbrink 2015), and was modified by a professional graphic designer for the avatar condition. Participants completed product liking and packaging visual appeal measures.

Packaging visual appeal significantly impacted liking, thus it was used as a covariate. ANCOVA on product attitude with experimental condition as between-subjects factor and visual appeal as a covariate revealed significant effect of the covariate ($F(1, 129) = 207.430, p < .001$) and, importantly, experimental condition ($F(1, 129) = 6.144, p = .014$). Product liking was significantly higher for the less human-like avatar ($M = 4.20$), compared to the photograph condition ($M = 3.54$).

Study 2 included a control condition to rule out the possibility that photographs dampens (rather than avatar improves) product liking. 248 participants were assigned to an avatar vs. photograph vs. control between-participants experiment. They saw a picture of shampoo packaging, featuring an avatar, or a photograph, or no picture of the shampoo’s producer. A professional graphic designer produced all stimuli. We measured product liking as a dependent variable.

An ANOVA on product liking with experimental condition as between-participants factor revealed a significant effect of experimental condition ($F(2, 246) = 3.258, p = .040$). Product liking was higher in the avatar condition ($M = 5.32$), compared to photograph ($M = 4.84; F(1, 246) = 5.530, p = .019$) and control conditions ($M = 4.90; F(1, 246) = 4.111, p = .044$). There were no differences between the last two conditions ($p = .742$).

Study 3 explored whether less human-like avatar (vs. photograph) can be more effective in health-promoting interventions, and probed increased cognitive elaboration as the underlying mechanism. Additionally, it addressed two alternative explanations. More schematic, less human-like avatars could, first, increase perceived similarity between avatars and observers, and second, be processed more fluently, thus enhancing message persuasiveness. 88 participants took part in a two-cells (avatar vs. photograph) between-participants experiment. They saw a screenshot of the “About” section, presumably taken from the webpage of a health-coach, with his less human-like avatar (vs. photograph) embedded in it. Stimuli were created as in Study 1.

Next, participants read some advice by the health-coach, and made a choice between two videos to watch; an advice-related, and an advice-unrelated. Choice of video, capturing the persuasiveness of the health-coach advice, was our dependent variable. To probe the underlying mechanism, we asked participants to rate the video-relatedness of the advice. If avatar enhanced cognitive elaboration, we expected that it would also increase (decrease) perceived video-relatedness of the related (unrelated) video. To probe alternative accounts, we measured perceived similarity and webpage typicality.

A binary logistic regression with choice of video as the dependent variable and experimental condition as independent variable was statistically significant ($\chi^2(1) = 5.014, p = .025$). The odds ratio indicated that participants in the avatar condition were 4.24 times more likely to choose advice-related video (76.7%) than participants in the photograph (93.3%) condition ($\beta = 1.445, p = .038$).

We computed an index of video-relatedness as the absolute difference between ratings of each videos’ relatedness. We did a mediation analysis with video-relatedness as a mediator, experimental condition as independent variable, and video choice as dependent variable. As predicted, avatar increased accurate perceptions of video-relatedness ($\beta = .97, p = .013$), which in turn increased probability of choosing the advice-related video ($\beta = .63, p = .004$). The confidence interval indicated significant mediation (95%CI = [1.128, 1.447]). Similar models with perceived similarity and webpage’s typicality as mediators were not significant (both 95%CI included 0).

Summarizing, we found that less human-like avatars increase product liking (Studies 1-2) and lead to greater persuasive power (Study 3) compared to exact human-like ones. This effect is driven by increased cognitive elaboration that less human-like avatars provoke (Study 3). Our results contribute to computer-mediated communication (Hoffman and Novak 1996) and consumer well-being (Sirgy, Lee, and Rahtz 2007) literatures. First, we proposed and demonstrated an important boundary condition to the use of exact human-like avatars, which can decrease persuasiveness compared to less human-like avatars. Thus, creating avatars as human-like as possible may be unnecessary, or even detrimental. Second, we showed how aesthetics dimensions (i.e., human portrayals used) can impact consumer well-being. Consumers adhered more to health-related ad-
vice by simply changing an avatar from ultra-realistic to less human-like. These contributions extend to managerial advice concerning humanizing firm-consumer interactions.

REFERENCES
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Using three experiments, we showed that, when a description of the tactile characteristics of the product is provided, the information given by a web-community (vs. a company website) increases consumer’s attitude toward the product because of the higher perception of source’s reliability. This effect is demonstrated for low-touch products.

In online environments, consumers can not experience the tactile contact with objects and evaluate products based on visual representations and descriptions of their tactile characteristics (Fan et al. 2013). Previous studies show that, when the direct contact with a product is not possible, the provision of tactile information may positively affect consumer behavior (Peck and Childers 2003a, 2003b). Despite such evidence, earlier contributions have devoted little attention to the differential influence of online sources of information on consumers’ attitudes when a description of the tactile characteristics of a product is provided and consumers do not have previous knowledge with the product or brand.

This paper aims at covering this gap by analyzing the effects of online information sources on consumers’ attitude and distinguishing two kind of digital sources that can provide tactile information about a product: companies’ websites vs. web-communities. We propose that consumers’ attitude is higher when tactile information is provided by a web-community compared to a company website (H1) and that such effect is mediated by the reliability associated to the information source (H2). Indeed, the information exchanged within web-communities reflects knowledge and experience deriving from real-life of other users and is generally considered to be more reliable (Wathen and Burkell 2002). We additionally maintain that the type of product in terms of touch diagnosticity (low- vs. high-touch products) moderates this relationship. Based on ELM model (Petty and Cacioppo 1981), we propose that, for low-touch products, in which tactile information is not diagnostic, consumers will follow a peripheral route in which they will use the source’s reliability as a heuristic. Therefore, tactile information provided by a web-community will increase the perception of reliability that, in turn, will produce higher consumers’ attitude. For high-touch products, tactile information is diagnostic during product evaluations. Consumers will follow a central route in which the source of information is less relevant than the information itself. Therefore, there are no differences of perceived reliability between the two tactile information sources, and thus in terms of consumers’ attitude.

We tested our hypotheses in three studies. Study 1 was aimed at testing H1 and H2. We manipulated online information source (web-community vs. company website) in a between-subjects design, observing its effect on consumers’ attitude toward a generic pretested product that has medium touch importance (i.e., an agenda). Results showed that consumers attitude is higher in the web-community condition than in the company website condition (M_web-site = 4.97, F(1,93) = 14.00, p < .01). Moreover, a mediation analysis revealed that the tactile information provided by a web-community predicts reliability (b = .64, p = .01), that in turn predicts product attitude (b = .63, p < .01).

Study 2 was aimed at testing H1 for private consumption. We used a 2 (online information source: web-community vs. company website) x 2 (type of product: low- vs. high-touch products) between-subjects design. Products (i.e., a comb as low-touch product and a towel as high-touch product) were selected on the basis of a pretest. A two-way ANOVA on attitude showed a significant interaction effect (F(1,106) = 5.60, p < .05). Coherently with H2, planned comparisons revealed that, for low-touch products, consumers attitude is higher when tactile information is provided by a web-community than a company website (M_community_comb = 5.26; M_website_comb = 4.15; F(1,106) = 12.66, p < .01), whereas for high-touch products there is not significant difference between the two information sources (F(1,106) = .04, p = ns).

Study 3 was aimed at giving further support of previous results for public consumption. We adopted the same design as in Study 2 and used a keyring as low-touch product and a scarf as high-touch product, selected on the basis of a pre-test. Additionally, similarly to Study 1, perceived reliability as mediator was measured. Results of a two-way indicated that, for low-touch products, consumers attitude is higher when tactile information is provided by a web-community than a company website (M_community_keyring = 4.02; M_website_keyring = 3.18; F(1,129) = 12.10, p < .01), whereas for high-touch products there is not significant difference in terms of consumers attitude (F(1,129) = .12, p = ns).

Then a moderated mediation analysis, considering information source as IV, type of product as moderator and perceived reliability as mediator, showed that both information source (b = .48, p < .05) and type of product (b = .92, p < .01) have a significant effect on perceived reliability. Moreover, simple slopes analysis showed that, for low-touch products, web-communities are perceived as more reliable than company website (b = .48, p < .05), whereas for high-touch products information source does not influence reliability perception (b = -.01, p = ns). Considering attitude as DV, both reliability (b = .52, p = .00) and information source (b = .39, p = .03) have a significant effect. Moreover, there is a significant indirect conditional effect of information source on attitude for low-touch products equal to .25, [C.1. .02, .56]. Conversely, for high-touch products the indirect conditional effect is not significant [C.1. - .27, .27].

This research contributes to better understand the differential influence of online sources of tactile information on consumers’ attitudes across different types of products. Moreover, findings are particularly relevant for emerging brands that want to commercialize their products in the digital environment. These companies should be present in web-communities aiming at describing product tactile characteristics, especially if not diagnostic.

This paper has some limitations that may provide opportunities for future research. We considered only positive tactile elements of products and referred to a fictitious brand. Future research can also consider the impact of negative tactile aspects and real brands.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This research demonstrates that haptic feedback can augment mobile advertising effectiveness with downstream consequences on brand attitudes and choice. However, the positive impact is contingent on a brand’s personality: only warm, familiar brands benefit from incorporating haptic feedback since the source of touch plays a pivotal role in its interpretation.

While consumers’ prolific smartphone usage provides a fruitful advertising avenue, the small screen and limited ad visibility present a challenge to marketers (Bart, Stephen, and Sarvary 2014). One way to circumvent this shortcoming and exploit the handheld nature of smartphones is to utilize haptic feedback technology, which takes advantage of the sense of touch by applying vibrations to the user (Brewster, Chohan, and Brown 2007). In contrast to visual and auditory cues, tactile exchanges require direct contact with the stimulus (Peck 2010). Touch is thus considered the most “proximal” sense (Montagu and Matson 1979) and has an idiosyncratic capacity to evoke a sense of psychological closeness (Trope and Liberman 2010). Research in computer science suggests that “mediated social touch” is possible, where haptic feedback from devices can symbolize the touch of another person (Gallace and Spence 2010; Haans et al. 2006).

Drawing from this interdisciplinary literature, we propose that haptic sensations experienced in a mobile phone advertisement can be perceived as a form of touch from the sender (i.e., the brand). Further, because haptic sensations are so uniquely associated with immediate proximity and contact, haptic feedback in advertising may have the ability to make these consumer-brand exchanges feel more engaging and personal, ultimately augmenting mobile advertising effectiveness. However, any positive effect of haptics may likely depend on the brand’s characteristics, since the source of haptic sensations plays an important role in their interpretation. Notably, brands can differ in how familiar they are to consumers (Kent and Allen 1994) and in personality dimensions (Aaker 1997). Researchers have found differences in perceived brand warmth to be particularly robust (Kervyn, Fiske, and Malone 2012). We expect that haptic feedback delivered from warm, familiar brands will exert a positive effect on downstream consumer responses, whereas the same feedback delivered from unfamiliar or cold brands will not. We conducted a series of experiments to explore these predictions. All haptic effects were professionally integrated by a developer of haptic feedback technology.

Study 1 examined the effect of haptic advertising on a consequential downstream variable: product choice. Participants (N=85) viewed one of two 30-second advertisements on mobile phones according to a 2 level (Haptics: absent versus present) between-subjects experimental design. The advertisement was for the chocolate brand Cadbury, which pre-test results revealed to be high in both familiarity and warmth. Afterwards, participants were offered a snack as a gift (either a Cadbury chocolate bar or an equivalently-sized cereal bar). Binary logistic regression results revealed a main effect of haptics on choice ($\chi^2=3.80$, $p=.05$). Participants experiencing the haptics-present advertisement were more likely to choose the chocolate than those who watched the haptics-absent version (59% versus 80%, respectively).

The purpose of our second two studies was to define the necessary contextual circumstances under which haptic advertising would positively influence downstream consumer responses. Study 2 (N=110) was a 2 level (Haptics: absent versus present) between-subjects design. Participants watched three advertisements (all either haptified or non-haptified) for brands that varied in brand familiarity and warmth. The advertisements were for: 1) Royal Caribbean, a cruise brand high in both familiarity and perceived warmth; 2) Peugeot, a car brand low in familiarity and neutral brand warmth; and 3) Carver’s, a beer brand with low familiarity and neutral brand warmth. To increase the external validity of this study, participants watched a short animated film and the advertisements were inserted at a natural stopping point mid-reel. Afterwards, participants were asked to evaluate the brands using three bipolar items (Dislike/Like, Negative/Positive, Bad/Good) and two Likert scale items (“This product is a good fit with my preferences” and “If I were looking to buy a [product category], I would consider buying this one,” $\alpha_{\text{RoyalCaribbean}}=.94$, $\alpha_{\text{Peugeot}}=.86$, $\alpha_{\text{Carver's}}=.90$). A repeated-measures analysis of variance revealed no significant main effect of haptics on brand attitudes ($F(1,108)=.01$, $p>.90$). While the interactive brand*haptics term did not reach significance ($F(2,216)=1.16$, $p=.28$), we examined the conditional effect of haptics on brand attitude for each brand individually based on our a priori predictions (Aiken and West 1991). ANOVA results revealed a significant main effect of haptics on brand attitudes for Royal Caribbean: attitudes were better when the advertisement was haptified ($M=5.67$) than when it was not ($M=5.35$). $F(1,108)=4.38$, $p<.04$). However, there were no significant main effects of haptics on brand attitudes for either Peugeot or Carver’s (both $p>.25$).

Study 3 aimed to disentangle these results. We held brand familiarity constant, varied product category as a within-subjects variable, and manipulated brand warmth and haptics between-subjects. Thus, Study 3 (N=174) was a 2(Haptics: absent versus present) x 2(Brand Warmth: low versus high) x 2(Product Category: Insurance versus Retail) mixed model design. The procedure was the same as in Study 2. All participants viewed two advertisements: one for a retailer and one for an insurance provider. In the high brand warmth condition, participants viewed advertisements for Target and Geico, and in the low brand warmth conditions, participants viewed advertisements for Walmart and Allstate. Afterwards, participants indicated their brand attitudes and those in the haptics-present conditions described the haptic effects felt. A repeated-measures ANOVA revealed no significant main effect of haptics on brand attitude, but a significant interactive effect of haptics and brand warmth on brand attitude ($F(1,170)=9.14$, $p<.02$). Planned contrasts revealed that as expected, haptics had a positive effect on attitudes toward the brands high in warmth ($F(1,170)=3.83$, $p<.06$) but not the brands low in warmth. Notably, this pattern of results did not differ across product categories ($F(1,170)=.06$, $p>.80$). In the haptics-present condition, an independent coder coded participants’ description of how the haptics felt. We found a significant effect of brand warmth on this affective evaluation of the haptic effects ($F(1,72)=8.80$, $p<.01$). Those who saw advertisements with the brands high in warmth liked the way the haptics felt more than those exposed to brands low in warmth.

This is the first academic research to explore the effects of haptic advertising on consumer responses. We investigate an intersection
between haptic feedback and source characteristics allowing us to differentiate between the nature of the haptic sensation and its evaluative implications.

REFERENCES
The Mystery Around Product Packaging: The Effect of Fantasy Labels on Product Evaluation and Actual Purchases
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We investigate when, how, and why fantasy labels affect product evaluations and purchasing behavior. Across three studies, we find a positive effect of fantasy labels but only in the presence of product quality signals. Moreover, this positive effect is sequentially driven by the evocation of the imaginary and positive affect.

Companies spend billions annually for packaging and labeling. While the use of fantasy themes is increasing in many product categories, it is unclear whether fantasy labels help or hurt consumer perceptions. This research aims to solve this mystery. We define fantasy labels as those that engage imagination by including words/images of fantastic animals, an unreal world, or other fantasy related legends or fairytales. Two streams of research make opposing predictions for the effect of fantasy labels on consumer responses. On the one hand, literature on meta-cognitive processing suggests that unusual visuals are harder to process, which is a hedonically negative experience (Reber, Schwarz, and Winkielman 2004; Graf and Landwehr 2015). Hence, fantasy labels would decrease purchasing behavior. On the other hand, the literature on mental simulation suggests that fantasy labels increase product evaluation and purchase intentions by activating positive affect (Escalas 2004; Zhao, Hoeftler, and Zauberaman 2011) because fantasy themes stimulate imagination and the joy of constructing an alternative world (Belk and Costa 1998; Martin 2004). Moreover, the principle of hedonic dominance suggests an important boundary condition on when affect per se can influence product evaluations. Specifically, it predicts that functional requirements have to be met to make people rely on their affective evaluations (Chitturi, Raghunathan, and Mahajan 2007). Hence, even if fantasy labels increase positive affect, consumers are likely to rely on quality signals first, before they rely on their affective responses (Page and Herr 2002). Therefore, if the quality cut-offs are not met, the decreased fluency of fantasy labels may further decrease product evaluations (Wänke, Bohner, and Jurkowitzsch 1997). However, once the cut-offs for functional benefits are met, purchase intentions are likely to be enhanced by fantasy themes (Chitturi et al. 2007).

With respect to the underlying process, we expect that consumers enjoy constructing mental imagery (Zhao, Hoeftler, and Dahl 2009) because this process enables them to transport themselves from reality to an imaginary world (Green and Brock 2000; Van Laer et al. 2014). This escape from reality is affectively enjoyed (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Kozinets et al. 2004), which should in turn lead to an increase in product evaluations (Herr et al. 2012) and purchase intentions (Fuchs, Schreier, and van Osselaer 2015).

Across three studies (an online experiment, a field experiment, and a study using retail sales data), we find a positive effect of fantasy labels, but only when the product quality is high; otherwise this effect backfires or makes no difference. Moreover, this positive effect is sequentially driven by (1) the evocation of the imaginary and (2) positive affect.

In study 1, 241 adults (recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk) participated in a 2 (label: fantasy vs. non-fantasy) x 3 (quality signal: none vs. low vs. high) between-subjects online experiment using wine labels as stimuli. Fantasy (non-fantasy) was manipulated by showing a picture of a unicorn (horse) and Mystery (Mastery) Estate as a brand name. Quality signal was manipulated by using the rating system from a specialist wine magazine and showing either no rating as no indication of quality or 71/100 (94/100) points as low (high) quality. In addition to purchase intentions, and evocation of the imaginary (adapted from Martin 2004), affect was measured on a seven-point scale (“Looking at this wine label makes me happy.”, adapted from Molginer, Aaker, and Kamvar 2012). As expected, participants were more willing to buy Mystery (vs. Mastery) Estate, but only in the presence of high quality. Focused on high-quality conditions, a serial mediation analysis (PROCESS model 6; Hayes 2013) revealed that evocation of the imaginary and positive affect (in that order) mediated the effect of fantasy on purchase intentions.

In Study 2, 40 regular consumers participated in a within-subjects field experiment setting in a liquor store. Participants tasted the same wine from bottles with the same high-quality cues, but with different labels (Mystery vs. Mastery Estate) to manipulate Fantasy (same manipulation as in Study 1). A gold medal sticker commonly used in the target market provided the high-quality signal. Mastery and Mystery Estate were tasted in a counterbalanced order between participants to control for any effects of order. After participants saw the two bottles of wine and started the tasting, they indicated, on seven-point scales, the taste of the wine and their purchase intentions in the same way as in Study 1. Results revealed higher taste perceptions and purchase intentions for Mystery (vs. Mastery) Estate — even though participants tasted exactly the same wine.

In Study 3, we examined real purchasing data (for 7 fantasy and 7 non-fantasy labels) collected from two liquor stores and employed price as a quality signal. The dependent variable, quantity sold, was measured in number of 750 ml bottles sold per week per store. The independent variables were fantasy (non-fantasy vs. fantasy labels) and actual price (in NZ-$; z-transformed). We also included two control variables: Christmas period and flyer-based product price promotion. The general structure of the data is a three-level nested structure where (up to) 105 weekly observations are nested within wine bottles which are nested within stores. The results of a Linear Mixed Model show that sales of non-fantasy labels dropped quickly with increasing prices and reached a constant but low level of sales once they passed the average price. In contrast, fantasy labels started off at a considerably lower level of sales, showed a slight decrease until the average price was reached, and started to increase slightly for prices above the average. This suggests that fantasy labels backfire when used for cheap wines because they are harder to process; in contrast, they become attractive when used for expensive wines because the price serves as a quality signal and makes consumers rely on their affective enjoyment of mental imaginary.

Taken together, the findings suggest that fantasy labels should be used with care and only in combination with high-quality signals. This research contributes to research on unusual designs (Labroo, Dhar, and Schwarz 2008; Landwehr, Wentzel, and Herrmann 2013; Nenkov and Scott 2014) by uncovering conditions when those designs increase, decrease, or make no difference for consumers’ purchasing behavior.
REFERENCES
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This paper provides evidence that the horizon height in a panoramic photograph affects construal level. Additionally, this paper shows that - when both visual (i.e., horizon) and verbal advertising elements induce the same (vs. a different) type of construal - ad effectiveness increases.

An aesthetic feature commonly used in contemporary advertising to improve ad effectiveness is the use of panoramic pictures (Hartmann, Apaolaza and Alija, 2013). We propose that the effectiveness of panoramic ads is especially enhanced when the visual and verbal ad elements require a similar processing style (Lee, Keller, and Sterntahl, 2010).

The height of the horizon depicted in panoramic pictures, as a visual ad element, likely affects the way consumers process the ad. Drawing on Construal Level Theory (Liberman, Trope and Waksal, 2007), we hypothesize that depending on the height of the horizon, panoramic pictures can induce either a concrete processing style or an abstract processing style. We argue that a panoramic picture with a low horizon, that is a horizon positioned in the lower third of the picture frame, induces a feeling of looking up. As looking up has been shown before to serve as a distance cue and, as such, to induce abstract processing (Van Kerckhove, Geuens and Vermeir, 2015), we expect that low horizons lead to abstract processing. In contrast, panoramic pictures with a high horizon, that is a horizon positioned in the upper third of the frame, are expected to induce a more concrete type of processing as this induces a feeling of looking down.

Not only visual elements such as the horizon height, but also verbal messages have the potential to evoke a certain construal level. In this respect, especially messages referring to benefits in the near present or distant future have been shown to be powerful in evoking construal level and are often used to manipulate a concrete or abstract processing style (e.g., Chang, Zhang and Xie, 2015).

Based on previous fit literature (Higgins, 2005) and the Fit from Construal Theory (Lee, Keller and Sterntahl, 2010), we propose that not only a fit between the viewers’ mindset and an ad element matters (e.g., Lee, Keller and Sterntahl, 2010), but also a fit from constrainst between different ad elements, such as the visual and the verbal elements. Similar to when there is a fit between the viewers’ mindset and an ad element (e.g., Lee, Keller, and Sterntahl, 2010), we expect that ad effectiveness increases when visual and verbal ad elements require the same processing style. Therefore, we propose that different ad elements that induce the same processing style, elicit feelings of perceived fit resulting in increased ad effectiveness, just as is the case when an ad element fits the viewers’ mindset.

Study 1 investigates whether people imagine looking up versus down when perceiving a panoramic picture with a low versus high horizon. We recruited 100 participants. Two one-sample t-tests revealed that a panoramic picture with a low horizon leads people imagine themselves looking up (X neutral = 4, t(50) = 4.06, p < .001), whereas a panoramic picture with a high horizon induces a feeling of looking down (X neutral = 4, t(48) = -2.99, p = .004).

Study 2 investigates whether people perceiving a picture with a low horizon adopt a more abstract style of processing than do people viewing a picture with a high horizon. A sample of 105 respondents were exposed to either a panoramic picture with a low or high horizon. To measure construal level, we used two Rosch tests (1975). The results of an ANOVA show that panoramic ads with a low horizon induce more inclusive categorization than do panoramic ads with a high horizon ($F(1,103)$ = 9.31, $p < .003$). As such, panoramic pictures with a low horizon induce more abstract or less concrete construal levels compared with panoramic pictures depicting a high horizon.

In study 3, 194 participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions. Two conditions feature construal level fit in their ad elements (i.e., horizon height and advertising message induce the same level of construals), and two conditions feature a construal misfit (i.e., horizon height and advertising message induce different levels of construal). After ad exposure, we measured attitude towards the ad (Aad) and purchase intentions (Pi) as dependent variables and perceived fit as potential mediator.

First, an ANOVA confirms that combining visual and verbal ad elements that evoke the same type of construal, rather than one combing visual and verbal ad elements that prompt different types of construal, enhances consumers’ perceptions of fit of the ad. Respondents scored the advertisements characterized by construal fit higher on perceived fit compared with the advertisements characterized by construal misfit ($F(1,190)$ = 6.40, $p = .012$).

Second, a MANOVA confirms that advertisements with elements evoking similar construal levels prompt more positive Aad ($F(1,190)$ = 4.83, $p = .029$) and Pi ($F(1,190)$ = 3.31, $p = .070$) than those that prompt different levels.

Third, according to the mediation analysis, perceived fit mediates the effect of construal fit versus misfit on all three dependent variables (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). The analysis, with 10,000 bootstraps reveals a significant mediation effect for Aad ($ab = .25, 95\%LLCI = .06, 95\%ULCI = .47$) (Hayes, 2013). We find that the effect of construal fit versus misfit on perceived fit is significant ($r(190) = .52, p = .01$), as is the effect of perceived fit on Aad ($r(189) = .825, p < .001$). The direct effect of construal fit versus misfit on Aad is not significant ($r = .17, 95\%LLCI = -.16, 95\%ULCI = .50$). Similar patterns hold for purchase intentions ($ab = .22, 95\%LLCI = .06, 95\%ULCI = .43$) as the dependent variable.

This study provides several contributions. No prior CLT research has focused on (1) whether panoramic pictures affect construal levels and on (2) how a fit between the type of construal evoked by visual and verbal advertising elements increases advertising effectiveness. This article underscores the need for marketers to design advertising in which the visual and verbal elements fit their evoked construal levels.

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Communicating a Promise of Change: Visual Steps Enhance Process Imagery
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Advertisements promising positive change (change-ads) may employ before-after visuals (of the starting and ending points) or progression visuals (which include, in addition to starting and ending points, the intermediate steps). Although neglected in the marketplace, we show that progression ads are more persuasive than before-after ads in conveying change.

Humans often desire change: we want to be thinner, look younger, have more hair. Marketers respond to such desires by offering products promising to deliver the corresponding changes: weight-loss programs, wrinkle removers, hair growth solutions. The visuals in the advertisements (ads) for these products typically focus on the desired final outcome by featuring a before and an after visual (e.g., a person at the beginning and at the end of a weight loss program; before-after ads). Very few change-ads include visuals of the intermediate steps between the before and the highly desirable after (e.g., a person gradually slimming down throughout the weight loss program; progression ads). Although neglected in the marketplace and by future marketers, across seven studies we show that progression ads are superior to before-after ads across multiple consumer domains. We theorize that, to be effective, ads promising transformation should facilitate mental imagery of the trajectory of the change, i.e., the consumer should be able to imagine herself going through the transformation from “before” to “after.” Progression ads (but not before-after ads) evoke this kind of spontaneous process imagery -- thoughts and images about the means and ways leading to a change. In turn, spontaneous process imagery increases the credibility of the ad and leads to more favorable attitudes toward the product (serial mediation).

Through a content analysis of 250 ads of the top five weight-loss programs in the US (source: Consumer Affairs) we show that before-after ads are more common than progression ads: 36% were “before-after” whereas only 0.8% were “progression.” Another pilot study asked participants (N=122) to draw the ad for a weight loss program. While 22.95% of participants drew before-after ads, only 0.8% were “progression.” Another analysis of the content of the ads showed that progression ads are superior to before-after ads across multiple consumer domains (e.g., a person gradually slimming down throughout the weight loss program; progression ads). Although neglected in the marketplace and by future marketers, across seven studies we show that progression ads are superior to before-after ads across multiple consumer domains. We theorize that, to be effective, ads promising transformation should facilitate mental imagery of the trajectory of the change, i.e., the consumer should be able to imagine herself going through the transformation from “before” to “after.” Progression ads (but not before-after ads) evoke this kind of spontaneous process imagery -- thoughts and images about the means and ways leading to a change. In turn, spontaneous process imagery increases the credibility of the ad and leads to more favorable attitudes toward the product (serial mediation).

In both studies and using different stimuli (stylized figures and actual photographs), the progression ad was more credible than the before-after ad. One pretest ensured that the stimuli used did not differ on visual appearance, informativeness, complexity, familiarity, and novelty (all p's > .1).

In study 2 (N=134), we test the downstream consequences of credibility on attitudes toward the product. Participants rated credibility and reported their attitudes toward one of two versions of an ad for a fictitious hair growth product. The before-after ad featured a drawing of a person before using a hair growth treatment and a drawing of the same person at the end of the treatment. The progression ad contained an identical drawing with the addition of drawings of four intermediate outcomes. As predicted, the progression ad was associated with higher credibility ($M_{before-after} = 2.91$, $M_{progression} = 3.79$; $F(1, 132) = 5.99, p < .01$) and more positive attitudes ($M_{before-after} = 3.71$, $M_{progression} = 4.73$; $F(1, 132) = 7.35, p < .05$) than the before-after ad. In a mediation model, credibility fully accounted for the effect of ad type on attitudes (95% CI: 1.65, 1.14).

Studies 3a (N=143) and 3b (N=80) use open-ended and close-ended responses to show that progression ads evoke greater process imagery than before-after ads, even though both ads only have visuals of outcomes. In study 3a we coded the content of the spontaneous thoughts and images that either a before-after or a progression ad evoked in participants. Indeed, the progression ad generated more spontaneous process imagery than the before-after ad ($z=-5.11, p < .01$). The two ads did not differ on outcome imagery ($p > .5$) or amount of imagery (i.e., response length, $p > .5$). In study 3b participants rated the extent to which a before-after ad or a progression ad evoked process and outcome imagery (through six randomly presented statements, three reflecting process imagery ($α=.89$) and three reflecting outcome imagery ($α=.70$) adapted from Taylor et al. 1998; Escalas and Luce 2004; Zhao et al. 2007; 2011. Again, the progression ad led to higher process imagery than the before-after ad ($M_{before-after} = 4.11$, $M_{progression} = 6.92$; $F(1, 78) = 41.53, p < .01$) and to the same outcome imagery ($p > .5$).

Study 4 (N=142) tests the links between the constructs investigated in the previous studies. Results show how the progression ad leads to greater process imagery than the before-after ad, which then results in higher credibility and consequently more positive attitudes toward the product (full serial mediation, 95% CI: 1.18 and .89).

Study 5 tests a boundary condition and shows that ambiguity (operationalized through size of change) moderates the effect of ad type on attitudes. We expected to replicate study 4 in the large change condition (high ambiguity because the transformation is large), with a full serial mediation whereby the progression ad leads to greater process imagery, credibility, and ultimately better attitudes than the before-after ad. However, when the change is small (low ambiguity because the transformation is trivial), the progression ad should no longer be more persuasive than the before-after ad. Indeed, within the large change condition, there was a full serial mediation (95% CI: .45 and 1.86). However, and as predicted, within the small change condition, the serial mediation was not significant (95% CI: -1.00 and .20). Importantly, the full mediations in studies 2, 4, and 5 via process imagery indicated that the process mechanism driving the observed effect is not the amount of information contained in the ad (or these mediations would be partial).

Theoretically, and differently from prior research on mental simulation, we bring attention to an understudied yet important typology of mental imagery: spontaneous mental simulation of process (process imagery), and highlight its critical role in the persuasiveness of advertised change. Second, we add to the literature on process versus outcome focus by showing how process imagery can be spontaneously generated through outcome visuals. Substantively, we show that before-after ads, currently prevalent in the market place, may be an ineffective way to credibly promise positive change.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Extant research shows that experiences bring more happiness than possessions. However, we propose that not all consumers value experiences equally. Belief in malleability (vs. fixedness) of personality drives preference for experiences. Eight studies demonstrate that incremental theorists value experiences more than entity theorists due to experiential purchase’s contribution to self-growth.

The pursuit of happiness in our consumerist society is all about getting the biggest hedonic bang for the (limited) buck. Extant research on happiness over the last decade shows that the first principle of using money to increase happiness is to spend it on experiences instead of possessions (Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). Experiences (e.g., going to the movies, eating out) bring more happiness than possessions (e.g., gadgets, bags, clothes).

Thus far, research seems to suggest that preference for experiences is almost universal – with the exception of a few purchaser characteristics (low income, and those high in materialism, Zhang et al. 2014) and a solitary purchase characteristic (valence of purchase, Nicolao, Irwin, and Goodman 2009) predicting otherwise.

However, we propose that not all consumers will derive similar happiness from experiential consumption. Specifically, people’s implicit beliefs about malleability (vs. fixedness) of personality will drive differential preference for experiential purchases. Incremental theorists, who believe in malleability of self and others, actively seek opportunities for self-growth and advancement (Murphy and Dweck 2016). Hence, they are more likely to extract greater value from experiential consumption, as they believe that experiences add to their personality and help them grow as individuals. In contrast, entity theorists who believe in fixedness of the personal characteristics are less likely to value experiences as a tool for self-development, thus not preferring them to possessions.

Hence, incremental theorists will be more positively disposed towards experiences (over material goods), compared to entity theorists. Further, incremental theorists’ preference for experiences will be driven by their belief that experiences contribute to self-growth and learning.

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

Eight studies provide converging evidence that incremental theorists value experiences over material possessions more than entity theorists. We replicate the effect across multiple contexts, both for anticipatory consumption choices and preferences and retrospective post-consumption evaluation (Studies 1-2, 3a-3c). Study 4 identifies experiences’ ability to contribute to self-growth as the underlying mechanism. In a stricter test of the hypothesis, Studies 5 and 6 demonstrate that incremental theorists’ preference for experiences holds even when a product (experience) is framed as an experience (vs. a material possession).

Study 1 measured the general tendency to make experiential purchases (over material goods) using the Experiential Buying Tendency Scale (Howell et al. 2012) and measuring implicit beliefs using the 3-item scale (Levy et al. 1998). Regression analysis showed that participants’ implicit theory scores were linked to their general preference for experiences ($B=.36$, $t(48)=4.11$, $p<.001$) such that incremental theorists (+1SD) demonstrated a higher propensity to make experiential purchases ($M_{inc}=4.74$) compared to entity theorists (-1SD) ($M_{ent}=3.55$).

Study 2 asked participants to recall a recent purchase made with the intent of increasing happiness (Guevarra and Howell 2015). Participants then rated their purchase on a scale from $1=material purchase$ to $7=experiential purchase$. We measured implicit beliefs using the 8-item scale (Levy et al. 1998). Regressing participants’ rating of the purchase on their implicit orientation revealed a significant effect ($B=.34$, $t(155)=2.13$, $p<.05$). Participants with an incremental orientation (+1SD) were more likely to recall an experiential purchase ($M_{inc}=4.27$), while those with an entity orientation (-1SD) were more likely to come up with a material object ($M_{ent}=3.55$).

Studies 3a-3c demonstrated that implicit orientation influences anticipatory choice between experiential and material options. Under a relevant cover story, participants in Study 3a were asked to pick top four most appealing options from a list of eight (four experiential, four material). Implicit beliefs were measured as in Study 2. Regression analysis showed that incremental theorists (+1SD) chose a greater number of experiential options ($M_{inc}=2.93$) vs. entity theorists (-1SD, $M_{ent}=2.15$, $p<.05$). Study 3b replicated the effect by manipulating implicit beliefs (Chiu et al. 1997). Study 3c provided behavioral evidence of choice using gift vouchers for a stationery store (material) and a movie theatre (experiential).

Study 4 provided evidence for the underlying mechanism. Participants were randomly assigned to recall a recent purchase, either material or experiential. They then evaluated the subjective economic value of the purchase (Guevarra and Howell 2015). Participants’ beliefs about the extent to which the purchase helped them grow as an individual, their implicit beliefs and materialism, were also measured.

Regression type of purchase, implicit beliefs, and their interaction on subjective economic value (SEV) showed a significant interaction ($B=.75$, $F(1,135)=9.46$, $p<.01$). Incremental theorists assigned higher SEV to experiential purchases than entity theorists. ($M_{inc}=8.00$ vs. $M_{ent}=6.67$, $p<.05$). Further, incremental theorists derived higher value from experiential purchases vis-à-vis material ($M_{exp}=8.00$ vs. $M_{mat}=7.15$, $p<.05$). Moderated mediation using Hayes’ (2012) Model 7 was significant with self-growth as the underlying mechanism (95%CI=[-.07, .53]) only for incremental theorists.

Study 5 provided a stricter test of the hypothesis by framing a material good (HDTV) in either material or experiential terms (Jiang and Sood 2014). Implicit beliefs were manipulated as in Study 3b. There was a significant interaction between type of framing and implicit beliefs ($B=2.03$, $F(1,121)=20.32$, $p<.001$) such that participants in the incremental condition expressed greater purchase intent for the HDTV when it was framed as an experiential purchase ($M_{inc,exp}=5.43$) compared to when it was framed as a material purchase ($M_{inc,mat}=4.74$, $p<.05$). Finally, Study 6 replicated the above pattern of results by framing an experience (trip to a retail store) in either experiential or material terms.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The experience-over-goods effect is thought to be near universal with few moderators investigated till date. Our research reveals that a key individual difference – i.e., implicit beliefs – determines consumers’ preference for experiences. We show that the value of
experiences (to incremental theorists) comes from the imbued opportunity to learn which contributes to self-growth. This research contributes to experiential vs. material consumption literature by investigating a meaningful individual difference that influences the happiness people derive from experiential consumption. We also contribute to implicit theory literature by examining the underlying reason that drives incremental theorists’ preference for experiences. Further, we add to growing consumer research that establishes implicit theory as a critical variable with noteworthy impact on preferences. Lastly, this work has interesting implications for marketers to design compelling communication by leveraging either the material or experiential attributes to appeal to a specific target audience.

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How Does Self-Concept Clarity Influence Happiness in Experiential Settings?  
The Role of Strangers versus Friends

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In this research, we demonstrate that despite various positive outcomes of having clearly and confidently defined and internally consistent self-beliefs (i.e., self-concept clarity, or SCC), in experiences shared with strangers such as communal tables in cafés, low SCC individuals are happier than high SCC individuals.

Knowing the self is thought to provide numerous advantages in life. However, in this research, we demonstrate that despite various positive outcomes of having clearly and confidently defined and internally consistent self-beliefs (i.e., self-concept clarity, or SCC), in experiences shared with strangers such as communal tables in cafés, low SCC individuals are happier than high SCC individuals. The literature is silent in investigating social contexts in which total strangers share the same experience at the same time in the same physical space. Such experiences are inescapable in daily life during commutes, at school, at work or even in the communal tables of restaurants, cafés or bars. When individuals are in experiential settings that involve strangers (i.e., people they know little or nothing about), they form a variety of impressions by making social inferences (Ickes 2003) and similarity-liking associations. Research has shown that high-SCC individuals demonstrate a greater liking–similarity effect than low-SCC individuals (Collislon and Howell, 2014). Therefore, we propose that this differential impact of SCC on anticipated and experienced happiness is mediated by perceptions of interpersonal distance (i.e., perceptions of familiarity, similarity, and closeness) and that these perceptions differ between high- and low-SCC individuals. Specifically, we propose that high-SCC (vs. low-SCC) individuals perceive greater interpersonal distance with people they do not know (i.e., strangers) and thus anticipate and experience less happiness from experiences with strangers.

We tested these hypotheses across four studies, using both structural and metacognitive SCC measures, experimentally induced SCC conditions, anticipated happiness as well as experienced happiness in real-life experiences.

In Study 1, we manipulated SCC similar to Emery, Walsh, and Sloter (2014) and had a 3 (SCC: high, low, control) x 3 (experiences: shared with a friend, shared with a stranger, solitary) between-subjects design. 315 adults (229 males and 86 females) participating via mTurk wrote about two traits of themselves that contradicted their self-concept clarity, or SCC, while the control condition required them to write about their day. Then, participants were randomly assigned to one of the three photographs depicting a coffee-drinking experience with either friends or strangers or alone at the same table in the same atmosphere. They were asked to imagine themselves in a similar experience and to respond to the questions measuring anticipated happiness (“How happy would this experience make you feel?”), demographics (age, gender, income) and manipulation checks (mark the nature of the relationship of the person depicted in the photograph on a range from 1 = total strangers to 10 = close friends and SCC scale of Campbell et al. 1996). With a significant interaction of experience type and SCC condition on anticipated happiness (F(4,303) = 2.99; p = 0.019), results showed that people with high SCC (M<sub>highSCC</sub> = 7.67; SD = 0.42) anticipated more happiness than people with low SCC (M<sub>lowSCC</sub> = 6.36; SD = 0.32; p = 0.015) in the experience with friends condition. In the experience with strangers condition, people with low SCC (M<sub>lowSCC</sub> = 5.17; SD = 0.33) reported more happiness than people with high SCC (M<sub>highSCC</sub> = 4.23; SD = 0.33; p = 0.043).

In Study 2, we collected real-time happiness data from 164 individuals (68 males, 94 females, 2 undisclosed) in a café with a communal table. After coding the type of the customer as sitting with friends or with strangers (2 experience conditions), the participants were requested to respond to questions regarding their happiness in the immediate experience (e.g. “How happy is this experience making you feel?” 1 = not happy and 9 = very happy), and to the SCC scale. With a significant two-way interaction between SCC and experience (b = 0.99; p < 0.001, 95% CI [0.5762, 1.4100]) on happiness, in experiences with strangers, SCC level had a significant negative influence on happiness (b = -2.17; p = 0.03; 95% CI: [-0.6878, -0.0329]) but in experiences with friends, SCC level had a significant positive influence on happiness (b = 4.84; p = 0.00; 95% CI: [0.3747, 0.8908]).

In Study 3, we measured SCC as the inverse value of time spent responding to the Twenty-Statement Task adapted from Cabooter et al. (2016). Then, participants were shown one of two photographs depicting a coffee-drinking experience with either friends or strangers and responded to questions measuring their perceptions of the interpersonal distance among the people in the experience (e.g. “How close do you think these people are?” 1 = very distant to 7 = very close) (Stephan, Liberman, and Trope 2011) and their anticipated happiness from the experience as in Study 1. With a significant interaction of SCC and experience type on both perceived interpersonal distance (b = -0.8438; p = 0.00; 95% CI [-1.3362, -0.3514]) and on anticipated happiness (b = -1.02; p = 0.02; 95% CI: [-1.8949, -0.1522]), PROCESS Model 8 test of moderated mediation results show that while experience type has a moderating role, the perceived social distance acts as a mediator of the interactive effect. The moderated mediation index was significant (-0.8409) based on 5000 resamples, and the confidence intervals did not contain zero (-1.4940, -0.3356) at 95% significance level. We also ran a quick study measuring self-esteem and self-efficacy and anticipated happiness from experiences with friends and strangers, in which results ruled out the significance of the self constructs on happiness.

Our research has implications for the service sector. For example, if an individual consistently experiences episodes with strangers, such as regularly commuting or dining with unknown people, low SCC levels would make it easier to adjust to these circumstances and increase happiness levels. A key direction for future research would be to replicate the effects in online, virtual communal experiences such as webcast experiences or virtual meetings among known and unknown participants.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

People exhibit product subcategory loyalty, selecting options from their favorite subcategory while ignoring non-favorite subcategories. Three studies explore strategies for increasing appreciation through reorienting the experiential perspective. Training alters consumers’ experiential perceptive by providing a novel perspective that is goal-relevant, resulting in increased appreciation and consumption of non-favorite subcategories.

People exhibit product subcategory loyalty, selecting options from their favorite subcategory, while ignoring options from non-favorite subcategories. For example, a Merlot lover selects Merlot over Shiraz or Malbec. Similar behavior occurs in entertainment, art, and music. This subcategory loyalty is attributed to a desire to maximize utility (Savage 1954), decrease risk (Bettman 1973), simplify decision-making (Iyengar and Lepper 2000), and habit (Murray and Häubl 2007).

Significant marketing efforts expand the number of subcategories people deem acceptable because people tend to buy more (Brynjolfsson, Hu, and Smith 2003) and increase per capita consumption (Chandon and Wansink 2002; Sun 2005). However, this strategy is only successful if consumers develop a true appreciation for non-favorite subcategories. Thus, it is important to identify strategies for encouraging the appreciation of non-favorite subcategories.

Three experiments show that consumers can be trained to appreciate products in non-favorite subcategories when training (1) provides a novel perspective, (2) is relevant to what the person values, and (3) can help a person derive additional benefits from the experience.

Hypothesis 1: Training materials that suggests a novel perspective for product appreciation, as opposed to a redundant perspective, should be more effective at increasing the personal appreciation for products from non-favorite product categories provided the

1. Training is conducted using materials from non-favorite product categories.
2. Novel perspective is deemed relevant given one's goals.

Experiment 1 shows that when an expert trains a person how to better appreciate products in non-favorite subcategories, anticipated appreciation and consumption from those subcategories increases. Experiment 2 shows that the training must be relevant and appropriate for people to derive benefits from consuming non-favorite experiences. Experiment 3 shows that the reason for consuming products from non-favorite subcategories determines the training that is most effective.

EXPERIMENTS 1A–B

Experiments 1A–B tested whether the perceived novelty of the perspective for appreciating products from a non-favorite subcategory could influence appreciation. Appreciation included intent to try the product (1A) and trial of the product (1B). Art was chosen as the domain. People were told the instructional materials were developed by an art professor (novel perspective) or an art marketer (redundant perspective).

Participants were randomly assigned to a 2 (training subcategory: favorite, non-favorite) by 2 (learning frame: novel perspective-professor, redundant perspective-marketer) between subjects design. Training in the favorite subcategory served as a control group.

Participants ranked five subcategories of art (e.g., cubism, impressionism, realism). Next, participants were trained on four stylistic elements of paintings (e.g., subject matter, meaning, style). The novel (redundant) condition was told the training program was developed by an “art professor” (“a marketing team from an art company”). The favorite (non-favorite) training condition was trained using four paintings from their favorite subcategory (one painting from their four non-favorite subcategories). Thus, participants received the same training, but the frame (e.g., novel, redundant) and opportunity to apply the consumption knowledge (e.g., favorite subcategory, non-favorite subcategories) varied.

In 1A, 244 participants completed the training and were asked their willingness to view a room with art featuring each of the five subcategories. Contingent on their style ranking, willingness to view rooms featuring non-favorite paintings was averaged. An ANOVA revealed a significant interaction between training subcategory and frame (F(1,240)=3.94, p<.05). When people were trained on their non-favorites styles, a novel perspective (M=5.66) resulted in more willingness to view non-favorite paintings than a redundant perspective (M=5.14; F(1,240)=4.81, p<.05).

In 1B, 204 participants instead viewed 15 additional paintings (three paintings from five styles). Time spent on paintings in the four non-favorite styles was summed. An ANOVA revealed a significant interaction between training subcategory and frame (F(1,200)=4.44, p<.05). When trained on non-favorites styles, a novel perspective (M=98.78) resulted in longer viewing of the non-favorite paintings than a redundant perspective (M=78.35; F(1,200)=4.03, p<.05).

EXPERIMENT 2

Experiments 1A–B showed how training from a novel or redundant perspective influences appreciation. Experiment 2 altered the description of the novel perspective so that it would be deemed inappropriate (e.g., intimidating, too sophisticated). If experiential instruction provides an inappropriate perspective, then appreciation of non-favorites should decline.

121 participants participated in a 2 (training subcategory: favorite, non-favorite) by 2 (learning frame: inappropriate novel perspective–highly accomplished historians, redundant perspective–market) design. The procedure was the same except the inappropriate, novel perspective said training came from “a team of art historians”. The time spent viewing non-favorite paintings was recorded.

There was a significant interaction of training subcategory and frame (F(1,117)=4.11, p<.05). When trained using paintings from non-favorites styles, an inappropriate, novel frame (M=47.50) resulted in less time viewing than a redundant frame (M=79.96; F(1,117)=8.67, p<.01).

EXPERIMENT 3

Training must align with a person’s needs if appreciation for non-favorite product categories to grow. A new condition asked par-
Participants to derive consumption benefits in order to perform well on a knowledge test (learn). Altering the motivation would make instruction by a highly accomplished source, whose greater experience makes them the more knowledgeable, most effective. Thus, a highly accomplished source would no longer be considered an inappropriate source for those with a learning goal. To create a cleaner manipulation, the highly accomplished source was changed from a team of historians to an accomplished art professor. Thus, in both conditions the source was an art professor.

101 participants participated in a 2(learning frame: appreciation perspective–art professor, learning perspective–extreme art professor) by 2(motivation: appreciation, learning) design. All training was on non-favorite subcategories. In the appreciation (learning) condition, participants were told to enjoy the paintings (perform well on an art test). In the extreme condition, participants also read the professor’s credentials.

There was a significant interaction of motivation and frame ($F(1,97)=7.69, p<.01$). When motivated to appreciate, an appreciation frame ($M=84.58$) resulted in marginally longer viewing times of the non-favorite paintings than a learning frame ($M=60.64$; $F(1,97)=3.07, p=.08$). When motivated to learn, a learning frame ($M=92.07$) resulted in longer viewing times than an appreciation frame ($M=63.65$; $F(1,97)=4.76, p<.05$).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Consumers can be taught to appreciate products in non-favorite subcategories. Importantly, the studies show an increased appreciation of products in lesser-liked subcategories when the training was novel, relevant, and goal-consistent.

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Hedonic consumption has been too often stigmatized as mal-adaptive and this prevailing negative view does not convey a complete picture. We investigate whether hedonic consumption fuels prosociality. Results show that after engaging in free hedonic consumption consumers behave more altruistically. We posit that hedonic-induced disinhibition underlies this effect.

Hedonic experiences abound. In spite of their universal appeal, a common intuition is that besides immediate enjoyment, they elicit guilt or regret (Okada 2005). Hence, pursuing pleasure has been considered generally suboptimal (Keinan and Kivetz 2008). We aim to redress this misconception. We contend that under particular conditions experiencing hedonic consumption can be very beneficial and prompt highly desirable outcomes such as prosociality.

Hedonic experiences are sought for their inherent affective and sensory attributes, and the pure enjoyment they provide (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). In their pursuit of pleasure, consumers escape functional goals and derive satisfaction from hedonic consumption per se without further goals (Botti and McGill 2011). Based on this, we propose that when they deliberately engage in hedonic experiences, consumers break free from other endeavors. Because they are highly immersive, hedonics prompt a higher focus on the consumption experience and render consumers more impulsive and less inhibited. On these premise, we argue that freely engaging in hedonic consumption induces behavioral disinhibition.

Recent research examining tipping behavior through economic games suggests that during the holiday season consumers offer considerably higher restaurant tips (Greenberg 2014). Relatedly, theatregoers and tourists tip more for taxi rides than non-theatregoers and local consumers in New York (Borges Ferreira Neto, Nowak, and Ross 2017). Both holidays and theatre performances illustrate hedonic episodes so these findings support our notion of hedonic-induced disinhibition that facilitates prosocial behavior.

In Praise of Pleasure: Hedonic Consumption Fosters Prosocial Behavior
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Hedonic consumption has been too often stigmatized as mal-adaptive and this prevailing negative view does not convey a complete picture. We investigate whether hedonic consumption fuels prosociality. Results show that after engaging in free hedonic consumption consumers behave more altruistically. We posit that hedonic-induced disinhibition underlies this effect.

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Extant research suggests that disinhibition is a direct precursor of prosociality (Rand, Kraft-Todd, and Gruber 2015; Van den Bos et al. 2009). Within moral psychology, the social intuitionist model stipulates that moral judgments, for instance favoring cooperation over defection, ensue as the result of relatively automatic intuitive processes (Haidt 2001). Building on this and on the notion that most people adhere to prosocial values (Van Lange, Schippers, and Balliet 2011) recent studies propose that our innate impulses are geared towards cooperation and that such predispositions are often overshadowed by deliberation (Rand 2016).

Prior research has suggested competing antecedents of prosociality such as positive mood (Isen and Levin 1972) and guilt-induced helping (Strahilevitz and Myers 1998; Zemack-Rugar et al. 2016). However, hedonic episodes do not unequivocally trigger positive affect of guilt, but concurrent positive and negative responses (Ramanathan and Williams 2007). Thus, we extend the existing work by documenting a qualitatively different relationship between hedonic experiences and prosociality. Specifically, we propose that following free hedonic consumption, prosociality ensues as an intuitive response, and that behavioral disinhibition underlies this effect.

Recent research examining tipping behavior through economic lens suggests that during the holiday season consumers offer considerably higher restaurant tips (Greenberg 2014). Relatedly, theatregoers and tourists tip more for taxi rides than non-theatregoers and local consumers in New York (Borges Ferreira Neto, Nowak, and Ross 2017). Both holidays and theatre performances illustrate hedonic episodes so these findings support our notion of hedonic-induced disinhibition that facilitates prosocial behavior.

We examined our hypotheses in three experiments using real chocolate consumption. To exclude the possibility that the proposed effect is due to the intake volume and potential physiological correlates of chocolate consumption (i.e., glucose), besides the free chocolate consumption condition we included a yoked condition across all our studies (Church 1964; Bruyneel et al. 2006). In this condition, each participant was instructed to consume the same amount of chocolates as another participant had done in the free condition. Therefore, the intake was identical across the two conditions. We systematically ruled out mood by measuring it before and right after the eating task.

Study 1 tested the basic prediction that free hedonic consumption fosters behavioral helping. We utilized a yoked between-participants design, where hedonic consumption (free vs. instructed) was the manipulated factor. We measured behavioral prosociality by asking participants to help checking written exams for the Exam Office. A Poisson regression revealed that free hedonic consumption had a positive effect on helping (β = 0.44; χ2(1) = 25.69; p < .001). Participants who experienced free hedonic consumption voluntarily checked 55.3% more exams than those who consumed the same chocolate amount by instruction. Besides mood, we also ruled out perceived post-consumption conflict.

To test whether the hypothesized effect is germane to hedonic consumption, in Study 2 we contrasted a hedonic experience with a non-hedonic one. We employed a 2 (consumption: free vs. instructed) x 2 (food: hedonic vs. non-hedonic) between-subjects design plus a control condition (no consumption) to capture baseline prosociality. After consuming either chocolate truffles (hedonic) or rice crackers (non-hedonic), participants had to decide how much of their experience payment to donate to a charity of their own choice. Those in the control condition proceeded directly to the prosociality measure. A 2 (consumption: free vs. instructed) x 2 (food type: hedonic vs. non-hedonic) ANOVA on charitable donation revealed a main effect of consumption (F(1, 157) = 4.48; p = .03) and a main effect of food type (F(1, 157) = 13.52; p < .001), but no significant interaction between the two (F(1, 157) = 2.15; p = .14). The donation level in the control condition (M = 22.58) was significantly lower than the free hedonic consumption condition (p < .001), but did not differ from either of the non-hedonic conditions. Additionally, we ruled out the potential moderating role of psychological reactance.

So far, we ascribed the differences in prosociality to disinhibition induced by free hedonic consumption. To examine this hypothesis, in study 3 we measured consumers’ chronic predispositions to disinhibit. We utilized the same yoked between-participants design, where we manipulated hedonic consumption (free vs. instructed). Prosociality was measured as in Study 2. Following the donation task, participants completed the full Behavioral Inhibition System (BIS) scale. Results indicated a significant main effect of hedonic consumption on charitable donations (F(1, 95) = 6.62; p = .01). Importantly, this was qualified by an interaction with BIS (b = 28.21; t(95) = 2.74; p = .007). These results support our hypothesis that disinhibition measured as a chronic tendency to “let go” drives the positive effect of hedonics on prosociality. In Study 4 (ongoing), we aim to provide evidence for the proposed mechanism by directly measuring disinhibition.

Considered jointly, the current studies lend support to our central hypothesis that free hedonic consumption fuels prosocial behavior. Freely engaging in a hedonic experience facilitated behavioral helping (Study 1) and charitable donations (Studies 2 and 3). Indi-
viduals more prone to experience disinhibition display more generosity following hedonic consumption (Study 3). Thus, we attribute this positive effect to hedonic-induced disinhibition.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Using the concept of staging we explore how the meaning of the body is stabilized on its journey to the grave. We follow the body through final stages from storage through to preparation, laying-out and burial/cremation. We highlight insights that ‘staging’ might bring to value creation practices in the marketplace.

The banality of everyday death and the materiality of the key object which precipitated it, namely Prior research on death and consumption has focused on the rituals and memorialisation practices (e.g. Szmigin and Canning 2015; Bonsu and Belk 2003; Francis, Kellaher, and Neophytou 2000; Hockey, Komaromy, and Woodthorpe 2010) One striking feature of this research to date, with few exceptions, is that it places the emphasis firmly on the bereaved rather than the body.

In this paper we leverage the concept of staging to help us theorise the intersection of symbolic and material/contextual in processes of meaning stabilization. Rather than using ‘stage’ as solely a theatrical metaphor (Deighton 1992) we use it in a more active sense to explore the series of practices and rituals surrounding the (re)presentation of the body as well as its representation through language. Thus for example we explore both practices of grooming, washing and dressing and the choices surrounding these practices, but also the role of talk, exploring the way the body is referred to by both bereaved consumers and funeral professionals. Staging is also useful as a concept as it foregrounds the contextual dimension of these representations viewing context as a constituent part of the meaning making process (Goffman 1959).

Service marketers have employed a range of dramatic metaphors to help them to conceptualise the service encounter (Goodwin 1996). Such a perspective views individuals as acting out specific roles in accordance with culturally and organisationally controlled role expectations. Bringing in a spatial element the concept of the ‘service encounter’ is also used to explore the context and conditions of service delivery (Harris, Harris, and Baron 2003). This work also uses the concepts of backstage and frontstage to describe the displayed and hidden elements of the consumer service encounter. In addition, atmospheres and visual cues such as signs and artefacts are examined to better understand, and thus control, the servicescape (Bitner 1992).

To contribute to the discourse on death and consumption, the first author followed the deceased from deathbed to burial plot in a year-long ethnographic study of funeral customs in the southwest of Germany. We shadowed two undertakers in their daily business and interviewed them along the way in formal and informal manners to understand their role in the handling of the body. We also interviewed six bereaved (clients) who reflected on their journey from becoming newly bereaved to burying their loved ones and their engagement with the body along the way. We used an inductive approach to interpret interviews, informal talks and observations with care in order to understand the meaning and notions behind the narratives (Spiggle 1994). Using hermeneutic analysis we read the scripts and observed the human behaviour and practices in ways that bring understanding (Croftt 1998, 87).

Findings are organised according to five stages that the body moves through in its final journey to the grave. These five stages include: the domestic setting, the cool room, the chapel of rest, the funeral and the grave. At each stage we explore the linguistic/discursive elements of presentation and meaning management and their associated practices (i.e. preparing the body). We also draw out the significance of different actors and spaces during each of these stages using in particular Goffman’s concept of front and back spaces.

Through an exploration of the series of final transitions of the body we have explored the ways in which its meaning is managed by undertakers and the bereaved. We have used the concept of staging to examine the way in which these meanings are reliant on context (stage) but also rely on ritual meaning making practices and language. As such in contrast to existing studies of servicescapes (Bitner 1992; Tombs and McColl-Kennedy 2003; Harris and Ezeh 2008) staging has a clear performative dimension. This lens allows for the mutuality of process and context and the reciprocal nature of the relationship between the social and the material in consumption contexts. This lens of staging might be usefully applied to understand brands as key staging devices. The narrative dimension of brands has been widely documented (Onyas and Ryan 2015). However while brands serve to significantly ‘costume’ objects they also intensify particular meanings and suppress others. Lury (2004) observes that brands frame the activities of the market, organising the very logics of global flows of products, people, images and events. They act as a ‘a kind of program, a platform for action, a loop that anticipates choices of actions’ (Arvidsson 2006, 129).

We think that our specific take on the body and its final journey has a series of important theoretical insights into meaning making and meaning management in the marketplace more generally. Once we accept that objects are largely indeterminate, and have little meaning outside the social relations in which they are imbedded, then we recognise the true power of the marketer in shaping the meanings of things. As we have seen in the case of the body this shaping might involve on the one hand promotion of particular meanings but on the other hand a suppression of other meanings. This points us directly to struggles over the politics of meaning in the marketplace. Highlighting the transitory nature of things also points us towards the important role that marketers play as intermediaries which manage these transitions from one context to another. This role is important not only in directly translating and shaping object meanings for the consumer but also in influencing wider culture as a whole. We can usefully view marketers as cultural intermediaries in this respect with significant responsibility to wider society.

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Celebrity Consumption Experiences:
Liminality and Hyperreality in Celebrity - Consumer Interactions
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This paper expands celebrity consumption research beyond a celebrity-as-object conceptualisation, to include their liminal subjectivity. Twelve self-identified media users were interviewed, finding four types of celebrity consumption experiences: reading, characterising, parasocialising and encountering. Celebrity consumption experiences enable individuals to both reinforce and subvert celebrity structures in building their social world.

The life of the celebrity as a consumption experience has become increasingly contested with the advent of social media and the perception that everyday individuals can “touch” the person behind the celebrity image (Marwick, 2015). Traditional conceptions of celebrity have focused on the fame systems of production of the celebrity image (Marshall, 1997; Rojek, 2001; Turner, 2004; van Krieken, 2012). Emerging from this focus on the produced celebrity image is the assumption that celebrity consumption is object focused. This includes McCracken’s (1989) conceptualisation of celebrity as an image of layered meanings that can be transferred through endorsement, and then consumed through rituals. In addition, the celebrity image is the focus in cultural and individual identity work (Turner, 2004). However, a defining feature of celebrity is that they are someone who is well-known for being well known (Boorstin, 1964). In focusing on the celebrity image object the human subjectivity of celebrity consumption has been lost. In this paper, we seek to expand the conceptualisation of celebrity-as-object consumption experiences to incorporate the liminal subject and object properties of the celebrity experience. In order to develop a research tradition of celebrity consumption as a field there is a need to identify the basic assumptions about the kinds of entities that inhabit this field and how these entities interact (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1986; Laudan, 1977). This paper addresses the research questions of what is the celebrity that is consumed how celebrities and consumers interact to form celebrity consumption experiences.

While the enactment of celebrity consumption is important in connecting the watching audience, the attributes of the celebrity consumption experience needs to be elaborated. We view celebrity consumption experiences as the interaction that occurs between celebrity and consumer entities (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1986; Laudan, 1977) and distinguish between the mode and the form that the consumption interaction takes. The mode of the celebrity represents the liminality of celebrities to be the human subject of well-knownness versus image object produced in celebrity systems of media and cultural industries (Marshall, 1997; McCracken, 1989; Turner, 2004). The form the content of the celebrity consumption experience incorporates the nature of celebrity as hyperreal (Alexander, 2010), that much of celebrity consumption happens in the incorporeal imagination of consumers rather than residing within the material of celebrity (Borgerson, 2014; Giles and Maltby, 2004).

In order to understand these practices 12 in-depth interviews were conducted (eight females and four males aged 26 – 45) with respondents who were self-identified as regular media users. Each interview lasted from 1 to 1½ hours and respondents received a $50 voucher as a thank you for their time and to encourage respondents to ask their friends to participate. The interviews covered such topics as their media and celebrity consumption patterns, using examples of popular celebrity magazines, music videos, websites, respondent’s own celebrity material, and social media examples of celebrity. Stories or topics that were of interest to respondents were discussed. Respondents were also asked about any celebrities that they had met or would like to meet. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysis followed a process of constant comparison to build, confirm and substantiate theory (Hackley, 2003).

The ways of consuming celebrity are a performative and discursive process to construct an individual’s self and social world. We found four types of celebrity consumption experiences; (1) reading, (2) characterising, (3) parasocialising, and (4) encountering performed to varying degrees by celebrity consumers.

Reading celebrity includes the understandings of how to read and read into a particular celebrity (Lyotard, 1984). Reading emerges from experiences of physical celebrity material of the celebrity in an image object form and are determined by current and past celebrity readings.

Characterising celebrity is the experience of imagining the celebrity based on their public persona based on their object images or roles (Auslander, 2004; McCracken, 1989). In this type, celebrity consumption experience the mode is the celebrity as object, their image and roles, but the form of the experience is imagined.

The parasocialising experience is when the celebrity goes beyond the object of reading and characterising to become the subject of imagination (Caughey, 1984; McCutcheon et al., 2002), in this case of celebrity consumption the celebrity is imagined as an intersubjective relational other (Froggett, 2008). The consumption experience of the parasocialised celebrity subject is one that mimics other real-world intersubjective relationships.

Encountering involves physically meeting the celebrity subject. This type of experience stands in contrast to the other types as it forms a confirmation / disconfirmation process to the other types of celebrity experiences. In meeting the real celebrity in their public or private persona (Auslander, 2004) previous readings, characterisations or parasocialisations become the expectations for the experience.

In understanding how consumers practice celebrity consumption, we have expanded the ontological understanding of celebrity consumption (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1986; Laudan, 1977). Individuals in experiencing celebrities engage in a constant critiquing process of layering current with past communication in their reading, of comparing current personas with past personas in characterising celebrities, of socialising with celebrities in imagined parasocial relationships, and the confirming all of these types of consumption experiences when encountering the real celebrity. The findings from this study suggest that the performance of celebrity consumption involves the celebrity and the audience sharing different structural positions as the spectacle of celebrity is co-constructed (Lancaster, 1997). This study is limited by a focus on the everyday consumption of celebrity across different celebrities. There is an opportunity to explore whether the findings presented here hold true in situations of a single celebrity, a dedicated fan community or for a particular mode or form of celebrity experience.

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Liminality and the Transition to Motherhood for Ethnic Minority Consumers: Examining the Experiences of South Asian Mothers in the UK
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This paper examines the experiences of South Asian mothers in the UK, aiming to further our understanding of ethnic minority mothers’ experiences of liminality during the transition to motherhood. The paper examines how these mothers negotiate consumption and the norms of intensive mothering differently compared to existing consumer research.

Consumer researchers have argued that periods of transition are important phases in which consumers negotiating new identities tend to experience significant upheaval and uncertainty in their consumption practices (Noble and Walker 1997; Schouten 1991; Solomon 1983). Such transitions are usually theorised in consumer research using the concept of ‘liminality’ (Schouten 1991), an anthropological concept that has helped us to understand the complexities of identity construction during periods of change. In particular, the transition to motherhood is widely recognised as a major life-role transition (Atkinson 2014; Prothero 2002; Thomsen and Sorensen 2006; Voice Group 2010a).

Consumption during the transition to motherhood is also deeply intertwined within the dominant norms of intensive motherhood, which pervade many cultures (Arendell 2000; Hays 1996; Miller 2014). Intensive motherhood refers to the notion that mothers should devote intense amounts of time, emotion, energy and resources to ensure their child’s development (Hays 1996). New mothers are expected to demonstrate their readiness for the safe arrival of their child ‘nesting’, i.e. purchasing the (many) appropriate baby products in readiness for the baby’s arrival. Nesting is seen as a ‘symbolic marker’ of new motherhood (Afflerback et al. 2014:2).

While early studies of liminality (Noble and Walker 1997; Solomon 1983) were based on the notion that consumption can offer a means of easing or reducing liminality, by offering an array of marketplace opportunities for consumers, later research on transitional mothers has argued that consumption may often cause or heighten consumer liminality (Carrigan and Szarnig 2004; Thomsen and Sorensen 2006; Voice Group 2010a; 2010b). However, much of the existing research draws mainly on the experiences of women who occupy non-minority positions (Banister et al. 2016), meaning that the experiences of ethnic minority mothers are relatively unexplored (Cappellini and Yen 2016). Moreover, there is an underlying assumption, articulated by the Voice Group (2010a:379), that ‘mainly white middle-class mothers’ may be ‘less prone’ to experiencing consumer liminality and ambivalence ‘than other, perhaps more marginalised, consumer groups’.

In this paper, the concept of reflexivity is used to understand how negotiating new gender identities on becoming a mother can both reproduce the norms of intensive mothering, yet mediate the market’s role in the transition to motherhood. Reflexivity brings about a heightened awareness of the gender norms (Adams 2006; McNay 1999; Thompson and Üstün 2015). Motherhood has been widely recognised as prompting such reflexivity, as women become increasingly likely to move across the family, work and education fields (McNay 1999; Miller 2005; Mitchell and Green 2002).

Moreover, post-assimilationist consumer acculturation research has shown how ethnic minority consumers construct multiple identities through consumption, as they move between different cultural contexts (Askegaard et al. 2005; Jafari and Goulding 2008; Jamal and Chapman 2000; Lindridge et al. 2004; Luedicke 2011; Oswald 1999; Penaloza 1994; Üstün and Holt 2007). As such, South Asian women in the UK may also become reflexive of gender norms, as they negotiate their identities at the intersection of home and host cultures (Bagguley and Hussain 2016). The paper examines what happens when these women become mothers, suggesting that these women may not necessarily experience consumption-induced liminality in the same ways as their white, middle-class counterparts, nor may they always be more ‘prone’ to doing so.

Given the exploratory research aims of this research, this study purposefully sought to recruit mothers of South Asian heritage living in the UK, who were pregnant or had at least one baby/child (aged 0-7 years). Whilst recognising that ethnicity is socially constructed and located (Brah 2010), in this study, the term ‘South Asian’ encompasses several different ethnicities (e.g. Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan) and religions (e.g. Muslim, Hindu). In total, 23 participants were interviewed using in-depth phenomenological interviews which usually lasted around 1.5 to 2 hours. Since interviews were to be conducted in English, the study recruited mainly women who identified as second-generation (though a small number identified as first- and third-generation). The data was interpreted using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006), and themes were developed using a ‘continuous part-to-whole’ and ‘whole-to-part’ movement, both within the data and between data and existing literature (Thompson et al. 1994:435).

The findings suggest that participants often delayed purchasing baby products until after the baby arrived, which is different to the way in which many mothers typically consume baby products during the transition to motherhood (Afflerback et al. 2014; Prothero 2002; Voice Group 2010a; 2010b). For these participants, being prepared for the baby’s arrival did not necessarily mean demonstrating that they had all the ‘right’ baby products or ‘props’, unlike their white, middle-class counterparts (Miller 2014:166). For example, several women did not purchase a pram before birth. Often participants were happy to receive prams and other large baby items as gifts, and were less involved in these purchases, in contrast to the mothers in Thomsen and Sorensen’s (2006) study. Moreover, participants were typically aware that by choosing to follow certain South Asian cultural practices, such as remaining indoors following birth and staying at their mother’s house, they appeared to receive more family support than non-South Asian British mothers. They reflexively chose to reproduce these practices, which are intertwined with the collectivist values of South Asian culture. In doing so, they reproduced South Asian norms of good mothering, in which good mothers keep babies inside until their immune systems are more developed (Wells and Dietsch 2014). Despite their position at the intersection of British and (British) South Asian cultures, participants’ choice to reproduce cultural practices that were specific to (British) South Asian culture explains why many participants did not feel the need to purchase most of their baby products beforehand. At the same time, participants seemed less susceptible to experience vulnerability and consumption-induced liminality than the mainly white, middle-class mothers in existing research (Voice Group 2010a; 2010b).

These findings offer insight into how South Asian mothers in the UK are reflexively negotiating between intersecting norms of intensive motherhood. Further research is needed which examines the nuances of consumers’ experiences of liminality during major life-role transitions. In doing so, such research may also help to break down wider stereotypes of ethnic-minority consumers.
TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences in consumption practices</th>
<th>South Asian cultural practices surrounding birth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delaying the purchase of baby products (especially prams) until after birth</td>
<td>Remaining indoors after birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of perceived need to nest (i.e. demonstrate their readiness for the baby's arrival)</td>
<td>Staying at mother's house and/or receiving support from family members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less involvement in purchasing baby products</td>
<td>Extensive gift-giving of expensive items</td>
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Pursuing the Fairytale Wedding: The Role of Liminality & Bridal Identity
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
The fairytale wedding of contemporary bridal identity is built on the premise that performing a white wedding ritual will fulfil all fantasies. This sought after liminal consumer identity does not hold for Nigerian brides, as their ideal bridal identity is always out of reach due to restrictive socio-cultural forces.

INTRODUCTION
There is a growing body of work on consumer identity from a liminal or transitional perspective (Banister & Piacentini, 2008; Cody, 2012; O’Loughlin et al., 2015). Bridal identity, a consumer identity typically associated with wedding rituals, has been closely studied in Western contexts. However, their contributions tend to emphasise the agency of the bride, with particular focus on her body and garments (Nash, 2013; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). Few studies have considered consumer identity in non-Western societies from a socio-cultural perspective (Ustuner & Holt, 2010). Being the largest consumer market in Africa (Euromonitor, 2017), this study aims to give a socio-cultural account of Nigerian consumers and expand the notion of bridal identity to include the entire wedding ritual as a stage for successful identity performance (Jenkins, 2008; Slater, 1997).

LIMINALITY & BRIDAL IDENTITY
Consumer identity serves multiple purposes including differentiation, status and transition (Slater, 1997). However, consumer identity for transitioning is often overlooked (Hemetsberger, 2015; Tonner, 2016). A common occurrence of liminal consumer identity is the bridal identity, a type of consumer identity performed during the transitionary phase of a wedding ritual. Nevertheless, successful performance does not determine transition (Ottes & Pleck, 2003). Transitioning from single to married, is typically determined by gatekeepers with less interest in the consumer identity including the family, state and religious institutions. What makes wedding ritual consumption important is twofold; first, it provides a detailed snapshot of the consumer culture of a given society (Arend, 2016; Nguyen & Belk, 2012). Secondly, the bridal identity has a significant influence on post wedding consumer habits, especially as the woman is often regarded as the main consumer in the family (Ingraham, 2008), and even more so in collectivist Nigeria (Nwafor, 2013).

Considerations of consumer identity and its manifestations in liminal spaces are typically individualistic in nature. Emphasis is often paid to the decisions and agency of the subject within the structuring influence of markets (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Rook, 1985; O’Loughlin et al., 2015), especially among studies of Western brides and their performance of bridal identity through the consumption of the wedding gown (Broekhuizen & Evans, 2016; Skykes & Brace-Govan, 2015; Nash, 2013). Furthermore, there tends to be an overemphasis on the bride’s physical appearance as the mode for performing bridal identity. In contrast, a socio-cultural account will enable considerations of the wedding ritual as a whole for identity performance (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Moreover, non-Western studies of weddings often conceptualise the wedding ritual as consisting of multiple actors i.e. the couple and their family, but pit the families’ desires against competing local forces (Nguyen & Belk, 2012; Ourahmoune & Ozcaqlar-Toulouse, 2012). Therefore, the wedding ritual is constructed according to the collective needs and requirements of the marrying couple and their (extended) families, as well as typically focused on status oriented consumption (Adrian, 2004; Nguyen & Belk, 2012). This often takes a limited account for the bride’s own agency (Mupotsa, 2015) and is therefore, necessary to consider the bride’s identity pursuits within the collective and in negotiation with the wider consumer culture.

In summary, this study aims to consider the acquisition and performance of a bridal identity inclusive of the bride’s preferences, agency and consumer tastes in conjunction with other institutional, familial, cultural and societal requirements placed on conducting a successful wedding ritual. Thereby, extending the concept of bridal identity to include the entire wedding process as the stage for performing bridal identity and not just limited to the bride’s physical body.

METHOD
Liminal consumption studies are typically grounded in Western contexts where gatekeepers’ roles are predominantly in the background (Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). Nigeria, a relatively collectivist society, with overt gatekeepers (Nwafor, 2013) proposes an opportunity for a more dynamic and nuanced formation of bridal identity. Based on an interpretive stance, 22 in-depth interviews were carried out to obtain rich data and insights about the brides’ experience. This included 19 women who recently married and three women who were planning to get married. The interviews lasted between 45-180 minutes and took place in two Nigerian cities, Abuja and Lagos, between 2017 and 2018. The participants were recruited via a purposive snowball sampling (Nelson & Ottes, 2005). Initial contact was made via referrals from the lead researcher’s network as a former wedding photographer. All participants were aged between 21 and 35 years old and consisted of middle to upper class Nigerians. Saturation was reached when the narratives of the brides produced negligible new variations for conducting a Nigerian wedding (Adrian, 2004; Nelson & Deshpande, 2003). The interviews were transcribed and then thematically analysed for emergent themes.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION
The findings indicate that none of the interviewed brides were able to fully perform their preferred bridal identity. Four identity positions emerge from the data, consisting of ideal, optimum, moderate and limited bridal identity. The ideal bridal identity consists of an unattainable mental image of the bride’s envisioned wedding ritual in respect to her preferred fairytale ending. However, this ideal is largely unattainable due to the constraining forces of gatekeepers’ restrictions on script control. Script control is how much influence is exerted upon the procedure and artefacts included in the wedding ritual (Ingraham, 2008). Optimum bridal identity occurs when the bride performs her bridal identity in close proximity to her ideal through modest script control and acquisition of significant ritual and consumption knowledge. Moderate bridal identity occurs when there is relative success indicated by modest script control accompanied with less than significant ritual and consumption knowledge. Whilst limited bridal identity is the least successful as a result of negligible script control. This follows the premise that gatekeepers are inherently invested in maintaining the ritual script (Ingraham, 2008; Ourahmoune & Ozcaqlar-Toulouse, 2012), more so in collectivist Nigeria (Nwafor, 2013). Consequently, only modest script control is afforded to the bride. The findings further suggest liminal consumer
identities are not rigid concepts, rather, a series of identity positions owing to the amount of influence afforded to liminal occupants by liminal gatekeepers.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Overall, the findings illustrate the difficulties brides have in pursuing their fairytale endings. Due to the role of (Nigerian) gatekeepers, this study concludes that the ideal bridal identity is beyond the reach of (Nigerian) brides regardless of the various forms of capital. In a liminal consumption context, this study reinforces the view that liminal spaces are not limited to powerlessness and ambivalence (Adrian, 2004; Ourahmoune, & Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2012; Turner, 1967). Finally, the research responds to the need for improved knowledge of consumer cultures within less affluent societies (Ustuner & Holt, 2010). The findings are limited to the sole perspective of the bride; therefore, further research should include other identifiable gatekeepers.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Recent findings cast doubt on the universality of the unhealthy = tasty intuition. Extant findings are reconciled by proposing and investigating the possibility that two opposite intuitions can coexist; (1) an implicit belief acquired early in life and (2) an opposite highly context-dependent, subsequently acquired belief.

Spontaneously activated intuitions are known to be powerful in guiding the judgments of managers, administrative decision-makers, customers, etc. While the rational aspects of decision making are well studied, insights into the automatic and non-conscious mechanisms at some deeper level are scarce and sometimes even contradictory. In an obesity epidemic context for example, the seminal paper by Raghunathan, Naylor and Hoyer (2006) published in the Journal of Marketing (= 600 citations) put forth that suboptimal food choices of many consumers must be traced back to the intuition that healthier food is implicitly viewed as inherently less tasty, even when consumers do not consciously subscribe to this intuition. Recent studies, however, find that the exact opposite pattern questioning the universality of this intuition. The present research aims to resolve the seeming contradiction by developing a theory of coexisting intuitions in the human mind.

Building on the Theory of Contextualized Mental Representations (Gawronski et al. 2010), we argue, for the first time, that this might be due to the fact that consumers can hold different—even opposite—implicit beliefs at the same time. In the early years of development, humans initially acquire beliefs about the world (e.g., humans realize that calorie-rich, sugar-laden foods offer sensory pleasure and enjoyment; an unhealthy = tasty intuition). Later in life, counter attitudinal information can also get deeply stored in the human mind (e.g., the concept of healthiness gains meaning leading to a healthy = tasty intuition). While the initially learned intuition is context-free and is the default belief guiding many of today's decisions, the subsequently learned intuition can get activated in the very context in which it was learned, such as when a health focus is salient for consumers during decisions.

With five studies, we shed light on the implicit (un)healthy = tasty intuition. Two preliminary studies explore the prevalence of this intuition: In Study 1, we use the original IAT and a sample whose parameters match those of the original study in this field (Raghunathan et al. 2006); it reveals a marked healthy = tasty intuition. Study 2 explores its universality across countries that exhibit different environmental cues that activate this intuition. Study 2 exploits its universality across countries that exhibit different environmental cues that activate this intuition. Study 2 explores its universality across countries that exhibit different environmental cues that activate this intuition. Study 2 explores its universality across countries that exhibit different environmental cues that activate this intuition. Study 2 explores its universality across countries that exhibit different environmental cues that activate this intuition. Study 2 explores its universality across countries that exhibit different environmental cues that activate this intuition.

In Studies 3–5, we test our contextualization account of implicit cognitions to determine if consumers hold distinct intuitions about the tastiness of healthy food that get activated depending on the context. We expect the initially learned unhealthy = tasty intuition to be the default, context-free association, but the subsequently acquired healthy = tasty intuition should be activated in contexts that match those in which it was learned, namely, when healthiness is salient. We also test whether the health cue provided by the original IAT prompts the instrument to tap into a healthy = tasty intuition. To illustrate the implications of this contextualization, in Studies 4 and 5 we also compare the predictive performance of the intuition assessed in a context-free setting with that of the intuition assessed in a health context, when it comes to anticipating consumption behavior.

In exploring the contextualization explanation in Studies 3–5, we demonstrate that consumers can store two competing, implicit beliefs about healthy and unhealthy food products in their minds. Implicit beliefs depend on the context in which they are measured. Accordingly, we observe that the unhealthy = tasty IAT metric can change and even flip when a contextual cue directs attention to the healthiness of food. Beyond establishing this finding for the first time, our research helps to resolve a persistent debate: The paradoxical healthy = tasty intuition can be attributed to the instrument traditionally used to measure the strength of the intuition, because the traditional IAT taps into the contextualized implicit belief consumers hold. Rather than the initial context-free unhealthy = tasty intuition, it picks up on the subsequently acquired healthy = tasty intuition. We demonstrate the implications of the presence of an exogenous health cue using different IAT labels (Study 3 and 4) and for a subtle verbal prime (Study 5). Furthermore, Studies 4 and 5 reveal that only the context-free unhealthy = tasty intuition explains everyday food choice patterns. The contextualized healthy = tasty intuition cannot predict actual consumption patterns. It is thus crucial to take the context into consideration when investigating consumer intuition and interpreting the IAT metric. Without considering the type of intuition being assessed (i.e., default vs. contextualized), researchers might erroneously conclude that implicit beliefs are not good predictors of eating behaviors (see Roefs et al., 2011) or that the taste stigma of healthy foods—a crucial contributor to the obesity epidemic—has been resolved.

Across five studies, we demonstrate that our theory of the contextual sensitivity of implicit intuition helps to resolve the confusion in the marketing literature. Even more importantly, the theory has direct managerial consequence because ignoring the context sensitivity of implicit cognitions leads managers to draw erroneous conclusions about the “gut feeling” of their consumers. Also, a mismatch between the context in which the implicit belief is assessed and the consumption context is shown to damage predictive validity. Marketers, producers and retailers as well as policy makers and health professionals can benefit from this knowledge by identifying environmental cues that activate this intuition.

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Do People Rely on Information for Food Choice?: The Role of the Type of Novelty and Personality Traits
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
A pseudo-experiment conducted using novel dishes has revealed that the information on taste and health benefits would influence people in trying a new healthy food and this effect varies based on the type of novelty of food. It also highlights the role of food neophobia and variety-seeking behaviour of consumers.

SUMMARY
Non-Communicable diseases like obesity and diabetes which are linked to unhealthy food choices are posing to be serious threats to the well-being of the people, especially in developing countries like India. People should be encouraged to make healthy food choices. They also seek varieties in food. The irony is that when the marketers introduce new healthy foods, most of them fail. This research has attempted to find out which information will influence people to try new healthy foods and whether the type of novelty of the food, the Food Neophobia (fear of trying new foods) and the variety seeking behaviour in consumers play a role. A pseudo-experiment was conducted in India with 385 subjects with 12 different versions of the survey where the new dish and the information presented were manipulated. Willingness towards trying the food was measured along with their food neophobia and variety seeking trait. Results show that the type of novelty of the food influences the willingness to try and also has an interaction effect with the information presented. Also, the variety seeking behaviour of the subjects has an impact on their willingness to try a new food. The authors discuss the implications of these findings and also recommend some solutions for the food marketers.

CONCEPTUALIZATION
There are various barriers that people perceive in accepting a novel food. Studies have established that providing information about the food will influence the willingness to try a novel food (Martins et al. 1997; Pelchat and Pliner 1995). Effect of information could vary with respect to the level or type of unfamiliarity of the food, the health consciousness level and the neophobic level of the individuals. There is a gap in literature in identifying what type of information about which foods for which people, conveyed how, will be most effective (Martins et al. 1997). This study attempts to address that gap and also tries to understand the role of the trait of food neophobia and the variety seeking in people.

Food Neophobia is the term derived from Omnivore’s dilemma, characterized by children avoiding new foods. Evidence for food neophobia can be inferred from “willingness to try food items” (Dovey et al. 2008). Individuals differ in their internal need for variety and it is a personality trait based on theory of optimal stimulus level (Van Trijp 1995) which states that if this level is not reached, they will feel bored and seek for more variety which includes variety in food choices.

In the literature, Unfamiliarity and Novelty terms are used interchangeably. Recently, Aqueveque (2015) made a distinction with respect to the unfamiliar food, as Unknown food (unknown ingredients) and Novelty Combination food (known ingredients combined in a novel or unusual way). In our study, we define three types of novelty. Type 1 is where the ingredient has not been tasted already but the format of the dish was tasted. For example, in the case of a "custardapple pancake", custardapple is referred to as the ingredient (which is highlighted in the name of the dish) and the format refers to the pancake. Type 2 is the one in which the ingredient has been tasted already but the format of the dish is new. Type 3 is the one in which both ingredient and the format has not been tasted already.

METHOD
A picture of the food was shown in the survey and the consumers’ willingness to try that dish was measured. Each subject was shown a picture of one dish which represented one of the three types of Novelty.

Type 1: Mudakkathan Dosa (Mudakkathan – ingredient, Dosa – format)
Type 2: Corn Adai (Corn – ingredient, Adai – format)
Type 3: Kavuni Sankati (Kavuni – ingredient, Sankati – format)

The taste expectations and health benefits information given along with the picture were also manipulated. Low Taste Expectation was provided in the survey as 3 out of 10 people said “TASTES GREAT” and high taste expectation was provided as 9 out of 10 people said “TASTES GREAT”. In the version of survey for “with health benefits”, health benefits of the food were given, but it was missing in the version “without health benefits”. There were 12 versions of the survey, which included the combinations - type of novelty(3)*taste expectation(2)*health benefits(2). Food Neophobia and Degree of familiarity with the dish were measured using existing scales. Variety Seeking behaviour especially with respect to food choices was measured using the existing VARSEEK scale (Van Trijp and Steenkamp 1992).

Only novel non-animal foods were considered as Martins et al. (1997) established that the information did not influence willingness to try novel animals foods. All the 3 dishes were South Indian dishes to avoid any effect of ethnicity and the survey was administered to only Indians. The data collected from 385 respondents (after filtering) in age group of 18 to 40 were used for analysis.

MAJOR FINDINGS
Information on taste expectations, health benefits and food neophobia do not have main effect on willingness to try, but Type of Novelty has the main effect. There is a 3 way interaction effect of Type of Novelty, Taste Expectations and Health Benefits. Food Neophobia couldn’t have had an impact on willingness because of the Indian dishes chosen but variety seeking does have an impact. The study could be replicated with foreign foods which could highlight the impact of food neophobia.

The positive correlation between Variety Seeking and the willingness to try a novel food was found to be significant. And we found no significant difference in the variety seeking behaviour between males and females.

The findings of our research have important implications for designing food displays at the restaurant buffets and restaurant menus. This study would help the restaurant marketers to provide the right kind of information in influencing the people to choose a healthy food when it is new to them. The results of this study could also be used by marketers of packaged foods and retailers too. In addition to the factors such as packaging, labelling etc., they could decide on the information to be provided on the package as well as in their...
advertisement according to the type of unfamiliarity of the food. This research can also guide the mothers and care providers at home to persuade the family members to try new healthier foods.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We offer a novel explanation why consumers reject sustainable food innovations (e.g., insect consumption, lab-meat). Adopting these requires consumers to violate internalized norms, which elicits moral disgust. Accordingly, not the intrinsic characteristics of the innovations (e.g., palatability), but their perceived degree of norm violation elicits rejection and must be addressed.

By 2050 an additional 150 million people will suffer from a protein deficiency, as increased CO2 emissions reduce the protein in crops such as rice and wheat (Medek, Schwartz, & Myers, 2017). Particularly alarming is that the reduction in plant-based protein will affect developing countries, the cause, however, can largely be attributed to the current western diet. For instance, the main source of protein—the livestock industry—accounts for 14.5 per cent of CO2 emissions induced by humans (Steinfeld, et al., 2006) and the western lifestyle and its diet are spreading to other countries (Pingali, 2007), further accelerating the problem.

Sustainable food innovations are desperately needed, but suffer from a lack of consumer acceptance. Labgrown meat, for instance, could revolutionize the food industry, but consumers are disgusted by it (Verbeke, et al., 2015). Insect-based meat substitutes would reduce resource expenditure, however, consumers also reject edible insects based on disgust (Vanhonacker, Van Loo, Gellynck, & Verbeke, 2013). Mapping perfectly onto acknowledged disgust elicitors such as impurity and pathogens, these consumer arguments have not been questioned but embraced as the true cause of these innovations’ failure—with limited success. We argue that addressing these consumer rationales has shown limited success because sustainable food innovations are not rejected based on their inherent features. Instead, we find that consumers reject foods that are too abnormal; foods which constitute a perceived violation of an internalized norm.

The studies below suggest that consumers reject products that are not normal to them because they are not normal to them. When in the process of socialization, norms—culture’s guidelines of what is normal and approved of—get internalized they are complied with as a goal in itself (Gintis, 2003). Important norms are more likely to be internalized (Villatorto, Andrighetto, Conte, & Sabater-Mir, 2015), accordingly, internalized norms can be seen as constituting the important values of a society. Any behaviors or ideas that oppose these will elicit moral disgust (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005), including foods that oppose these norms. While it might be tempting to view disgust as an inherent feature accompanying specific products, this is not the ultimate cause. The same product can be considered delicious or appalling, depending on the norms one has internalized. In other words, we argue food innovations elicit disgust not because they are feared to reduce one’s health, but rather because they are considered abnormal.

We first established the relationship between normality and disgust. 43 attendees of a health-related event were sequentially presented with two novel foods, either camel milk and horse meat or a dried grasshopper and seaweed. Treating observations as independent of each other, which they were not truly given the within subjects design, we find that consumption likelihood correlates positively with perceived normality (r(83) = .50, p < .001) and negatively with perceived disgust (r(83) = -.40, p < .001). Normalness and disgust are negatively correlated (r(83) = -.69, p < .001).

Next, we studied the effect of a normviolating ingredient on consumption, theorizing that awareness of such an ingredient would make the consumption of the food a normviolation and thus elicit moral disgust. We presented a cupcake to 137 participants, half of which were informed about its insect-based colorant, finding significant differences in the disgust expected during its consumption between aware (M=-.19, SD=1.08) and unaware participants (M=-.20, SD=.88); t(131.683)=2.292, p<.05. Participants experiencing disgust were unlikely to eat the cupcake (t(137)=-.23, p<.05). We find that disgust is elicited by normdeviating food products and will consequently lead to rejection.

A third study tested the links between internalized norms, disgust, and rejection. We showed 145 participants a picture of one of two ambiguously looking food items: (1) a hamburger described as either made of lab-meat (normviolating) or an unfamiliar breed of cattle (normcongruent), (2) a fried isopod described as either an insect (normviolating) or a kind of shrimp (normcongruent). The relationship between the foods (norm-violating: lab-meat and insects; norm-congruent: beef and shrimps) and their rejection was tested with perceived normviolation and disgust as serial mediators using Hayes’ (2013, model 6) PROCESS macro with 10,000 bootstrapped samples at a 95% confidence interval, showing a significant indirect effect of the food on rejection with the two mediators norm-violation and moral disgust (.2914, 95% CI .1880, 1.9347). A food will, when perceived as a normviolation elicit moral disgust which will then lead to rejection. Importantly, as we kept the qualities such as taste identical between the foods and only varied whether they were normviolating or normcongruent, this result cannot be due to these qualities.

As familiarity with the normcongruent foods (beef and shrimps) could have potentially affected the results, we replicated study 3 with two different, unfamiliar food items. 222 participants were shown a picture of food described as either anteggs or crabeggs. We proposed that consuming an unfamiliar food only elicits moral disgust if it is perceived as a normviolation. Serial mediation was tested using the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013), model 6 with 10,000 bootstrapped samples at a 95% confidence interval. We find a significant indirect effect of the food on rejection through the two mediators of normviolation and moral disgust (.3735, 95% CI .1974, .6254). The total indirect effect was also significant (1.2570, 95% CI .6496, 1.9172). Supporting the results of study 3, study 4 shows that a food product is rejected if it is considered a normviolation. Additionally, we find that this holds true even for unfamiliar foods that themselves are not subject to a norm, but are derivatives of a food item that is regulated through norms.

These findings have important implications: highlighting or improving the foods’ primary characteristics will not overcome the aversion as they are not the cause of it. Instead, changing consumer perceptions of food innovations being abnormal should be tackled. Once these food items will be perceived as normal, the disgust reaction will cease to exist and consumers’ acceptance will increase.
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**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Front-of-Pack (FOP) labels attempted to make it quicker and easier for consumers to discern the nutritional quality of food, with limited success. We examine the mechanism of a hybrid FOP label that uses an evaluative cue to reinforce the objective format, and the effect it has on consumers’ perceived healthfulness.

In an attempt to combat rising obesity rates, the nutrition facts panel (NFP) was introduced on the back of food packaging showcasing nutritional information to assist consumers with their consumption behaviors (Balasubramanian and Cole 2002). Still, consumers face increasing time and cognitive constraints that hinder their ability to comprehensively analyze the NFP, resulting in an inability to accurately discern the nutritional quality of food (Newman, Howlett, and Burton 2016). Front-of-pack (FOP) labels condense the nutritional information presented on the front of packages, thereby making it quicker and easier for consumers to identify the relative healthfulness of foods (Newman et al. 2016). However given that there is no standardized, government assigned FOP label, the current labels vary greatly in terms of content and format. Some of these formats contain objective nutrition information that is quantitative in nature and showcases a condensed form of the NFP (e.g., Guideline Daily Amounts-GDA). Other formats, such as evaluative labels, are interpretative in nature and provide an evaluation of a products’ overall healthfulness (e.g., IOM’s Healthy Stars).

Although objective cues provide measurable numerical information, some consumers still find processing this information to be a complex cognitive task, especially when compared to easier evaluative formats (Visschers and Siegrist 2009). However, over-simplification of nutritional labeling can lead to incorrect assumptions about food attributes, and even to health halos (Chandon and Wansink 2007). This is especially prevalent given that most people tend to think in healthful and unhealthful categories whilst underestimate the calories in ‘healthy’ foods and overestimating those in ‘unhealthy’ foods (Chandon and Wansink 2007).

Hybrid labels (e.g., Traffic Light/TL-GDAs) proposed a combination of the condensed quantitative (objective) information with evaluative components, such as colors and words (Newman et al. 2016). Yet, this labeling system does not assist consumers in distinguishing between multiple ‘red colored’ items and it adds an ambiguous evaluative cue (e.g., what threshold for sugar equals red coloring) that does not directly reinforce the quantitative data (e.g., 23g sugar). Additionally, current hybrid FOP labels have only assisted consumers in determining product healthfulness in limited situations (Newman et al. 2016). Newman, Howlett, and Burton (2016, p.750) recently concluded that “the types of FOP labeling programs that best engage and ultimately influence consumers’ product evaluations and decision-making processes are still poorly understood.”

The present paper addresses this issue. Gaining a better understanding of alternative hybrid FOP labels is important for assisting consumers’ comprehension and interpretation of products nutritional content. Therefore, this paper examines the mechanism and boundaries of a simplified hybrid FOP label in the form of a summary reference. Unlike previous studies, we examine the use of an evaluative cue (verbal) to directly reinforce the information presented by the objective cues (numerical).

Across four studies, we examine individual and joint effects of numerical and verbal cues on healthfulness perceptions and purchase intentions. Although current FOP labels (including hybrid forms) have been able to assist consumers’ evaluation of nutritional information more than NFP, none of them have been effective across different situations (Newman et al. 2016). In this research we examined a simplified hybrid label, which gives consumers an average reference point to assist with perceived healthfulness within a product category. In order to gain a better understanding of the mechanism behind the hybrid label, the pilot study first established the numerical (objective) effect on purchase intention via perceived healthfulness perception, which was in line with prior literature (Viswanathan 1994).

Studies 1 and 2 identified an important boundary condition for the hybrid FOP, namely the moderating effects of product category. We demonstrated that the numerical labels effect on perceived healthfulness and purchase intentions was significant and accentuated for the hedonic category (Study 1). This indicated that the numerical label was less helpful in highlighting the differences between a relatively favorable and unfavorable product in the healthful category, which could be attributed to a potential health halo effect. As predicted by H3 in Study 2 the introduction of a combination of objective (numerical) and evaluative (verbal) in the form of a hybrid label not only was effective in the healthful category, it also removed this health halo in the healthy category. Study 3 showed that it was in fact the presentation of the hybrid label that allowed consumers to distinguish between a relatively favorable and unfavorable product, as opposed to just verbal label.

In sum, our results so far suggest that a numerical label is sufficient for consumers to distinguish between products’ healthfulness in the hedonic category, however a hybrid label is effective across categories. The simplified hybrid label, which reinforces the numerical (objective) information with a verbal evaluative format, assisted in improving consumers’ food shopping behaviors, and can be considered as a viable alternative for the current hybrid FOP nutritional labels. One challenge with FOP labels, including our hybrid CARP is that consumers might mistake the food that is healthier within an unhealthful category as being overall healthy (Bucher, Müller and Siegrist 2015). Future research could compare consumers’ perceived healthfulness for relatively favorable items within the hedonic category, and unfavorable items within the healthful category. However the results of Study 2 do not indicate that consumers would misinterpret the label in this manner.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumers typically react more favorably to attractive (vs. less attractive) opposite-sex service providers. As this research suggests, however, consumers are likely to react more negatively to attractive (vs. less attractive) service providers when social failures occur than when non-social failures occur.

PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS AND SOCIAL COMPETENCE

The “what is beautiful is good” stereotype is pervasive. It suggests that attractive individuals are perceived to be more persuasive, popular, sociable, and intelligent than unattractive persons are. People find interacting with attractive people to be an aesthetically pleasant experience (Dion et al., 1972). Because attractive individuals are perceived to have more desirable attributes (goodness, virtue, innocence, etc.) than unattractive individuals, they are better liked and treated with greater patience and compassion (Eagly et al., 1991). For example, attractive offenders tend to receive more lenient sentences than unattractive offenders for certain types of crimes (Deitz and Byrnes, 1981). People are also relatively more forgiving of attractive opposite–sex offenders (Phillips and Hranek, 2012). These favorable reactions suggest that attractiveness might have a positive impact on consumers’ tolerance for service failures. However, little if any previous research has investigated conditions in which the physical attractiveness of service providers might decrease the favorableness of consumers’ reactions to a service failure and have negative impact on consumer satisfaction.

The most robust attribute associated with the “beautiful is good” stereotype is social competence, or the ability to handle social interactions effectively (Eagly et al., 1991). Socially competent individuals are able to take the perspective of others and be responsive to the needs of others (Griffin and Langlois, 2006). Because attractive service providers are stereotypically social competent, they might be expected to be particularly capable of delivering good service. This expectation may lead consumers to be less tolerant of poor service that they might otherwise be. Therefore, when this expectation is violated, they may be relatively less forgiving of an attractive provider’s mistakes than of an unattractive provider’s errors.

Social and Non-social Service Failures

Service failures can either be impersonal, pertaining to the core service that the consumer receives, or interpersonal, surrounding the manner in which the core service is transferred to the consumer. Some researchers (e.g., Chan, Wan, and Sin, 2009) have further distinguished between social and non-social failures. A social failure is a situation in which the consumer suffers a loss of social resources (e.g., status, esteem) due to an interaction with the service provider, whereas a nonsocial failure is a situation in which the consumer suffers a loss of nonsocial resources (e.g., money, time). In other words, physical/instrumental factors are involved in a non-social failure, whereas social/psychological factors are involved in a social failure. (For example, in a restaurant, a social failure occurs if the waiter is impolite, whereas a non-social failure occurs if the waiter took the wrong order.)

Social competence may have a greater effect on reactions to a social failure than on reactions to a non-social one. Therefore, consumers may react less positively to a provider’s social failure, but more positively to a provider’s nonsocial failure, if the provider is attractive than if (s)he is average-looking.

Hypothesis 1: Consumers react more positively to a nonsocial service failure if the opposite-sex service provider is attractive than if (s)he is not.

Hypothesis 2: Consumers react more negatively to a social service failure if the opposite-sex service provider is attractive than if (s)he is not.

METHODOLOGY

One hundred twenty female participants were paid HK$20 (approximately US $3) to take part in a 15-minute experiment. They were randomly assigned to cells of a 2 (attractiveness: high vs. average) x 2 (service failure type: social vs. non-social) between-subjects design. Participants were asked to evaluate a retail service. They viewed a picture of a male representative at a retail shop, together with a scenario in which they imagine themselves experiencing a service failure. A physically attractive male confederate (age = 26) served as the model for the picture. In the high attractiveness condition, he styled his hair and wore a uniform that fitted him well and flattered his shape. In the average attractiveness condition, the same confederate did not groom and wore an oversize uniform and a pair of glasses to detract from his appearance. In nonsocial failure conditions, participants imagined themselves that they requested a specific smartwatch with a fitness tracker and GPS function, but the representative made a mistake and gave them a wrong color watch without the GPS. In social failure conditions, participants imagined that the representative was impolite when they made the same specific request.

RESULTS

Results confirmed our hypotheses. When a nonsocial failure happens, participants were less dissatisfied if the provider was attractive than if he was average-looking. When a social failure happens, however, participants were more dissatisfied if the provider was attractive than if he was average-looking.

DISCUSSION

Abundant research shows that attractive (vs. average-looking) service providers bring about higher consumer satisfaction and purchase intention (e.g., Wan and Wyer, 2015). Conceivably, consumers should be more forgiving for their mistakes in service failures. As this research suggests, however, there are certain situations in which an attractive provider is likely to have a deleterious effect. The findings offer valuable managerial insights into the role of service providers’ physical attractiveness on consumers’ behavior. Note that this research did not examine the factor that mediated the impact of service failure type and physical attractiveness on consumer reactions. In addition, cultural or dispositional variables might also moderate the relationship between attractiveness and service failure type on consumer reactions. More studies will be conducted to examine these possibilities.
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Should Out-Group Members Communicate Factual Message in order to Foster a Sense of Proximity?
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Perceived dissimilarity is peripheral to resistance to out-group members and negatively affects the evaluations of out-group members. However, the negative effect of perceived dissimilarity on evaluations will be diminished when out-group members share a type of message (in this case factual message) that signals personality traits such as trustworthiness.

People form strong inferences of disposition from other’s facial appearance (Hehman, Flake, & Freeman, 2017), race (Fiske, 2000), and as well as communication message (Clark, Wegener, Sawicki, Petty, & Briñol, 2013). When we observe others share their opinions, we consistently form perceptions of the personality traits that they might possess (Clark et al., 2013), and whether our perceptions are favorable or not depend on the nature of our relationship with those who share their message with us (Heider, 1958; Joshi, Waksłak, Raj, & Trope, 2016). Similar others are more socially close than dissimilar others, and in-group members are more socially close than out-group members (Bar-Anan, Liberman, & Trope, 2006). When encountering a persuasive message, people often engage in many different strategies and rely on many different types of information as a basis for their evaluations (Clark et al., 2013). According to out-group homogeneity effect (Judd, Ryan, & Park, 1991), people often underestimate the variability in out-group members with respect to their traits (e.g., trustworthiness) and thoughts. As a result, when receiving a message from an out-group member, they rely on stereotypes (e.g., group membership) and consistently perceive out-group members as dissimilar to themselves and as well as their group. The perceived dissimilarity, therefore, leads to negative evaluations of out-group members (Freling, Vincent, & Henard, 2014).

However, as we show, this is not always the case. Indeed, in some situations, such as receiving a message from an out-group member, recipients are motivated to rely on message features such as the content of the message to infer the personality traits that the source might possess in order to form a basis for their evaluation of the source. As a result, they rely less on the stereotypical cues such as the source’s group membership. In fact, stereotypes can be ignored in the presence of diagnostics and more specific information (Krueger & Rothbart, 1988). Factual messages are characterized as less subjective and more specific. In contrast to subjective statements, objective statements evoke feelings of familiarity, and are more “imageable”. “Imageability” itself is a source of perceived truth (Hansen & Wänke, 2010). Moreover, objective statements have been shown to elicit a higher sense of proximity (Berger, 2014; Joshi et al., 2016; Menegatti & Rubini, 2013; Reitsma-van Rooijen, Semin, & Van Leeuwen, 2007).

The present study shows when receiving a message from an out-group member, message recipient engages in content-dependent processing-processing the message to infer traits that the source possesses (Clark et al., 2013). Message recipient 1) attends to available information about the source (in this case, the message); 2) infers the unobservable traits of the source that are salient to interpersonal relationships (in this case trustworthiness); 3) forms the first impression of the source’s dissimilarity; and 4) incorporates the perceived trustworthiness and dissimilarity in her or his evaluation of the source (social acceptance).

In study 1 online participants (N=75, 60% male) were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions: in-group and out-group. They learned that, during a work group a new member who is either their colleague (in-group) or a newcomer (out-group) joins their team. Then, they indicated the extent to which the new member is dissimilar to their team and their likelihood of accepting this member as their teammate. Perceived dissimilarity (Rink & Ellemers, 2009) was measured with the following two items: “I expect this person to clearly differ from us” and “I expect this person to have little in common with us” (α = .69). Social acceptance (Rink & Ellemers, 2009) was measured with the following three items: “I think it will be easy to get along with this person”, “I think I will feel comfortable with this person”, and “I think I will personally like this person” (α = .84). Participants perceived the newcomer as more dissimilar (M=3.50) than colleague (M=2.81) to their team F (1, 73) = 6.63, p<.05. Colleague was marginally more accepted to be part of the team (M= 5) than newcomer (M= 4.65), F (1, 73) = 2.39, p=.12.

In Study 2, while imagined working on a management problem with their teammates, online participants (N=61, 50.8% male; Mage=38) were randomly assigned to one the two conditions (Facts vs. opinions). Participants asked to take the role of human resource manager who faced a problem and come up with an optimal solution (Perry-Smith, 2014). After reading a brief description about the company, depending on the experimental condition, participants saw either three factual suggestions or opinions offered by a new member of the team about the task. Participants perceived the new member in opinion condition as more dissimilar (M=4.56) than in fact condition (M=3.47), F (1, 59) = 10.93, P<.005. The new member in opinion condition was less accepted (M=4.09) than in fact condition (M= 5.10), F (1, 59) = 13.30, P<.005. The effect of type of message on social acceptance (α = .82) was partially mediated by perceived dissimilarity (CI [.0296,.2636; sig of indirect effect, p<.05).

Study 3 was a 2 (Facts vs. opinions) × 2 (in-group vs. out-group) between subject design. We also measured perceived trustworthiness of the source. Online participants (N=118, 65% male, Mage=26) were randomly assigned to one the four conditions. Participants in fact condition reported higher trustworthiness scores (M= 4.82) than in opinion condition (M= 4.18), F (1, 116) = 8.12, p<.01 and the difference between perceived trustworthiness was significant only in out-group condition but not in in-group condition. Social acceptance was higher in fact condition (M= 4.28) than in opinion condition (M= 3.77), F (1, 116) = 4.65, p<.05. There was no significant effect of type of message on social acceptance (α = .88) in in-group condition (M fact = 4.01, M opinion = 3.88, t (57) = .542, p=.5). However, the effect of type of message on social acceptance was significant in out-group condition (M fact = 4.60, M opinion = 3.69, t (57) = 2.501, p<.05). Media analysis revealed the indirect effect of type of message on social acceptance through trustworthiness (M1) and perceived dissimilarity (M2) (CI [-9.727,-.2815]).

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The Effect of Social Exclusion Intensity and Consumers’ Overconfidence on Social-Oriented and Self-Oriented Behaviors
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
We showed that calibrated (those with an accurate evaluation of social exclusion) slightly excluded consumers show social-oriented (e.g., ethical and luxury product preferences) and self-oriented (e.g., unhealthy food preferences) behavior. However, overconfident consumers, overestimating social exclusion and having an excessive faith in their evaluation, do not engage in such behavior.

Physical or emotional social isolation that people experienced is called social exclusion (Riva and Eck, 2016). Scholars have discussed social exclusion as an important driver of consumers’ judgments, decisions and actions which leads to social-oriented and self-oriented behavior. Social-oriented consequences include consumers adopting conforming (preference for partner-approved choices; Mead et al., 2011) or non-conforming (interest for conspicuous consumption; Lee and Shrum 2012) behavior to re-establish their social relations (Williams et al., 2000). Self-oriented consequences entail enormously negative outcomes and impair self-regulation (Baumeister et al., 2005) which increases self-defeating behavior (Twenge et al., 2002).

In this research we investigate two core aspects of social exclusion including its intensity and consumers’ evaluation of social exclusion and how they result in social-oriented and self-oriented behavior.

The emotions that individuals feel facing social exclusion play a great role in determining their behavioral response to the exclusion (Chow et al., 2008). People tend to overestimate negative events (Betz and Skowronski, 1997) such as social exclusion. Overconfidence (along with underconfidence) as the most prevalent judgment biases (Moore and Healy, 2008) has a negative effect on decision quality (e.g., Hadar et al., 2013) and usage experience (Puligadda et al., 2010). Overconfidence includes both overestimation and overprecision (Moore and Healy, 2008) in judgments.

We hypothesize that different levels of social exclusion intensity (inclusion/ not exclusion/ slight and severe exclusion) lead to different consumption behavior. Moreover, overconfidence in social exclusion is one of the determinants of consumers’ decision-making. We discuss our hypothetical model around social-oriented and self-oriented consequences of social exclusion.

SOCIAL-ORIENTED CONSEQUENCES
Recent studies have shown that the manner in which exclusion is communicated (lee et al., 2017) results in different preferences for conforming or non-conforming behavior. We suggest that the level of social exclusion intensity is also important, so slightly excluded consumers are more motivated to re-establish their relationships, whereas severely excluded consumers dis-engage from re-building their relationships as they see little chance to achieve it. We also argue that overconfident, slightly excluded consumer show similar behavior to the severely excluded consumers as they think they are severely affected (although in reality they are not).

Hypothesis 1: Calibrated, slightly excluded consumers (vs. not socially excluded and socially included consumers) are more likely to show a) conforming and b) non-conforming behavior.

Hypothesis 2: Overconfident, slightly excluded and (overconfident and calibrated) severely excluded consumers (vs. not socially excluded consumers) are less likely to show a) conforming and b) non-conforming behavior.

We further suggest that socially included consumers do not see a need to re-establish their relationships and do not engage in conforming or non-conforming behavior.

Hypothesis 3: Socially included consumers (vs. not socially excluded consumers) are less likely to show a) conforming and b) non-conforming behavior.

SELF-ORIENTED CONSEQUENCES
Social exclusion leads to self-regulatory deficits, (Baumeister et al., 2005) which are the consequences of involvement with the threatened social belongingness (Twenge et al., 2002). Therefore, these negative cognitive and emotive effects are at their highest when there is a deeper involvement with social ties. These engagements are higher when the consumer is slightly excluded and her cognition and emotions are stimulated to re-establish the threatened relationships.

Hypothesis 4: Calibrated, slightly excluded consumers (vs. not socially excluded and socially included consumers) are more likely to show self-defeating behavior.

However, this is not the case for overconfident slightly excluded and severely excluded consumers who perceive less involvement with social ties, as they see themselves more distant from these ties.

Hypothesis 5: Overconfident, slightly excluded and (overconfident and calibrated) severely excluded consumers (vs. not socially excluded consumers) are less likely to show self-defeating behavior.

A 4 (social inclusion vs. non-exclusion vs. slight exclusion vs. severe exclusion) X 2 (overconfidence vs. calibration) quasi-experiment is conducted. Participants’ level of overconfidence (over-estimation and overprecision) is also measured to divide them into two groups of overconfident and calibrated consumers. Participants (N=184) were recruited via CrowdFlower.

The study utilized “Cyberball” to manipulate social exclusion (Williams et al., 2000). During the course of the game with 36 ball tosses, participants were randomly assigned to one condition and received different numbers of tosses (inclusion (50%), non-exclusion (33%), slight exclusion (22%) and severe exclusion (5%)). Upon completing the game, participants’ estimation and precision of the number of ball tosses they received (i.e., overprecision and overestimation) were measured. Then, they were asked to make choices which were related to our three contexts (i.e., conspicuous consumption, healthy food choice and ethical consumption). Finally, participants responded questions related to control variables and their demographic profile.
Overconfidence is assessed through asking participants to specify the percentage of times the ball was passed to them; moreover, they specified their estimation of minimum and maximum of the percentage of times the ball was passed to them. Conforming behavior is assessed through how ethical participants are (Gupta and Sen, 2013). Non-conforming behavior is studied through assessing conspicuous choice. Self-defeating behavior is operationalized through unhealthy food choice (Baumeister et al., 2005).

We performed a MANCOVA and divided participants into six groups: included, not-excluded, calibrated slightly excluded, calibrated severely excluded, overconfident slightly excluded and overconfident severely excluded. As we expected, calibrated slightly excluded consumers show a high level of conforming, non-conforming and self-defeating behavior (H1 and H4). Consistent with our hypotheses, socially included consumers and overconfident slightly or severely excluded consumers did not engage in such behavior (H2 and H5). Despite our expectation, not-excluded consumers engage in social-oriented behavior. The reason behind this is simply to enhance their relations and as they were not prevented from such relationships; their self-regulation is not disturbed. Inconsistent with our hypotheses, we also find that calibrated severely excluded consumers show social-oriented behavior. Interestingly, these consumers did now show self-defeating behavior. We suggest that these consumers have a calibrated evaluation of social exclusion as a negative event that shows their strong regulation of their emotions. Therefore, due to the high level of self-regulation they do not show self-defeating behavior and do not give up re-establishing their relationships easily (as a result of emotional consequences of severe exclusion).

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Counter to current belief that consumers’ choices become more virtuous with increasing assortment size, this research reveals the opposite choice-pattern. Due to product agnosia, consumers’ urge to justify their choices diminishes when choosing from large (vs. small) assortments, rendering them prone to select vices over virtues, despite higher choice difficulty.

Nowadays’ marketplace offers consumers an abundance of choice alternatives. However, large assortments have been shown to impose many aversive effects for consumers’ judgment- and decision-making such as lower choice satisfaction and increased post-choice regret (for a review see Chernev, Böckenholt and Goodman 2015).

Despite ample research on consumers’ judgment- and decision-making in large versus small assortments, research addressing how assortment size affects option choice (i.e., the option that is ultimately chosen from the assortment) is scarce (Chernev 2012). To date, only Sela, Berger and Liu’s pioneering work (2009) on this matter exists. Extrapolating their findings, leads present marketing theory to expect a shift toward more ‘virtuous’ food choices when choice difficulty increases with assortment size. That is because consumers tend to opt for options that are easier to justify (i.e., virtues) when choice difficulty increases (Sela et al. 2009).

However, in Sela and colleagues’ studies (2009) the large choice-sets were limited to 10 or 12 options. Other studies on large versus small assortments (for a review see Chernev et al. 2015 or Scheibehenne, Greifeneder and Todd 2010), though, indicate that the average number of options used to represent large assortments, is double the size of these choice-sets. Specifically, these papers point out that twenty-four or twenty-eight and four or six options, are the most commonly used sizes to represent large and small assortments.

In real-world contexts, like in supermarket settings, the assortments consumers encounter comprise far more than twelve options. Moreover, consumers tend to be drawn to large product offerings (e.g., Chernev and Hamilton 2009). Additionally, for food, the option the consumer ultimately chooses has considerable consequences for the consumer’s wellbeing. When consumers choose the immediate taste pleasure of tempting, but unhealthy foods (i.e., vices) over the long-term health benefits of healthier, but less tasty alternatives (i.e., virtues; Khan and Dhar 2007; Wertenbroch 1998), this might come at the long-term cost of personal weight gain. Indeed, the type of food (i.e., healthy vs. unhealthy) that is bought and consumed accounts as a primary cause of obesity (Centers for Disease Control 2017), which to date, persists to be a growing and worldwide problem (e.g., Ogden, Carroll, Kit and Flegal 2014). Therefore, in this research, we address how choosing from large (vs. small) assortments—which we define following Chernev et al. (2015) and Scheibehenne et al. (2010) as compromising at least 24 options—influences consumers’ food choices.

Recently, Jia Shiv and Rao (2014) documented on the phenomenon of product agnosia, which they define as a loss of ability to differentiate between products. When choosing from large (vs. small) assortment we also anticipate consumers to suffer from product agnosia, leading them to perceive the products (i.e., the vice and virtue options) as more similar to another in large than in small assortments. Consequently, we expect consumers to experience less self-control conflict when choosing between vice and virtue options (Fishbach and Zhang 2008) in large (vs. small) assortments. Hence, in contrast to prior research predicting justifiable option choices (i.e., virtues) as choice difficulty increases with assortment size (Sela et al. 2009), we posit that—due to product agnosia—consumers’ urge to justify their choices diminishes when choosing from large (vs. small) assortments, rendering them prone to select vice over virtue options, despite of higher choice difficulty. In other words, we argue that choosing from large (vs. small) assortments, renders consumers’ food choices suboptimal (i.e., choosing vices over virtues).

We present four experimental studies of which the results converge to demonstrate that—despite higher choice difficulty—consumers are more prone to choose vice over virtue options when choosing from large as opposed to small food assortments (as defined by Chernev et al. 2015 and Scheibehenne et al. 2010). Throughout these studies, we replicate this “assortment size” effect with various food assortments (i.e., jams, chips, breakfast cereals and cookies and biscuits) and rule out differential assortment variety perceptions (in Study 1) and choice depletion (in Study 2) as alternative accounts for the observed effect (Kahn and Wansink 2004; Huffman and Kahn 1998; Vohs and Heatherton 2000). Additionally, in Study 2 we replicate the effect with real choices and pretested the selected vice and (relative) virtue options (i.e., regular and low-fat chips) to confirm that they were perceived as such.

Instead, we argue and show that this unexpected choice-pattern occurs due to product agnosia arising in large assortments, which attenuates consumers’ urge to justify their choices. In Study 3 we find evidence for this proposed serial mediation model with product agnosia and reliance on justification for choice as mediators. When choosing from large (vs. small) assortments, respondents perceived the options more similar to one another (i.e., product agnosia), which offset their urge to rely on justification for choices. In further support to our theorizing, we argue that—as a consequence of product agnosia—consumers experience less self-control conflict in choosing between vices and virtues (Fishbach and Zhang 2008) in large than small assortments. Put differently, we posit that the self-control conflict—when choosing between vices and virtues—is less salient in large compared to small assortments. Study 4 provides evidence for this proposition. Specifically, we show that restrained (vs. non restrained) eaters, who can be expected to pursue healthy food choices, successfully choose virtues over vices in small assortments, but fail to do so in large assortments—which we argue to be due to a diminished self-control conflict in large assortments.

With this research, we aim to shed new light on the impact of assortment size on option choice. Specifically, this research aims to conceptually extend Sela and colleagues’ work (2009) on assortment size and option choice. The results, though, contribute to the literature on the backfiring effects of large assortments (e.g., Botti and Iyengar 2006). Besides, we believe that these findings also have significant importance for consumer welfare. That is, given the worldwide obesity epidemic and consumers’ prevalent preference for large assortments (Chernev and Hamilton 2009), hence, we believe that identifying large food assortments as another environmental trigger of vice choices, is pertinent and timely.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Although the negative effects of habitual consumption of unhealthy items (e.g., sugary snacks, smoking) are well-established, consumers fail to regret their behavior and continue consuming such products. We borrow from the appraisal theory of emotion to delineate appraisal processes of regret and explain why consumers fail to regret.

Habitual consumption of unhealthy items has been a behavioral paradox for policy analysts as well as researchers. In this research, we explore whether low consumption regret might be one of the contributing factors for such unhealthy consumption habits and explore the psychology behind this low consumption regret. In this paper we propose that the failure to experience consumption regret can be caused by counteracting appraisals of regret. Building on the appraisal theory of emotion (e.g., Lazarus 1991, 1993; Luce 1998; Cohen, Pham, and Andrade 2006), we propose that consumption regret is influenced by an interplay of primary and secondary appraisals, with primary appraisals (concerns the potential influence of the event on the goals that one pursues, assessing goal relevance and goal congruence of the event) activating negative arousal and secondary appraisals (involves ascribing blame or granting credit, and considering one’s coping potential) sometimes reducing the intensity of regret triggered by the primary appraisal.

Most consumers have a goal to stay healthy. When this goal is salient, unhealthy consumption behaviors (e.g., consumption of sugary snacks or smoking a cigarette) would be spontaneously appraised as being incongruent with their goal. Therefore, primary appraisal of unhealthy consumption triggers negative arousal by making people realize that their behavior has been inconsistent with their goal. However, this negative arousal might not always manifest as experienced regret because negative arousal often triggers secondary appraisals that counteract the effect of this arousal. Because regret is an unpleasant experience, people are intrinsically motivated to minimize or regulate it (e.g., Inman 2007; Zeelenberg and Pieters 2007). Therefore, during the secondary appraisal, people assess the causes and consequences of the consumption behavior and one’s ability to cope with the consequences. Some of these secondary appraisals could be defensive in nature and therefore reduce regret. When the health goal is salient, engaging in unhealthy consumption behavior is likely to result in blame that is directed at oneself, threatening one’s self-image. Previous research suggests that because people are generally motivated to maintain a positive sense of the self, threats to one’s self-image activate the psychological immune system (Gilbert et al. 1998; Sherman and Cohen 2006). This psychological immune system makes the situation less threatening to one’s self-integrity by reframing the situation or reevaluating the decision in a positive light (e.g., Yi and Baumgartner 2004; Roese, Summerville, and Fessel 2007; Zeelenberg and Pieters 2007). We identify two ubiquitous factors—accessibility of expectancy information and post-consumption threat to self-image—that can prompt the psychological immune system to create such counteracting regret appraisals. Specifically, we argue that consumption quantification can be paradoxically used as expectancy information, prompting secondary appraisals to reduce the effect of primary appraisals on consumption regret and that assessing post-consumption regret will trigger self-threat and prompt secondary appraisals to reduce the effect of primary appraisals on regret.

Study 1 (N = 101) was designed to show that arousal elicited by primary appraisal does not always create the feeling of regret. When expectancy information is readily available, people use that information to explain away the arousal elicited by primary appraisal. To directly show the role of arousal in the appraisal process of regret, we measured participants’ skin conductance activity during the study. Participants were assigned to three conditions (accessibility of consumption quantity: low, high1(daily), high2(annual)). For several unhealthy food categories, participants in the high accessibility (daily) condition were asked to report how many servings they consume per day before reporting their consumption regret. Similarly, participants in the high accessibility (2(annual)) condition were asked to report how many servings they consume per year. Participants in the low accessibility condition were not asked to consider their consumption quantity. Next, all participants were asked to evaluate how regretful they felt about the consumption of the food items. Results show that whereas the accessibility of consumption quantity did not change the intensity of experienced arousal, it changed the effect of arousal on regret as the effect of arousal on regret was significant only in the low accessibility condition.

Study 2 (N = 71) examined regret toward smoking. In this study, timing of regret evaluation (i.e., before vs. after smoking) was manipulated to test the effect of secondary appraisal on regret. Research assistants stationed at commonly frequented smoking areas on a large university campus approached smokers who just finished smoking. Smokers in the past experience condition indicated how much regret they feel now after smoking, whereas smokers in the future anticipation condition indicated how much regret they will feel next time they smoke. Results show that among smokers who have high intention to quit smoking, retrospective regret was significantly lower than anticipated regret ($M_{\text{anticipated}} = 5.12$ vs. $M_{\text{retrospective}} = 3.09$; $t = -3.44, p = .001$). However, among those who have a low intention to quit, the difference in regret was not significant ($M_{\text{anticipated}} = 3.36$ vs. $M_{\text{retrospective}} = 2.76; p = .32$).

Study 3 (N = 352) conceptually replicates Study 3 in a field study conducted at a restaurant popular for its lunch buffet, which includes a dessert buffet with several appealing but calorie-rich choices. Among dieters, anticipated regret was greater than retrospective regret ($M_{\text{anticipated}} = 4.28$ vs. $M_{\text{retrospective}} = 2.00; p < .0001$). Among non-dieters, the difference in regret was also significant but with a smaller difference ($M_{\text{anticipated}} = 2.28$ vs. $M_{\text{retrospective}} = 1.70; p < .01$). Together, Studies 2 and 3 show that post-consumption secondary appraisals are more defensive in nature (relative to pre-consumption appraisals) because unhealthy consumption is more threatening to self-image after consumption than before consumption and lead to regret mitigation.

Study 4 (N = 161) was conducted to confirm the role of self-threat as the mechanism underlying our findings. This study used a 2 (timing of evaluation: anticipation vs. retrospection) x 2 (self-affirmation: affirmed vs. disaffirmed) between-participants design and measured the strength of a diet goal. Consistent with our prediction, the interaction between time of evaluation and diet goal was not significant when participants were self-affirmed.
REFERENCES

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Health Care Decisions in a Relationship: An Attachment Theory Approach
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In this paper, we consider consumers’ judgments and decisions regarding health insurance for their relationship partners through the lens of attachment theory. Specifically, we examine how people’s attachment styles affect their perception of health-risk for their partners and their desire to buy health insurance to prevent against the risks.

Health care continues to be an important public policy topic in most countries. In the United States, for example, health care costs had risen to $2.6 trillion by 2011. As employer-based health insurance plans continue to decline, a majority (about 55.4%) of Americans provide coverage for themselves and their families. Moreover, most health care decisions are made within a relationship or a family context (Royalty and Abrahm 2006). Yet, little is known about what factors affect consumers’ desire for health care for their relationship partners such as spouses and what contexts may affect it. In this paper, we consider consumers’ judgments and decisions regarding health insurance for their relationship partners through the lens of attachment theory. Specifically, we examine how people’s attachment styles affect their perception of health-risk for their partners and their desire to buy health insurance to prevent against the risks in the presence and absence of environmental threats.

Based on our theorizing, we predict that in the presence to threats, more avoidant persons will have a greater desire for health insurance for their romantic partners. This may not be true for more anxious persons, because an anxious attachment style is often an unreliable predictor of caregiving behavior (Mikulincer and Shaver 2007; Simpson, Rholes, and Nelligan 1992). Second, we predict that the effect of threat and avoidant attachment style on desire for insurance for the partner would be driven by people’s perception of health-risk for their partner. That is, we predict that more avoidant persons would perceive greater health-risk for their partners in response to a threat and, as a result, would be more likely to buy or to recommend insurance to their partner. We tested our predictions in three experimental studies.

STUDY 1

In Study 1, we examined our basic prediction that people’s desire for health insurance for their romantic partners varies depending on their attachment styles and the presence/absence of a financial threat. We experimentally manipulated threat by having participants write three things that suggest the economy is becoming increasingly unpredictable and harsher. Those in the control condition wrote from the first two studies, we found a significant threat X avoidance interaction for desire for health insurance for partner ($F(1, 160) = 6.01, p = .015$). The threat X anxiety interaction was not significant ($F(1, 160) = .01, p = .91$). In addition, neither the threat X avoidance interaction ($F(1, 149) = .82, p = .36$), nor the threat X anxiety interaction ($F(1, 149) = 1.19, p = .27$) was significant for desire of health insurance for the self. These results are important as they highlight the social nature of attachment styles by showing that attachment styles affect desire for partners’ health insurance but not one’s own.

These studies provide important new insights into how and under what conditions consumers’ adult attachment styles affect health-related judgments and decisions for their romantic partners. Three experiments provide converging evidence that more avoidant persons desire greater health insurance for their partner in response to a threat. This effect occurs because threat increases their perception of health-risk for their partners. No consistent results were found for more anxious people. We believe that this research adds to our understanding of attachment styles and decision-making, and will appeal to a broad level of researchers interested in topics such as interpersonal relationships, health care, risk management, and financial threats.

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Planning To Do or Not To Do:  
The Efficacy of Implementation Intentions on Healthy and Unhealthy Eating Behaviors

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The methodological and intervention variables explain a high percentage of the variance of the effect size of II intervention for healthy eating behaviors. This will help policy makers and researchers to design more efficient interventions. In unhealthy behaviors II formulation is a key issue in designing efficient implementation intentions interventions.

Improving healthy eating is becoming a key political and societal goal due to problems resulting from poor dietary habits (Bublitz, Peracchio and Block 2010). From the Transformative Consumer Research perspective (Mick 2006), our role as consumer researchers is to develop, test and perfect the instruments that could best serve to design social policies to increase healthy eating and, consequently, to increase consumer citizen’s wellbeing. This study is focused on testing the efficacy of a psychological intervention to help people achieve their goals of healthy eating, called implementation intentions (II).

II interventions are volitional planning interventions that specify “when, where, and how” the individual is going to perform a certain behavior that will lead to goal attainment and anticipate critical scenarios with goal-directed responses, following the structure of “If situation x arises, then I will perform response y” (Gollwitzer 1990).

The last meta-analysis of healthy eating showed that the effect size is smaller when the intervention aims to reduce unhealthy behaviors (e.g., fat consumption) than to promote healthy eating behaviors (e.g., fruit intake) (Adriaanse et al. 2010). In this vein, recent studies have tried to improve the II intervention when targeting unhealthy eating behaviors. For instance, Adriaanse et al (2010) suggested that different formulations of II may have differential effects on unhealthy eating behaviors. These formats can be categorized into three: (1) when participants are instructed to formulate plans to reduce unhealthy eating (e.g., ignore or negate thoughts about an unhealthy snack food (Achtziger, Gollwitzer, and Sheeran, 2008) or plan not not eat (Sullivan and Rothman, 2008)), (2) when participants are instructed to formulate plans to replace an unhealthy eating behavior by a healthy option (Adriaanse, de Ridder, and de Wit 2009), (3) when participants are instructed to formulate action plans or planning protocols (e.g. Luszczynska, Scholz and Sutton 2007). Regardless of this proliferation, there is a lack of research integrating research findings across studies to test if these improvements in II intervention can increase its efficacy in reducing unhealthy eating.

The objective of our work is to resolve these deficiencies by pooling evidence from experimental studies on II interventions and unhealthy eating to provide a comprehensive review of the existing literature when the intervention is used in the promotion of healthy eating behaviors and when they aim to reduce unhealthy eating patterns. We test the impact of eleven moderator variables related to methodological issues and intervention issues.

To derive the average effect size of II interventions on healthy eating and to identify the sources of heterogeneity in the reported effect sizes, this paper applies meta-analytical techniques to 72 measures in 69 studies. The literature search and data extraction were performed in January 2016. We searched for experimental studies published in Web of Science (Core Collection) and MEDLINE (1990 - January 2016). We determined the effect size for all the studies using the SMD, linear correlation coefficient, or standardized regression coefficient depending on the data.

Our study confirms that II intervention has a significantly larger effect for healthy behaviours (d=0.43) than for unhealthy behaviours (d= 0.276). We checked for possible moderator variables using a meta-regression. For healthy behaviours, the model was statistically significant (p=0.003) and R2=58.2%, showing that the moderator variables explain a high percentage of the variance of the effect size of II intervention in healthy eating behaviors. In the healthy behaviors model Age has a significant and negative moderating role, showing that the effect of II intervention tend to yield larger effect size in young people since younger people are more open to new activities because their routines are not as strong as in elderly (Soureti et al. 2012). The effect of II intervention is smaller when the researcher has reviewed whether the formulation of the II intervention is correct (II check). This suggest that it is not necessary to review the formulation of plans, which makes the intervention simpler. Data collection coefficient indicates that the impact of II on healthy eating is smaller for those that were contacted via internet. A possible explanation for this might be that the involvement is higher when formulating manually the plans, because it needs more effort, meanwhile online participation can be distracted by other activities on the web that would decrease participants’ involvement. The effect II on Students was significantly smaller than in other samples. These results seem to be consistent with other research that report larger effect sizes for non-student samples due to the artificial laboratory environment (Fiske 2008). Finally, II format coefficient signals that specific if-then plans have a stronger effect on healthy eating. (Chapman, Armitage and Norman 2009) results on fruit and vegetable intake.

In conclusion, our findings will help researchers and policy makers to design more efficient interventions. For instance, researchers should take into account the smaller effect size for student samples and when the study is conducted via Internet. Moreover, to increase effectiveness, health campaigns to promote healthy eating using II interventions should encourage the target audience to make specific plans, invest in initial training and save resources in reviewing whether the formulation of the II plan is correct or not. Additionally, this intervention should preferably target young consumers. In relation to the unhealthy eating behaviors model, only the variable II formulation was significant, indicating that when II are formulated to decrease an unhealthy eating behavior, the effectiveness of the intervention is smaller (Adriaanse et al, 2011) than when they plan to replace an unhealthy option with a healthy option or use an action plan. These findings of this study have an important implication for future practice. Policy makers should avoid negative plans that involve decreasing unhealthy eating. An option is to look for alternative healthy eating options in order to reformulate the plans in a positive manner (e.g., “If I am hungry during the afternoon, I will eat a piece of fruit). Future research needs to examine more closely the links between II intervention and habits. Breaking habits seem to be a key factor when trying to diminish unhealthy eating behaviours through psychological interventions.
REFERENCES


Effect of Product Categorization on Consumer Thinking Style
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
In this research, we examine the effect of product categorization associated with a cognitive information-based processing. Across six studies, we show that categorization induces a more rational thinking style, increases the time consumers are willing to spend in the store and increases the number of products they buy.

Prior research has examined how categorization of the products influences consumers’ decision making (Chakravarti and Janiszewski 2003). Mogilner, Rudnick and Iyengar (2008) demonstrate that categorization serves as a perceptual (vs. cognitive) cue in which consumers infer differences among products through the mere presence of categories. However, in this research we examine the effect of categorization associated with a cognitive processing and contribute to the categorization literature in three important ways.

First, we show that categorization induces a rational (vs. experiential) thinking style. Novak and Hoffman (2009) have introduced the situation-specific rational (vs. experiential) thinking as a particular thinking style that consumers adopt in a specific decision environment. Exposure to categories has been shown to lead consumers to consider relatively more pieces of precise information (Ulkkümen, Chakravarti, and Morwitz 2010). Therefore, consumers exposed to the categorization will be engaged in conscious and high effort information processing which is the main characteristic of the rational thinking (Kahneman and Frederick 2002).

Second, we show that the categorization influences consumer in-store behavior. If categorization induces a rational thinking style, information given by categories will be used to motivate consumers to process the options within the assortment more systematically (Smith and DeCoster 2000) and therefore categorization increases the time that consumers spend in the store in order to complete their purchase. Moreover, categorization helps to differentiate the products in different categories and according to the mental accounting (Thaler 1985), consumers will be willing to spread out their budget to separate categories and therefore buy more products as the number of categories increases.

Third, we demonstrate that categorization is not experienced positively by all of the consumers. Consumers’ situational thinking is influenced by their self-regulatory orientation and prevention- (vs. promotion-) focused have higher rational thinking style (Novak and Hoffman 2009). Therefore, we show that consumers with a prevention focus have higher satisfaction with the categorization but not consumers with a promotion focus.

STUDY 1A (FIELD STUDY)
The study was conducted in two branches of a supermarket (approximately 400 customers enter the store per our). Products (dairy) were presented either with no categories (control) or classified in the six main categories (categorization). The results show that customers in the categorization (vs. control) condition bought significantly more products (M=2.92 vs. 2.15; F(1, 101)=3.7, p =0.057) and spent significantly more time in the store (M=127.65 vs. 91.89; F(1, 122)=2.59, p =0.01).

STUDY 1B (FIELD STUDY)
This study was conducted in a different supermarket and the procedure was similar to study 1a. The results show that customers in the categorization (vs. control) condition bought significantly more products (M=2.89 vs. 1.94; F(1, 166)=4.57, p =0.034) and spent significantly more time in the store (M=101 vs. 70; F(1,173)=4.28, p =0.04).

STUDY 2 (FIELD STUDY)
The data was collected in two phases in a big supermarket. The products (spreads) were presented either with no categories (control) or classified into the six main categories (categorization). Moreover, we asked customers to complete a questionnaire.

The results show that customers in the categorization (vs. control) condition bought significantly more products (M=0.39 vs. 0.26; F(1,752)=10.04, p =0.002) and spent more time in the store (M=29.97 vs. 25.31; F(1, 752)=9.38, p =0.002). The data from the questionnaire (n=160) show that customers evaluated the assortment significantly more positively in the categorization (vs. control) condition (M=8.59 vs. 7.63; F(1, 158)=17.71, p <0.001). Moreover, the results reveal that the indirect effect of categorization via perceived variety (β=, 95% CI: .042 to 0.33) and information helpfulness (β=, 95% CI: .038 to 0.45) is significant. However, when we use both mediators simultaneously, the overall indirect effect is not significant anymore (β =, 95% CI: .004 to 0.047) and neither the indirect effect through variety (β=, 95% CI: .04 to 0.18) but the indirect effect through information helpfulness is still significant (β=, 95% CI: .02 to 0.42). This shows that the important part of the effect of categorization on consumer satisfaction with product categorization is associated with cognitive processing (information helpfulness) and not perceptual processing (perceived variety).

STUDY 3 (LAB STUDY; N=216)
Participants engaged in a shopping task from an online store which offered 72 nutrition bars presented either without categories (control) or in three (broad) or seven categories (narrow).

The results show a marginally significant effect of product categorization on consumer satisfaction (Mcontrol =5.7 vs. Mnarrow =5.5 vs. M broaden =5.4; F(2,213)=2.8, p =0.06). Moreover, participants in the narrow (vs. control) categorization condition had significantly higher scores in the rational thinking (M=4.83 vs. 4.47; t(150)= 2.04, p =0.047). Finally, the rational thinking mediated the effect of categorization on consumer satisfaction (β=, 95% CI: 0.073 to 0.0002).

STUDY 4 (ONLINE STUDY; N=123)
We manipulated regulatory focus by asking participants to write an essay about their aspirations (promotion) or responsibilities (prevention). Participants next engaged in a shopping task at a retail website that offered beauty products presented either in three (broad) or six (narrow) categories.

The results revealed a significant interaction of regulatory focus and categorization on consumer satisfaction with their shopping experience (F(1, 119)=4.28, p =0.02). Prevention-focused participants were significantly more satisfied when choosing from a narrow (vs.
broad) categorization (M = 4.24 vs. 3.72; F(1, 119) = 4.56, p = 0.03) but not promotion-focused participants.

**STUDY 5 (ONLINE STUDY; N=117)**

The procedure of the study was similar to study 4 but we manipulated the label of categories to be either concrete or abstract. The results revealed a significant interaction of regulatory focus and category labels (F(1, 113) = 8.43, p = 0.005). Prevention-focused participants were significantly more satisfied when the categories were presented with concrete (vs. abstract) labels (M = 4.45 vs. 3.82, F(1, 113) = 4.8, p = 0.04) but not promotion-focused participants.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION**

We show that categorization induces a rational thinking style, increases the time that consumers are willing to spend in the store and increases the number of products they buy. Our results have clear implications for retailers as it is demonstrated in our field studies. Moreover, our findings show that regulatory focus can be used as a successful basis for customizing the product organization.

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Together or Separate? A Psychological Ownership Account of Bundling Effect
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
This research shows that bundling related products together can enhance spontaneous mental imagery of using the products, which leads to greater perceived psychological ownership of the products and higher product valuation. The effect is attenuated when cognitive resources for mental imagery are constrained or when ownership is already acquired.

Imagine Jessica shopping for apparel. If she looks at a mannequin with a shirt and a pair of pants putting together, would her evaluation be higher compared with if she evaluates the shirt and the pants from the different racks? It is well-known that consumers’ decisions are not only affected by the actual products, but also by various factors in the retailing environment including ways of product presentation. In this research we focus on the effect of presenting multiple product items as a bundle versus as separate items.

According to research on prospect theory (Kahneman and Tversky 1979) and hedonic editing (Thaler 1985), Jessica should derive greater utility when the items are presented separately than when they are presented as a bundle because of the greater utility of segregated gains. Research on price bundling also predicts that Jessica’s willingness to pay for the bundled products is lower than the sum of the price of each individual item (Estelami 1999; Heeler et al. 2007). Counter to these prior findings, we draw on research on visual imagery and psychological ownership (Kamleitner and Feuchtl 2015; Jussila et al., 2015), and argue that bundling these items together can actually increase Jessica’s product evaluation and willingness to pay (WTP). This is because bundling presentation can evoke greater spontaneous mental imagery of using the products, which enhances Jessica’s psychological ownership of the products and her subsequent valuation of the products and willingness to pay due to endowment effect.

We further identified boundary conditions. First, because mental imagery requires cognitive resources, the effect of bundling will be attenuated when consumers’ cognitive resources are constrained. Second, enhanced mental imagery only occurs when the elements in the bundle provide a consistent overarching theme and the bundle is conducive to positive mental simulation.

We conducted four studies to test these predictions and the results provide robust evidence.

STUDY 1
Study 1 tests the basic effect of bundling on ownership and product evaluation. Participants (n = 82, M-Turkers) were asked to imagine that they were planning to buy some clothing items. Each participants viewed the items of their own gender either together (bundled) or each item on separate screens. We measured their evaluations of the overall items, WTP, and perceived ownership. The results revealed a significant main effect of presentation format, with bundled presentation leading to significantly higher evaluation of the clothes than the unbundle presentation (M_{bundled} = 5.80 vs. M_{unbundled} = 3.82; F(1, 79) = 22.21, p < .001) and higher WTP (M_{bundled} = 215 vs. M_{unbundled} = 112; F(1, 79) = 11.73, p = .001). Presentation format also showed a significant main effect on ownership (M_{bundled} = 3.49 vs. M_{unbundled} = 2.25; F(1, 79) = 8.65, p < .005). Finally, mediation analysis showed that psychological ownership is a significant mediator of the effect (95% CI = [.306 to 1.182]).

STUDY 2
In study 2, we manipulate cognitive resources to test the role of mental imagery. Participants (n = 284 M-Turkers) in the cognitive load condition were asked to memorize a list of words for later recall. Those in the control condition were exposed to the same list of words but were not asked to memorize. A similar apparel shopping context without the model was used. Results confirmed the interaction effect (F(1, 280) = 8.85, p < .005). Bundled presentation led to higher evaluation than the unbundle presentation (M_{unbundled} = 5.98 vs. M_{bundled} = 5.00, F(1, 280) = 9.01, p < .005) when there was no cognitive load constraint; however, under cognitive load, the effect was attenuated (M_{unbundled} = 5.20 vs. M_{bundled} = 5.57, F(1, 280) = 1.39, p = .24). Mediation analysis confirmed the expected serial mediation (95% CI = [.017, .155]). Effects on WTP showed similar patterns.

STUDY 3
Study 3 tests the moderating effect of the match among the bundle elements. Participants (n = 467, M-Turkers) were randomly assigned to a 2 (presentation format: unbundle vs. bundled) x 2 (overall theme: match vs. mismatch) between-subjects design. A similar apparel scenario was used. Results showed a significant interaction (F(1, 464) = 43.77, p < .001): When the items created a match, bundled presentation led to higher evaluation of the clothes than the unbundle presentation (M_{unbundled} = 5.89 vs. M_{bundled} = 5.40, F(1, 464) = 4.15, p < .05). However, when the items did not create a match, the effect was reversed (M_{unbundled} = 4.95 vs. M_{bundled} = 5.23, F(1, 464) = 55.13, p < .001). Mediation analysis showed positive bundling → imagery → psychological ownership → evaluation effect (95% CI = [.017, .155]) for matching conditions while negative effect for the mismatching conditions (95% CI = [-.200, -.014]).

STUDY 4
Since psychological ownership plays an important role, in study 4 we directly manipulate it by having participants (n = 98, undergraduate students) either simply evaluating the products or first receiving the products as gifts before evaluating. All participants examined two real products: a notebook and a pen either together or separately. Analysis showed a significant interaction effect (F(1, 94) = 7.23, p < .01): When participants did not own the products, bundled presentation led to higher evaluation of the products than the unbundle presentation (M_{unbundled} = 5.27 vs. M_{bundled} = 4.55, F(1, 94) = 3.56, p = .06). However, the effect was reversed when participants already had ownership (M_{unbundled} = 4.88 vs. M_{bundled} = 3.96, F(1, 94) = 3.74, p = .05). These results provided further support to the effect of bundling and the important role of ownership in a real setting.

Counter to the findings in prospect theory and the bundling literature, our work showed novel effects of bundling on product evaluation and WTP. We extend the research scope of bundling by focusing on its presentation effect, add to research in mental accounting and hedonic editing, and contribute to existing research on mental imagery. Finally, our research provide important managerial implications.

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Effects of Absence Positioning of Unknown Product Ingredients on Consumer Evaluations
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
We investigated effectiveness of promoting unknown ingredients either with presence or absence positioning (e.g., Secret® deodorant claims it includes “aluminum chlorohydrate” while Crystal® says “no aluminum chlorohydrate”). Our results show that consumers have more positive evaluations for absence positioning than presence positioning and this effect is mediated by protection-related goals.

When looking at the ingredients section of goods such as processed foods, nutrition supplements, household cleaning or personal hygiene products, most consumers usually have no idea about the purpose of the uncommon ingredients they see. In some cases, marketing practitioners pick and choose one or more of these unknown ingredients and highlight them to differentiate and promote their products. For example, when Colgate Total® was first introduced to consumers, it promoted the fact that it was the first and only toothpaste with triclosan to prevent against gingivitis and other dental issues. However, even after decades in the market, few users of Colgate Total® or Pantene® know the purpose or added value of triclosan or pro-V.

Prior literature predicts the positive effect of emphasizing the presence of such ingredients such as triclosan in a toothpaste (see Carpenter, Glazer, and Nakamoto, 1994 for more details). If so, why is there a trend in the marketplace to include statements that highlight the absence of some ingredients about which most consumers have no idea of? Considering the limited space on product packaging, why would marketers promote something that their product lacks, instead of saying what the product contains? For example, while Secret® brand deodorant says it includes “aluminum chlorohydrate” right on the front of its package, its competitor Chrystal® brand very visibly says “no aluminum chlorohydrate”. Which one of these is a more effective positioning strategy? What factors impact consumer evaluations for products that promote absence vs. presence of such ingredients? This research aims to shed light on these strategic questions.

STUDY 1
Study 1 presented descriptions of ketchup for which ingredients were positioned as present or absent. We expected better evaluations when the product was positioned to emphasize the absence of ingredients (vs. the presence of the ingredients). Study 1 employed two hundred US residents participated on MTurk in exchange for payment in a 2 (absence vs. presence positioning), unifactoral between-subjects design. Participants in the presence positioning group saw a ketchup emphasizing an added fictitious ingredient (“ramil”); likewise, those in the absence positioning group saw a ketchup emphasizing the lack of the fictional ingredient. Participants were asked a series of questions pertaining to the treatment stimulus with four product-attitude questions; their agreement with protection-related/ performance-related statements; and their agreement with ingredient-knowledge questions. The results of Study 1 demonstrate how attitudes are significantly better toward products which are positioned to emphasize the lack of ingredients (vs. products positioned to emphasize the inclusion of ingredients). Furthermore, through mediation analysis, we show that the positive effects of absence positioning on attitudes happen indirectly through increased perceptions of protection-related factors.

STUDY 2
In Study 2, we explored ingredient positioning effects in a different product category (shampoo) and manipulated the inclusion of an ingredient list. We expected better evaluations when the product was positioned to emphasize the absence of ingredients (vs. the presence of the ingredients). Furthermore, we expected the stronger effects of absence positioning to attenuate when full ingredient lists were provided. Study 2 employed a total of six hundred sixty-three US residents participated on MTurk in exchange for payment in a 2 (positioning: absence vs. presence) x 2 (ingredient list with vs. without) between-subjects design. In the initial task, participants were presented with a choice between a control and one of the 12 treatment conditions. Next, participants were asked a series of questions specifically pertaining to the treatment stimulus. The results of Study 2 showed how products (in this case, shampoos) are evaluated more favorably when they are positioned to highlight the absence of a fictitious ingredient. As expected, these effects depend on the inclusion of ingredient lists, however: when other ingredients are listed, the preference for absence-framed ingredients attenuates. Our moderated-mediation analysis further elucidated that without an ingredient list, absence positioning leads to greater protection-related feelings. However, when a list of other ingredients is provided, these indirect effects attenuate. The mere ability to see a list of other common ingredients makes the highlighted ingredient seem less-threatening. Consumers often choose products based on ingredients’ perceived ability to protect them from harm or provide performance. These motivations are often guided by the consumer’s regulatory focus—the orientation of their goals toward promoting positive outcomes or preventing negative outcomes.

STUDY 3
Study 3 presented descriptions of two more products (detergent and lotion) for which unknown ingredients were once again positioned to highlight either the presence or absence of an ingredient. In addition, to test the moderating effect of regulatory focus, we created scenarios in which the products were positioned to either prevent negative effects or promote positive outcomes. We manipulated only regulatory focus, and the participants were asked to choose between absence-positioned and presence-positioned products. Finally, we offered protection and performance reasons as dichotomous choices. We expected protection-related needs to mediate the choice of absence positioning in promotion focus, while performance-related needs will mediate the choice of presence positioning in promotion focus. Critically, we also limited our exploration to chemical ingredients, which are commonly found in the marketplace. Study 3 employed two-hundred US residents participated on MTurk in exchange for payment. After seeing each image separately, participants were randomly assigned one of the positioning conditions. The results of Study 3 provide additional evidence for our theory that consumers prefer absence-positioned products which highlight the lack of ingredients. Choice shares were significantly greater for products which were positioned to highlight the absence of chemical additives, as compared with those products which were positioned to highlight the presence of the additives. Additionally, this study confirmed that the advantage of highlighting the absence of ingredients appears to be effective in prevention focus, while the opposite is true in promotion...
focus. When the consumer is motivated to prevent or avoid negative/ undesirable outcomes, he/she is more sensitive to the absence of potentially-harmful chemical ingredients. Likewise, presence-framed products are appealing when the consumer is motivated to approach positive outcomes and promote benefits. Studies 1-3, therefore, provide solid evidence of the absence positioning effect, as well as the moderating influence of regulatory focus and underlying mediation through perception of protection-related needs.

REFERENCES
Are Busy Consumers More Satisfied Consumers? It Depends!
The Effect of Perceived Busyness on Satisfaction
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This research examines when and how perceived busyness influences satisfaction. We demonstrate that when the product performance is low [high], high (vs. low) perceived busyness leads consumer to perceive that they used their time less [more] efficiently in obtaining or consuming the product, which reduces [increases] satisfaction with the product.

Busyness has become a pervasive psychological state of modern consumers. More and more consumers report being busier in that they feel overburdened with work (Schulte 2014). Recent research has started to document the effects of perceived busyness on various outcomes, including task motivation (Wilcox et al. 2016), experienced emotion (Hsee et al. 2010), and social inference (Bellezza et al. 2016). However, little research examines how perceived busyness could impact outcomes in the consumption domain. We address this gap by examining whether perceived busyness with required tasks has carryover effects on consumer satisfaction with a product or an experience.

In line with the previous literature (Bellezza et al. 2016; Wilcox et al. 2016), we define perceived busyness as a subjective perception that one has many required tasks (e.g., work-related tasks) to perform and long hours to spend on these tasks. Consumers can feel busy with their required tasks at any stage of decision-making process. We argue that feeling busy at the post-purchase evaluation is critical in influencing satisfaction because that is the stage when satisfaction is determined.

Building on prior research on resource availability (Metha and Zhu 2016; Shah et al. 2015), we argue that when consumers feel busy and therefore experience the constraint of time, they will focus more on the time they spent on obtaining/consuming a product (e.g., the time spent on searching online), consequently influencing their perception about how well this time was spent. We propose that perceived busyness can increase or decrease perceived time usage efficiency depending on the objective performance of the product. This is because objective product performance is a salient and important cue in post-purchase evaluation as to whether the purchase was successful (Churchill and Suprenant 1982). Objective product performance consists of various quality-related attributes (Oliver and DeSacro 1998). For example, in the case of clothing, objective performance consists of the quality of the fabric and how well it fits the consumer. We posit that when objective product performance is low [high], busier consumers are more likely to perceive that they used their time less [more] efficiently in obtaining/consuming a product because they are more likely to interpret the low [high] product performance as a cue that their time was not well spent [well spent]. This perception of time usage efficiency in turn could decrease [increase] satisfaction with the product.

Five studies tested these hypotheses. Across the studies, we ruled out alternative explanations including emotion (e.g., stress), feeling of deservingness, and sacrificing vs. maximizing tendency.

Study 1 tested the moderating role of objective product performance in the relationship between perceived busyness and satisfaction. We manipulated perceived busyness independently through a writing task. Participants wrote down either busy days with school tasks (high busyness condition) or relaxed days with leisure activities (low busyness condition). Participants then imagined that they would purchase a wallpaper to use on their laptop. They spent two minutes viewing information about online wallpaper alternatives and then chose one to purchase. In the high [low] performance condition, the chosen wallpaper had high [low] resolution, saturation and brightness. We obtained significant interaction between perceived busyness and product performance on satisfaction. As predicted, when product performance was low [high], the high (vs. low) busyness significantly reduced [increased] satisfaction. We obtained similar results on the rating of the wallpaper and willingness to revisit the store.

Study 2 tested the mediating role of time usage efficiency in obtaining a product. We manipulated perceived busyness as in study 1. Participants read a scenario where they imagined that after spending time on searching, they purchased a T-shirt online. Low versus high product performance was manipulated by telling participants that the T-shirt looked OK versus very good on them. We obtained significant interaction between perceived busyness and product performance on satisfaction and regret in the expected direction. Perceived time usage efficiency significantly mediated these effects.

In prior studies, perceived busyness was manipulated independently before consumers engaged in a purchase process. Study 3 manipulated perceived busyness in the scenario at the time of post-purchase evaluation to clearly test our proposition. We used a similar T-shirt scenario as in study 2. Participants in the high [low] busyness condition read that they received the T-shirt while they were having the very busy [relaxed] days. The T-shirt looked OK versus very good on them. We obtained significant interaction between perceived busyness and product performance on satisfaction and regret in the expected direction. Perceived time usage efficiency significantly mediated these effects in both high and low performance conditions in the expected direction.

Studies 1-3 used tangible products (e.g., wallpapers or T-shirt). In study 4, we used an experiential consumption to generalize our findings. We manipulated perceived busyness as in study 1. Then, participants watched a slideshow featuring eight photos in either high or low resolution. When product performance was low, high (vs. low) busyness significantly reduced satisfaction with the slideshow, replicating prior findings. When product performance was high, busyness did not significantly influence satisfaction. However, perception of time usage significantly mediated these effects in both high and low performance conditions in the expected direction.

Study 5 provided stronger causal evidence for the proposed mechanism by manipulating the amount of time consumers invested on obtaining a product. According to our theory, when consumers believe that they did not spend much time obtaining a product, the effects of perceived busyness on perception of time usage efficiency and thus on satisfaction should be attenuated. We first manipulated perceived busyness as in study 1. Participants then read a scenario where they imagined setting up a snack box subscription service. In the baseline [quick] amount of time condition, participants read that they went through a long [very quick] process to set up the service. We operationalized low product performance by saying that the quality of snacks was low. As expected, high (vs. low) busyness significantly reduced satisfaction in the baseline condition; this effect disappeared in the quick condition where consumers spent little time obtaining the product.
This research contributes to the literature on busyness and satisfaction. Practically, our findings suggest that firms can use knowledge of the relationship between busyness and satisfaction to enhance consumer satisfaction.

REFERENCES
**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Though the topic has increased in popularity within marketing, scant literature has considered emotional antecedents to self-disclosure. We examine fear’s impact on self-disclosure, showing that people who experience a frightening event alone are more likely to self-disclose vulnerable and personal information to brands, even though self-disclosure is inherently risky.

Extant research has considered various antecedents that may influence consumers to engage in self-disclosure (Derlega et al., 1993). However, scant research has examined the impact of incidental emotion on self-disclosure. For example, it is common for consumers to experience fear regularly. Yet, research has not considered incidental fear’s potential influence on self-disclosure motivations. In this research, we examine the impact of fear on self-disclosure and how this self-disclosure may be beneficial for brands.

Fear is a basic negative emotion elicited in response to perceived threat (Izard, 2013). Several theories examine the antecedents to and outcomes of fear. For example, cognitive appraisal theory suggests that fearful individuals are risk-averse and express pessimistic risk estimates of future events (Lerner and Keltner, 2001). Emotion regulation, however, has found that people cope with fear through affiliation with others (Schachter, 1959; Sarnoff and Zimbardo, 1961), a mechanism that has been shown to enhance brand attachment (Dunn and Hoegg, 2014).

These theories provide divergent predictions on fear’s effect on behavioral outcomes. While cognitive appraisal theory would predict that fearful individuals are risk-averse, affiliation theory would predict that fearful individuals are motivated to affiliate with others. Such affiliative behavior could potentially put an individual at risk of rejection or exploitation, if it involves self-disclosure (Derlega et al., 1993). Previous literature has suggested that individuals divulge private information when it provides a “net benefit” (White 2004), and are more likely to be open and honest when they do disclose (Derlega et al. 1993). This vulnerability results in self-disclosure being an inherently risky activity. If self-disclosure can enhance affiliation, but is also perceived as risky, which motivation (risk-aversion vs. affiliation) would exert greater influence over a fearful individual?

Across five experimental studies and one field study, we observe directional and significant effects of fear on self-disclosure. Specifically, we expect affiliation (via measurement and moderated by affiliative experience) as the underlying process. We predict that individuals who experience fear alone will engage in significantly greater amounts of self-disclosure than individuals who have experienced fear in a group.

Study 1 tested whether a) self-disclosure is seen as a risky activity and b) fear leads to higher perceptions of risk. Using several measures of self-disclosure behavior [i.e., private information, personal information, use of private and personal information (Vogel and Wester 2003; Fogel and Nehmad 2009)], we find a consistent pattern for fear: those who experienced fear perceived directionally greater risk in different domains of private and personal information than those in the control group.

Study 2 was conducted as a field study and tested whether our findings in the lab were reflected in real-life settings. Participants at a local haunted house experienced a haunted attraction alone or in a group and then had the option to complete a short survey. Lone participants, as compared to group participants, showed significantly greater engagement in the survey and marginally greater discussion in personal regrets.

Study 3 was a 2 (emotion: fear vs. control) x 2 (experience: alone vs. with others) between-subjects design used to test the moderating effect of experience on incidental fear’s influence on self-disclosure. Participants were told that they would either be watching a movie clip alone or with everyone in the lab and were then randomly assigned to watch either a fear-inducing or control movie clip. All participants were told that they had been selected for a pre-screening for a future focus group conducted by a brand. Scared lone participants believed they would demonstrate significantly greater openness and honesty with the brand if they were selected for the future focus group.

Study 4 utilized a similar setting and design as Study 3. Scared lone participants provided significantly longer responses about what they were most guilty about in life. Additionally, these participants were directionally more likely to agree to release their photo to an unknown brand moderator than other participants.

Study 5 tested fear’s impact on self-disclosure in a general perspective, rather than explicitly stating to participants that their self-disclosed material would be shared with a specific entity, such as a brand or brand representative. Participants were randomly assigned to conditions similar to Study 3’s design. Participants in the alone condition reported significantly greater amounts of needing to be with others than participants in the together condition. Scared lone participants, as compared to scared group participants, provided significantly longer responses to describe their relationships with their mothers as well as were more likely to engage in self-disclosure about their childhood and about expectations for the future.

Study 6 tested a brand’s anthropomorphism level as a boundary condition to self-disclosure under moments of fear. Participants were randomly assigned to watch a fear or control movie clip. Individuals who experienced fear reported a significantly greater need for affiliation than control participants. Participants were then randomly assigned to read about an anthropomorphized TV or a non-anthropomorphized TV as designed by Hur and colleagues (2015). Participants were asked about their typical television and streaming habits. Scared participants who read about the anthropomorphized brand, as compared to scared participants that read about the control brand, provided directionally longer answers about their personal viewing habits that they felt were inappropriate.

Our contribution to theory is three-fold. Firstly, we present a novel consideration of cognitive appraisal theory and affiliation theory in the domain of fear. Secondly, we extend the current knowledge of incidental emotional research within marketing (Achar et al., 2016). Thirdly, we extend self-disclosure literature within marketing by offering fear as a novel antecedent. We believe brands can utilize our findings to create strategic plans for communication with their consumers after an unrelated scary event has occurred. Both parties within the relationship can benefit; consumers can have the opportunity to alleviate their fear by affiliating with the brand via self-disclosure and the brand can obtain valuable information about its consumers that it would otherwise not have access to. Future re-
search will examine brand outcomes and the effects of participants experiencing fear physically alone or in a group.

REFERENCES


Emojional Communication in Digitally Mediated Relationships
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Limitations of mediated communication are slowly eroding as emojis are used to express meaning. This research applies emotion as social information (EASI) theory to demonstrate how emojis aid in relationship development within digital marketing communications by identifying the types of meaning emojis convey and the conditions that enable the effect.

The Oxford English Dictionary annually chooses a “word of the year” to reflect changes in language. In 2015, for the first time ever, the winner wasn’t a word, but an emoji called Face with Tears of Joy (Ayers 2015). The image’s popularity, along with that of emojis in general, led to this recognition. Since their introduction, emojis have quickly become a popular linguistic signal within a previously text-only communication. On average, emojis are used over 12 million times per day on Twitter (Rothenberg 2016).

Marketers have tried to capitalize on this popularity by including them in both online and offline communications. However, these efforts have sometimes led to unintended negative consequences (Walsh 2016). In face-to-face communication, senders and receivers rely on both verbal cues as well as nonverbal cues to convey meaning (Barnum and Woliamsky 1989). Nonverbal cues are missing when communication is digitally mediated, and relationship development takes more time (Walther 1992). By serving as a signal of senders’ meaning and emotion, emojis have evolved to fill this gap. This research introduces a new theory to the consumer research literature as a useful tool for understanding and predicting the responses elicited by the intentional communication of meaning and emotion via emoji in a textual message.

Emotion as social information (EASI) theory (Van Kleef 2009) provides a useful lens for understanding how emojis enhance both the meaning of a message as well as the relationship between sender and receiver. EASI focuses on the sender’s emotional expression and how it informs the receiver of a message.

EASI proposes that a sender’s emotional signal can activate affective and/or cognitive mechanisms of influence on the receiver of a message (Van Kleef 2009). The affective reaction relies on a transfer of emotion from the sender to receiver consistent with emotional contagion theory (Hatfield et al. 1994). Studies of emotional contagion theory have established the transfer of emotion via facial expressions and the downstream effects on relationship development (e.g. Hennig-Thurau et al. 2006). However, these effects have yet to be demonstrated in a digital communication environment.

Additionally, emotional signals also allow the receiver to infer information about the sender to facilitate social relationship development. The asynchronous nature of digital communication encourages more selective self-presentation by the sender and the lack of other nonverbal cues can lead the receiver to over-attribute limited information (Walther 2007). Although an emoji is a small portion of a message, it provides a signal from which the receiver can infer the sender’s current emotional disposition, attitudes, or relational intentions. We focus on how these emotions and inferences affect relationship strength.

Emotional expression is more commonly expected and reciprocated within communal rather than an exchange relationship (Van Kleef 2016). The key characterizing features of communal relationships are high levels of trust and expected reciprocity (Clark and Mills 1994). However, in exchange relationships, the overall level of trust is typically lower (Clark and Mills 1994). Expectations of an enduring relationship may not be present, and therefore it is important to maintain a balance so that neither party is indebted to the other.

Not only would an emotional expression be more likely to be caught via emotional contagion, the expression itself may be deemed more appropriate within a communal relationship and strengthen the inferential path as well. Therefore, the presence of a communal relationship should strengthen both the affective and inferential responses to an emoji.

This research applies EASI to the usage of emojis as a means of strengthening relationships in digital marketing communications. Specifically, we demonstrate 1) how an emoji contributes to perceived relationship strength, 2) social relational factors that moderate this effect, and 3) the affective and cognitive mechanisms operating. Three studies demonstrate the effects of emojis on relationship formation within a digital communication.

First, a pilot study measured responses to emojis in an online chat conversation. Undergraduate students participated in a lab experiment utilizing both conscious responses to survey questions as well as unconscious reactions such as facial expressions measured by iMotions sensors. Consistent with the happy emojis used, the facial expression profiling revealed that participants in the emoji condition expressed joy for more time and felt greater rapport with the experimenter than in the control condition. This provides initial evidence of the effect of an emoji on unconscious affect and rapport.

Study 1 demonstrated how the function of an emoji in a text message may differ based on existing communal or exchange relationship norms. Participants viewed a text message reminder for an upcoming appointment sent from either a new (exchange relationship) or existing (communal relationship) service provider. When an emoji was used, perceptions of the relationship were stronger in the communal condition than in the exchange condition, however there is no difference between perceptions of relationship strength in either control condition. This indicates that emojis are effective in marketing communications when communal relationship norms have been established.

Study 2 replicated the previous effect and demonstrated the internal mechanisms enabling to the effect. Like the previous study, there was a significant interaction effect on relationship strength. Additionally, a test of parallel mediators shows the conditional indirect effect of emoji on relationship perceptions through both positive affect and sender impressions was positive and significant in the communal condition. The effect on relationship strength was fully mediated through these two paths.

The presence of an emoji in this research allowed participants to feel happier, draw important inferences about the sender, and, in turn, perceive stronger relationships. This provides an extension of emotional contagion effects into the realm of digital communication. In mediated communication, participants look for subtle cues to replace non-verbal communication and form relationships. Unlike previous studies that have only tested affective responses to smiling in service settings, this application of EASI addresses complementary roles of both affective and cognitive mechanisms. Thus, our research fills a major gap in our understanding of how expressions of emotions influence others in digitally mediated communications. Examining these mechanisms through the EASI model provides a more robust understanding of how emotional expressions influence those around them.
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Surprises add pleasures to life but uncertainty is aversive. The booming subscription business provides an opportunity to examine preference for uncertainty when risks are involved. In a set of studies, we show that feeling of control plays an important role in consumers’ willingness to be surprised with a subscription package.

Conventional wisdom suggests that people love “surprises” as they add unexpected pleasures to our life (Goldsmith and Amir 2010; Laran and Tsiros 2013), but having control of one’s life is also crucial and uncertainty is aversive. The booming of subscription business in recent years offers an interesting context to examine consumers’ preferences for being surprised when there are risks involved. Subscription business offers periodical deliveries of products such as snacks, cosmetics, and apparels and customers can either choose the products themselves for each delivery, or opt for the surprise-me option and let the service provider selects products for them. Despite the surging popularity of this practice (i.e., offer a surprise-me option) in business, little is known whether consumers prefer making their own selections or would willingly let the service provider surprise them, and how the adoption of either subscription option affects consumers’ consumption experiences. In this research, we examine what makes consumers relent their control in decisions where risks are involved. Managerially, answers to these questions can help service providers better design the surprise-me option for both operational efficiencies and customer satisfactions.

Our key hypothesis is that the uncertainties associated with a surprise-me option are not immediately appealing unless consumers have a heightened sense of personal control prior to choosing a subscription option. This hypothesis is based on the notion that people prefer a certain gain over an uncertain one (e.g., Kahneman and Tversky 1979; Gneezy, List, and Wu 2006; Kivetz 2003), and uncertainty and its negative utility threaten the perception of personal control (e.g., Simonsohn 2009; Sonsino 2008; Holt and Laury 2002; Gaucher, Hafer, Kay, & Davidenko, 2010). Being in control is a basic human need and a key driver of consumer behavior (e.g., Kelley 1971; Kelly 1955). Also, the hedonic value of uncertainty is mostly shown in situations when no or minimal risks are associated (e.g., Goldsmith and Amir 2010; Laran and Tsiros 2013). Therefore, we propose that consumers by default prefer the self-selection option over the surprise-me option, and the latter leads to lower customer satisfactions about both the purchase process and outcome. This preference of the self-selection option will be even stronger when consumers already feel lack of personal control as they tend to compensate and engage in efforts to restore control (e.g., seeking order, structure, and pattern in one’s environment; Whitson and Galinsky, 2008; Kay et al., 2009).

On the other hand, a salient sense of personal control can serve as a safeguard to the basic human need of maintaining control, reducing risk perceptions and thus allowing consumers to appreciate the pleasure of uncertainty. Hence we expect that a feeling of personal control, even it is primed and illusory, is likely to increase the attractiveness of the surprise-me option.

We test this hypothesis in a series of three studies in which we operationalize a salient sense of personal control in various ways. In study 1, we instilled the sense of control by allowing consumers first to choose between the self-selection and surprise-me options. The study was conducted with student participants (n = 128). They were offered a candy after a filler task, either self-selection or a surprise-me and they either self-elect the process (decide whether to go with self-selection or surprise) or assigned to a process (self-selection or surprise-me). Results showed that while there is no difference for the choice conditions (whether self-elect or assigned), electing to be surprised led to higher affective reaction to the candy and actual consumption enjoyment than assigned surprise. Results confirmed our expectation that feeling of control increases preference for being surprised. In study 2, we increased consumers’ sense of control by offering a surprise option with an external assistant (i.e., computer algorithm for selection). We used a wine subscription scenario ($39.99 per box, n = 111). Results showed that when an external assistant is available, preference for the surprise option significantly increased. Finally, in study 3 we directly primed the state of personal (in)control using an autobiographical recall task adapted from Whitson and Galinsky (2008) (study 4). The scenarios used a snack subscription service ($9.99 per box, n = 133). Results showed that when participants were primed with a heightened sense of control, preference for the surprise option increased. On the other hand, when feeling lack of control, participants tend to prefer self-selection as it helps to compensate and regain control.

Overall, the set of studies supported the expected important role of feeling of control. In the context of subscription services, we show that the surprise option is valued only when consumers have a sense of control hence do not need to regain it through choice. Collectively, our studies show that the sense of control could be influenced by multiple sources including the state of mind (induced by recalling an event in study 3), or service characteristics designed by the providers (selection algorithm in study 2).

In this research, we link research in feeling of control and enjoyment of uncertainty and examine the important role of control in influencing the sense of enjoyment with uncertain consumption scenarios. Previous research identified the hedonic values of uncertainty but it is not clear under what conditions uncertainty is enjoyable. Our research offers contribution by identifying a boundary condition of the effect. We also provide interesting managerial implications. Identify conditions and mechanisms under which consumers are willing to be surprised would help service providers design more attractive offerings.

REFERENCES


Consumer Reactions to the Scope of a Data Breach Incident: How Affect Moderates Scope Effects on Intentions to Leave the Focal Firm

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Sumantra Sarkar, Binghamton University, State University of New York, USA
Cihan Uzmanoglu, Binghamton University, State University of New York, USA

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A laboratory study shows that as consumers become more fearful/angry/anxious following the news of a data breach, they create a prototypical mental image (how the incident affects them personally), and the latter makes their intentions to leave the focal company less sensitive to the breach’s scope (number of people affected).

Data breach is the stealing/viewing/using of sensitive, protected or confidential data (such as health information, personally identifiable information, trade secrets and intellectual property) by unauthorized individuals/organizations/countries. One consequence of data breaches is an abnormal churn rate and resulting loss in company value. For example, Martin, Borah and Palmitier (2017) find that the stock market punishes the focal firms (victims of the breach) and reward rival firms in proportion to the size or scope of the data breach. Our paper reports a laboratory study investigating how consumers respond to the news of data breaches that vary in scope (affecting few versus a large number of people).

When consumers hear about a data breach that can potentially compromise their personal information they feel threatened, which, in turn, evokes a variety of negative emotions such as fear, anger, and anxiety (Krusemark and Li, 2013). The main question that we ask in this paper is what role these negative emotions play in a consumer’s intention to stay with, or leave, the focal firm.

Research suggests that when consumers judge an incident based more on affect and less on reasons, they become insensitive to the incident’s scope (see, Hsee and Rottensteich, 2004; Kahneman and Frederick, 2002). This happens because affect-driven consumers quickly construct a prototypical instance of their situation and use this image to make their judgments (a prototypical instance might be a visual representation of what it would be like to have an unauthorized person access private information and run up a credit card bill; see Kahneman, 2003). And while prototypical instances are affect rich, they are insensitive to any scope considerations. For example, when Desvouges et al. (1993) examined how (separate groups of) participants donate to save 2,000, 20,000, or 200,000 migrating birds from drowning in oil ponds, they found the mean responses to be $80, $78, and $88, respectively, suggesting an almost complete disregard of the tragedy’s scope. And as Kahneman, Ritov, and Schkade (2000) explain it best, the scope insensitivity arises because respondents base their answers on “a mental representation of a prototypical incident, perhaps an image of an exhausted bird, its feathers soaked in black oil, unable to escape” (p. 652).

Based on the discussions above, we propose that (1) affect will moderate how the scope of a data breach will influence a consumer’s intentions to stay with, or leave, the focal company (the judgment becomes less sensitive to scope as the affective reactions get stronger; test of moderation) and (2) stronger affective reactions to data breach will generate a more vivid prototypical instance (visual image of how the consumer is affected by the breach), which, in turn, will influence the stay/leave judgments; test of mediation).

Two hundred and five M-Turk volunteers participated in an online study. They imagined that they were consumers of a fictitious retail company (RETAILCO), and read a news story that a data breach had occurred at RETAILCO about a year ago possibly compromising their personal information. At this point we measured, on 9-point scales (anchored on very much/not at all), how angry, fearful, and anxious they felt about the situation (for anger, angry, mad, rage, $\alpha = 0.91$; for fear, scared, dread, fearful, $\alpha = 0.87$; for anxiety, anxious, worried, nervous, $\alpha = 0.90$).

Next, the participants read that the data breach may have compromised the personal information of either three thousand customers (small scope) or nine million customers (large scope). Thereafter, we measured (1) their intentions to stop buying from RETAILCO; two 9-point, very likely/not at all likely, scales), (2) how vividly they could imagine the data breach afflicting them personally (two 9-point, very true/not at all true of me scales), and (3) their risk aversion (seven items; Meertens and Lion, 2008; since fear and anger drive diametrically opposite risk assessments; Lerner et al. 2003).

We test for a moderation model using the process test outlined in Hayes (2013). We use one composite measure of the negative emotions ($\alpha = 0.93$), one composite measure of future intentions ($\alpha = 0.72$), and mean-center the negative emotions variable. The conditional coefficient of scope (conditional on negative emotions = 0) on intentions to stop buying is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.70$, $t = 3.43$, $p = 0.00$). However, and consistent with our proposition, this effect is qualified by a significant and negative interaction with emotion ($\beta = – 0.31$, $t = – 2.50$, $p = 0.01$), suggesting that the scope effect is significantly reduced if participants react more emotionally to the news of the data breach.

We test for a mediation model using the process test outlined in Hayes (2013). We use one composite measure of prototypical instance ($\alpha = 0.87$). We find that those who react more emotionally to the news of the data breach can visualize more clearly how the data breach could affect them personally ($\beta = 0.55$, $t = 7.41$, $p = 0.00$), which, in turn, increases their intentions to stop buying from the focal retailer ($\beta = 0.14$, $t = 2.36$, $p = 0.02$). The indirect effect (0.55 x 0.14) is significant (a 95% bias corrected bootstrap confidence interval is 0.01, 0.17) supporting our second proposition.

Our research holds implications for organizations grappling with the problem of managing data breaches and reducing the as-

Figure 1. Process Models

Affective Reaction

Scope of Data Breach

Prototypical Instance

Affective Reaction

Intentions to Leave the Focal Firm

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Table 1: Process Tests

<table>
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Process Tests: Mediation Model

(A) Outcome = Prototypical Instance

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(B) Outcome = Intentions to Stop Buying

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<td>0.07</td>
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(C) Indirect Effect of Emotions on Intentions to Stop Buying via Prototypical Instance

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associated abnormal churn. The results suggest that affected organizations focus on how best to minimize the emotional outburst that almost invariably accompanies such news. Thus future research could identify strategies that can best keep these negative reactions in check (e.g., releasing the information as soon as it is detected, expressing contrition, and/or offering free credit monitoring services for affected consumers).

REFERENCES


Odd Numbers are Dynamic: How Numerical Parity Influences Consumer Judgment
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Associations between numbers and certain abstract concepts can have profound effects on judgment and preference. We uncover the “odd/even numbers-dynamic/stable” link and show that consumers prefer products associated with odd numbers when the ad appeal concerns product efficiency while favoring even numbers when product stability is highlighted.

Prior work has suggested that people have the tendency to associate numbers with different types of abstract concepts, ranging from human-like characteristics such as gender (Yan 2016) and competency (Jerez-Fernandez, Angulo, and Oppenheimer 2014), to source credibility (Schindler and Yalch 2006) and goal completion (Pope and Simonsohn 2011). Numerical parity (i.e., whether a number is even or odd), however, have attained relatively little investigation (see Wilkie and Bodenhausen 2012 for exception). In the present article, we propose that consumers tend to perceive odd numbers as dynamic and changing while linking even numbers with stability. This odd-dynamic association further exerts influences on consumer judgment and preference.

Examining this effect is important for several reasons. First, we expand the work on how numerical information influences consumers’ preference by focusing on a less explored category of numbers. In addition, we establish a novel link between numerical parity and dynamics. Further, we add to the literature on product efficacy by examining how numerical parity shapes consumers’ perception of how fast or stable a product could have effects.

Study 1 provided initial support for the proposed association between odd (vs. even) numbers and dynamics (vs. stability). We presented participants with a series of six numbers and asked them to rate how dynamic or stable each number seemed using a 9-point scale. In order to better control the magnitude, we created six pairs of numbers, each pair consisting of two consecutive integers. Specifically, three pairs contain smaller odd numbers (e.g., 71) and larger even numbers (e.g., 72), while the remaining three involve larger odd numbers (e.g., 347) and smaller even numbers (e.g., 346). We found that participants were more likely to perceive odd numbers as dynamic than even numbers ($F(1, 99) = 4.913, p = 0.029$).

Study 2 was conducted to further demonstrate the link using an implicit association test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz 1998). The IAT involved two target categories (even vs. odd numbers) and two attribute categories (stable vs. dynamic). Participants were instructed to sort a series of stimuli into two categories as quickly as possible on the premise to ensure accuracy. Following the procedure suggested by Greenwald, Nosek, and Banaji (2003), we observed that participants responded quicker when odd numbers were paired with dynamics-related concepts, suggesting an “odd numbers-dynamic” association.

Studies 3A and 3B tested whether consumers’ perception of products that were about to be out-of-stock would be influenced by numerical parity. In Study 3A, participants were asked to judge how soon a place setting would be sold out. As predicted, participants believed that the product would sell out sooner when there were 17 pieces (vs. 16 pieces) in stock ($F(1, 127) = 6.99, p = .009$). In Study 3B, participants were shown a set of wine glasses and instructed to indicate if they would buy them right away. Participants were more inclined to make a purchase when the quantity was odd than even ($F(1, 100) = 4.249, p = .042$). Moreover, we ruled out the alternative account that odd numbers seemed smaller than even numbers ($F < 1$).

While Studies 3A and 3B have demonstrated that odd (vs. even) numbers are perceived as more fast-changing in a declining trend, Study 4 examined if the odd-dynamic association would hold in an upward direction. Participants read a brief description of Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world, in which its height was varied as either 2722, 2723, or 2724 feet. Afterward, participants estimated how soon another building would break the record and become the new tallest building. A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of parity ($F(2, 312) = 4.32, p = .014$), such that it is easier to break the world record of 2723 feet than that of 2722 or 2724 feet ($t(312) = 2.41, p = .017$).

Study 5 tested whether odd numbers would enhance purchase intention when a product is featured in dynamic-related characteristics. Participants were presented with an ad for teeth whitening strips, aiming to either take the effect speedily or maintain the effect longer. Numerical parity was manipulated through the number of strips needed for one treatment (i.e., 9 vs. 8). Participants indicated purchase intention on two 7-point scales ($F(1, 204) = 5.719, p = .018$). Specifically, when the ad advocated efficiency, participants reported higher purchase intention for 9 pairs 8 pairs ($F(1, 204) = 4.156, p = .043$); however, the pattern disappeared when the ad concerned durability ($F(1, 204) = 1.803, p = .181$).

Study 6 aimed to show that consumers may apply this association only when the number concerns dynamic-related perception, and that odd numbers could also exert negative influence on preference when the number concerns stability perception. Participants were shown an ad for a probiotic product, which emphasized maintaining the viability of probiotics. The product was named either PRO-12, PRO-13 or PRO-14. Further, half of the participants were told that brand name indicates the number of probiotics involved to improve stability, while the other half were merely informed that multiple types of probiotics work together to improve stability. Participants indicated their willingness to pay. A 3 by 2 between-subjects ANCOVA with general interest as a control variable yielded a significant interaction effect ($F(2, 301) = 5.060, p = .007$). When the number was associated with stability, participants were willing to pay less for PRO-13 than for PRO-14 ($F(1, 301) = 8.972, p = .003$) and for PRO-12 ($F(1, 301) = 5.413, p = .021$). In contrast, when the number was unrelated to stability, no reliable difference was observed ($F(2, 301) = .938, p = .392$).

In sum, across seven studies we consistently observed an association between odd (vs. odd) numbers and dynamics (vs. stability). This odd-dynamic relationship has important marketing implications, such that consumer preference and purchase intention will be enhanced when odd numbers are aligned with dynamic-related concerns. In contrast, using odd numbers may have negative impacts on judgment when stability is under consideration.

REFERENCE


Perceiving Opportunities to Divide: How Expanded vs. Contracted Units Influence Goal Pursuit Organization

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Jorge Pena-Marin, University of Cincinnati, USA

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

How individuals decide to pursue their goals (i.e. goal structure) has important implications for goal completion. For quantitative goals, we show that the choice for a particular goal structure is determined by the scale in which a goal is specified because scale influences the perceived opportunity to divide.

Despite the wealth of research on goals, less is known about how individuals organize their goal pursuit. For example, a person can decide to complete a running goal of 15km in one stretch or restructure it into more or less sub-goals. Understanding the factors that determine choice for a particular goal structure is crucial because pursuing goals through either no, few or many sub-goals has implications for goal completion (Amir and Ariely 2008) and attributes this shift to the changing source of motivation at different time points during the goal pursuit. In four lab and field experiments, we employed contexts such as exercising, business reviews, and work-for-pay jobs, and performed both within-subject and between-subject tests. We found that when individuals are initiating a goal and derive motivation primarily from the belief that the final goal state is attainable, the structure of sub-goals enhances the sense of attainability and therefore leads to greater motivation. Conversely, when people are completing a goal and the source of motivation centers primarily on the perception that their actions are of value, a focus on the overall goal (rather than sub-goals).

We seek to better understand the determinants of goal organization, and focus on quantitative goals. We propose that the scale in which a goal is framed impacts the number of sub-goals consumers set. An emerging literature demonstrates that specifying quantitative information on alternative scales influences individuals’ decisions in various ways (Pandelaere, Briers, and Lembregts 2011). We anticipate that a goal expressed on an expanded scale may leads to setting more sub-goals than one on a contracted scale.

We test two possible mechanisms. A first possibility is that, because of the increase in number magnitude, goals specified on an expanded scale may appear less feasible, which in turn leads to opting for more sub-goals in an attempt to increase feasibility. In other words, number magnitude would function as a cue for goal feasibility.

A second possibility is that a contracted scale lowers the perceived opportunity to divide the goal in smaller sub-goals relative to an expanded scale. Although both 2-hour task can be divided in as many sub-goals as 120-minute one, thoughts of dividing the already small numbers of contracted scales in even smaller ones may be less salient.Dividing up smaller natural numbers may require thinking in fractions, which is something that people may want to avoid given the difficulties they have handling them (Ni and Zhou 2005).

In study 1 tests whether expanded scales lead to choosing goal systems with more sub-goals than contracted scales ($M = 3.80$) leads to choosing goal systems with more sub-goals than contracted scales ($M = 3.00$; $F(1,198) = 33.21, p < .001$).

Study 2) 1) tests the effect with a real goals, 2) keeps the familiarity of the scale constant across conditions, 3) manipulates perceived feasibility. If numerical magnitude functions as a cue for goal feasibility, then providing an alternative cue for feasibility should overrule the informational value of numerical magnitude, and the effect should be attenuated. If providing a more salient cue for feasibility does not attenuate the effect of scale type on goal pursuit organization, this suggests that an alternative process may be operating. In total, 301 AMT participants completed two tasks: a photo-rating task and completing a goal of burning energy, which was measured in a new unit, by mouse-clicking. In the expanded scale conditions, participants were asked to complete 2000 RD (1 click = 10 – 30 RD), in the contracted condition, participants were asked to complete 2 kiloRD (1 click = .01 - .03 kiloRD). Importantly, in the alternative feasibility cue conditions, participants also read the following statement before they saw the number of [kilo]RD: “Please be aware that the required number of [kilo]RD may seem very large, but it is not! This is the reaction that we often get from earlier participants”. In the no alternative cue condition, there was no such statement. After reading the required number of [kilo]RD, they were told that they could choose how to complete the picture rating task and burning 2000 RD. They then indicated their preferred goal structure. Next, they proceeded in completing both the photo-rating task and clicking task in their preferred way. We found a main effect of scale ($F(1,297) = 7.64, p < .01$) and alternative cue ($F(1,297) = 6.50, p = .01$). An expanded scale ($M = 2.95$) leads to more sub-goals than a contracted scale ($M = 2.25$). Providing a cue which suggest high feasibility decreases the number of sub-goals in general ($M_{no-cue}= 2.28; M_{cue-crom}= 2.93$), but it does not interact with scale type ($F(1,297) = .23, p = .63$).

Study 3 tests whether perceived opportunity of the numerical value to be divided rather than perceived feasibility statistically mediates the effect. We recruited 301 AMT participants to complete the same task as in study 2, except that only scale expansion was manipulated and different numbers were used (contracted: 20 kiloRD, expanded: 20,000 RD). We also measured perceived opportunity to be divided of the numerical value and feasibility.

Participants choose to complete the task using more sub-goals if the goal is specified in an expanded ($M = 2.28$) rather than a contracted scale ($M = 2.73$; $t(299) = -1.83, p = .07$). The numerical value of a goal specified in an expanded scale ($M = 5.81$) was also perceived as providing more opportunity to be divided than one in a contracted scale ($M = 4.64; t(299) = -6.41, p < .001$). A goal specified on an expanded scale ($M = 5.18$) was also perceived as less feasible ($M = 6.02; t(299) = 5.21, p < .001$). Mediation analysis shows that this effect is mediated by perceived opportunity to divide rather than perceived feasibility.

This study shows that, for quantitative goals, the choice for a particular goal structure is determined by the measurement scale in which a goal happens to be specified, and that this is driven the perceived opportunity to divide rather than perceived goal feasibility.
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We introduce the response category distance effect: response categories are more densely spaced in dropdown vs. Likert format and are interpreted less extremely and used more often, leading to mean shifts and increased non-substantive variance. This is relevant as Likert type items are converted into dropdown formats on mobile devices.

We propose that the visual range of a response scale format influences perceived extremity of the endpoints and consequently Extreme Response Style (ERS), i.e. the tendency to give extreme responses (e.g., strongly (dis)agree) regardless of item content. The difference in visual range is particularly apparent between Likert type items and vertical dropdown formats and of relevance since online survey package tools even automatically adapt Likert type items to a vertical dropdown format on mobile devices, because the latter are more compact. Consequently, we hypothesize ERS differences between dropdown and Likert formats, and study how this ERS difference affects measurement model parameter estimates.

Respondents tend to interpret the visual midpoint of a rating scale as the conceptual midpoint. Adjacent response categories (e.g., slightly (dis)agree) are visually and conceptually closer to the midpoint than are the endpoint categories. Therefore, inferences may arise that endpoint categories that are visually more distant from the midpoint are also conceptually more extreme. If narrowing (widen ing) the visual scale range leads respondents to perceive the endpoints as less (more) extreme, endpoint categories will be more (less) likely to be selected, i.e., the response category distance effect.

The minimum horizontal range covered by a response category label corresponds to the longest word in the label, whereas the minimal vertical range covered by a response category label spans only the height of one letter. Consequently, the endpoints in a horizontal Likert scale format are visually further apart compared to the denser dropdown format. We posit that as a result of the difference in response category distance, an identically labeled response category (e.g., strongly disagree) will be perceived as more extreme in the Likert scale format than in the dropdown scale format. ERS will consequently be smaller in Likert-type scale formats than in dropdown scale formats. We experimentally assess whether dropdown (vs. Likert) formats result in more ERS, and whether this leads to mean shifts and additional variance, and if so, whether the extra variance is substantive (i.e., construct related) or non-substantive (i.e., unique variance and/or method variance). In all experiments we use the same response categories and labels (five labeled categories) but manipulate the scale format, while keeping constant device use to rule out confounding effects. We operationalize ERS as the number of times a participant selects a response located at the (low or high) end of the scale.

In study 1, participants (N = 501, all desktop/laptop users) were randomly assigned to either dropdown or Likert format scales (between subjects) and responded to 14 common marketing scales (within subject) and 24 items in Likert format and another set of 24 items in Likert format. We manipulated the scale format, while keeping constant device use to rule out confounding effects. We operationalize ERS as the number of times a participant selects a response located at the (low or high) end of the scale.

In study 2a, participants (N = 382 desktop/laptop users) answered six mood valence Likert items (including three reversed items). Visual range of the response categories was experimentally manipulated (narrow vs. wide) while keeping response category labels constant. ERS was significantly higher in the narrow (vs. broad) Likert format (M_{narrow} = 2.01, M_{broad} = 1.51, p < .05). CFA results show that while the average absolute factor loadings are not significantly different, the narrow format leads to significantly higher residual (co)variance estimates and significantly lower composite reliability.

In study 2b, participants (N = 484 desktop/laptop users) responded to a set of 24 items in Likert format and another set of 24 items in regular or spaced dropdown format. Thus, the between-subjects distance manipulation (regular vs. spaced dropdown) is nested in the dropdown condition of the within-subjects scale format manipulation (Likert vs. dropdown). The regular dropdown format shows higher ERS (M_{regular dropdown} = 6.45) than the Likert format (M_{Likert} = 5.70, p < .05) and a dropdown format in which the visual distance between response categories has been increased (M_{spaced dropdown} = 5.94; p < .05), in line with the response category distance effect. Also, the distance manipulation alleviates the ERS difference between Likert and dropdown data (p > .20).

In sum, people give more extreme responses in dropdown than Likert scale format items which results in upward (downward) bias in means for dropdown vs. Likert format for items that have a mean above (below) the scale midpoint. The increase in ERS boosts non-substantive variance, resulting in significantly lower internal consistency of marketing scales shown in dropdown format (study 1). Study 2 provides evidence for the response category distance effect: categories that are visually closer are treated as if they are less extreme (despite them being identically labeled) which leads to increased ERS (study 2a). Accordingly, the difference between Likert and dropdown format in terms of ERS is reduced when distance between dropdown response categories is increased (study 2b). Our findings contribute by introducing an overlooked antecedent of ERS (visual scale range) and illustrating how this decreased distance between response categories in dropdown scale format leads to increased ERS and higher non-substantive (compared to Likert scale formats).
When Seeing a Ratio Reduces Perceived Risk: An Examination into the Use of Infographics to Convey Risk
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Infographics are an increasingly popular form of communicating risk information. Yet, the present research suggests that the effectiveness of infographics (vs. text) depends on the size of the numbers used to represent a ratio. Furthermore, this research demonstrates the important role of active processing in explaining this effect.

Infographics are an increasingly popular form of communicating risk information. Yet, research is mixed regarding whether it is better to represent ratios with graphics or text, with some research showing advantages of using graphics over text in communicating risk information (Galasic et al. 2009; Garcia-Retamero et al. 2010; Okan et al. 2012), and others showing disadvantages of using graphics over text (Schirillo & Stone 2005; Stone et al. 2003). Besides differences between these two streams of research in how risk was measured (objective vs. subjective), they also differ in the information communicated with the graphic. Thus, in the current studies, both objective and subjective risk were measured. In addition, to control for the amount of information provided in the graphic (vs. text) conditions, the ratio is only presented as numerical (graphic) information in the text (graphic) condition in the studies comparing graphic formats to text formats.

One disadvantage of graphics (vs. text) is that they may fail to engage active processing of the ratio (Okan et al. 2012). I propose that this depends on the numbers used to represent the ratio. Specifically, the effect of statistical information conveyed via graphics should be easier to actively process when the ratio is less (vs. more) numerous. Thus, less (vs. more) numerous ratios should increase risk perceptions. This is tested in study 1. Furthermore, it should be harder to actively process graphics (vs. text) of more numerous ratios, thereby making graphics less effective. However, with less numerous ratios, graphics (vs. text) may be equally effective (because both allow for active processing) or may be more effective (because active processing may increase consideration of the denominator, making risk appear greater when the pool of people who could be affected is smaller). These predictions are tested in studies 2-4.

In study 1, participants were randomly assigned to receive one of three infographics on cyberbullying, where 25% of girls who have been victims of cyberbullying was represented by one of three ratios: 1-in-4, 2.5-in-10, or 25-in-100. To the left of this text was an image of 4, 10 or 100 figures. The number affected by cyberbullying was colored red, and those unaffected were colored black. As predicted, the size of numbers used to represent the ratio significantly affected perceived risk: perceived risk was greater among those who received the graphic of the less numerous ratios (both 1-in-4 and 2.5-in-10) than the more numerous ratio.

A potential weakness of study 1 is that the ratio was conveyed both as text and as a graphic. Thus, the goal of studies 2-4 is to tease apart the effects of each type of format by creating ads that represent the ratio either graphically or textually. In study 2, participants were randomly assigned to a condition in a 2(format: graphics vs. text) x 2(numbers: small vs. large) design, where the numbers used to represent the ratio were either 3-in-10 (small numbers) or 30-in-100 (large numbers). To further test the generalizability of the study 1 results, I chose a different cause (melanoma), and measured perceived risk as well as donations. For perceived risk and donations, the format x numbers interactions were significant. Specifically, the graphic (vs. text) format conveyed greater perceived risk and higher donations when the ratio used smaller numbers, but not when the ratio used larger numbers.

Study 3 differs from studies 1-2 by using a relative-risk paradigm similar to that of prior research (Stone et al. 1997, 2003). Specifically, participants viewed an ad comparing an improved toothpaste to a standard toothpaste in its ability to prevent gum disease. Across conditions, improved toothpaste reduced gum disease from 50% to 40%. In the large (small) numbers condition, the ratios were 50-in-100 (5-in-10) to 40-in-100 (4-in-10). The graphic and text format were identical except that the ratios were either represented as numbers or as stick figures. Perceived risk and perceived risk reduction were measured. The format x numbers interaction was significant or approached significance for both variables. As predicted, the graphic (vs. text) format conveyed less perceived risk and less perceived risk reduction when the ratio used larger numbers but not smaller numbers.

If differences in active processing explain the format x studies effect observed in studies 2-3, then informing individuals of an approaching test, thereby encouraging more active processing across conditions, should mitigate the format x number effect. To test this in study 4, participants were randomly assigned to condition in a 2(format: graphics vs. text) x 2(numbers: small vs. large) x 2(test: aware vs. unaware) design. The study procedure was identical to study 3 with the exception of the test manipulation. Those aware of the test were told that they would be tested “on how accurately you remember this information,” while those unaware of the test were told that they would report “your feelings and beliefs based on this information.” In addition to reporting perceived risk, participants reported at the end of the study how carefully they read the information (i.e., engaged in active processing) in order to test this as a mediator. For perceived risk and active processing, a three-way interaction was significant. When participants were unaware of the approaching test (as in studies 1-3), the graphic (vs. text) format conveyed less perceived risk, and the information was processed less carefully when the ratio was more numerous, but not when the ratio was less numerous. When participants were aware of the approaching test, perceived risk did not differ between formats in the more numerous condition. In addition, across format and size conditions, participants who were aware of the upcoming test reported reading the information carefully. Furthermore, active processing significantly mediated the three-way interaction.

Together, these findings qualify those of prior research by suggesting that whether graphics (vs. text) is less effective depends on the numbers used to represent the ratio. Specifically, graphics can be as effective as (if not more effective than) text with less numerous ratios. Furthermore, this research demonstrates a novel process for the interactive effect of format and number: the degree of active processing.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Brand activism regarding socio-political issues has an asymmetric effect on consumers’ attitude towards the brand. The effect also depends on who takes the stand for the brand (source distance). Consumers process brand activism through a constructive moral reasoning process, instead of the intuitive and/or affective processes identified in moral psychology.

In 2012, when public opinion regarding same-sex marriages in the United States was highly polarized, the CEO of the American fast food chain Chick-fil-A made public statements opposing marriage equality. This led to a wave of protests against the brand led by supporters of same-sex marriage. On the other hand, the company also received a large show of public support on “Chick-fil-A Appreciation Day” (Norman 2012). The case described above is only one of the several recent examples of companies taking a stand on controversial social issues for which the public opinion is highly polarized. The Marketing Science Institute has identified the issue of whether brands should take stands in social issues as one of the critical emerging challenges in marketing (Marketing Science Institute 2016). Here, we use the term Brand Activism for such activities. We define “Brand Activism” as the act of publicly taking a stand on controversial social and political issues by a brand or a person associated with the brand. In this research, we investigate how brand activism influences consumers’ evaluation of the brand.

Controversial social or political issues can be regarded as open moral questions about which the society is yet to reach a consensus. In the marketing literature, the relationship between brands and their consumers have mostly been studied through the lens of the consumer-company identification framework (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003). This theory suggests that higher brand-self similarity should lead to more positive marketing outcomes. While this holds true for most aspects of a brand’s personality, we argue that the nature of this relationship will change when considering moral issues. We propose that this happens because morality, in general, is avoidance focused (Higgins 1998). Therefore, individuals are highly sensitive to moral violations and, therefore, tend to punish such actions. However, compliance with moral codes is seen as part of generally expected behavior and, therefore, do not attract any rewards. Accordingly, in our first study, we show that when a brand takes a stand on a controversial socio-political issue, the change in a consumer’s attitude towards the brand in the consumer-brand disagreement condition is negative and significantly different from the consumer-brand agreement condition ($M_{disagreement} = -2.05$ vs $M_{agreement} = 0.02$, $p < .01$) and the no-position condition ($M_{disagreement} = -2.05$ vs $M_{no\ position} = 0.11$, $p < .01$). However, there is no significant difference in the change in the attitude towards the brand between the consumer-brand agreement condition and the no-position condition, suggesting that there is no bonus for taking a stand consumers agree with.

Past research has shown that moral judgment is the result of quick, automatic, intuitive evaluations and moral reasoning is a post-hoc construction that is generated after the judgement has been reached in order to justify one’s position (Haidt 2001). These findings indicate that, in the context of brand activism, an individual’s reaction towards the controversial issue itself will be driven by a lower-order affective response. However, when a brand takes a stand on an issue that conflicts with the consumer’s moral principles, we argue that the negative affective response towards the brand’s stand does not get automatically transferred to the consumer’s evaluation of the brand. Consumers resort to different moral reasoning strategies to determine whether their disagreement with the brand on a moral issue should be incorporated in their evaluation of the brand. Therefore, cognition is likely to play a central role in this process. More specifically, we expect moral reasoning to play a constructive role in the brand evaluation process and not merely serve as a post-hoc justification of an automatic, intuitive affective response.

In our second study, we found a significant moderating effect of the source of the controversial stand on the consumer’s evaluation of the brand ($F(2, 199) = 3.38, p < .01$). The source of brand activism has no effect on the consumer’s evaluation of the brand in the consumer-brand agreement condition. However, as the distance between the brand and the source of the controversial stand increases (from CEO, a company insider, to a celebrity endorser, a company outsider), the negative effect of consumer-brand disagreement on the attitude towards the brand becomes weaker due to the increased ease and likelihood of employing a moral decoupling reasoning strategy which allows consumers to separate judgments of morality from judgements about the brand’s quality (Bhattacharjee, Berman, and Reed 2013).

To provide further evidence that brand activism influences consumer evaluation through a cognitive process (versus an affective process), in our third study, we manipulated the amount of cognitive resources that the consumer has at his or her disposal when evaluating a brand that engages in brand activism. When the availability of cognitive resources is low, the effect of the level of consumer-brand disagreement is not significant ($β = -0.21$, $t = -0.77$, $p = .44$). However, consistent with our expectation of a more elaborate cognitive processing based on moral reasoning, the effect is significant when ample cognitive resources are available ($β = -0.82$, $t = -4.75$, $p < .01$). Thus, when exposed to acts of brand activism, cognitive processing appears to play an important role in the brand attitude formation process. Lower order affective or intuitive processes alone do not seem to influence the consumer’s attitude towards the brand in response to the stand it has taken.

Based on the results of our research, there seems to be few benefits for taking the ‘right’ stand in a controversial issue, while the downside effects of being on the ‘wrong’ side of the debate are substantial. Therefore, the results suggest that brands should be extremely careful about getting involved in controversial socio-political issues. If a brand wishes to engage in activism, creating a distance between the brand and the source of the activism seems to be a possible way to shield the brand from negative influences. This implies that instead of the brand being the face of the advocacy, they may hire a brand ambassador who is a vocal advocate regarding the issue or channel their resources through outside organizations.

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Influence of Facebook Engagement on Brand Performance across Brand Life
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
The research studies the influencing dynamics of electronic Word of Mouth through Facebook engagement on high involvement product sales at various Brand Life Cycle (BLC) stages. Time series analysis is employed to study the lead/lag effect of Facebook engagement on sales. The finding highlights the need for BLC-driven content strategy.

INTRODUCTION
The rise of internet has given way for the rapid proliferation of social media platform that provides avenues for users to engage and share opinions about brands. This spread of opinions on online platform is referred to as electronic word of mouth (eWOM) communication and is facilitated by marketers on social networking sites like Facebook (FB) and Twitter. In this continuous engagement between the marketers and consumers, the marketer acts both as a transmitter and receiver of information through marketing communications and consumer feedbacks. The consumer participation also occurs across the continuum, where consumers seek feedback from peers and share opinions throughout the decision process. Decoding this intricate conversation across online platforms is essential for the marketers to develop an effective content strategy to enhance brand’s performance.

RESEARCH GAP AND RESEARCH PROBLEM
Existing studies have reported the association of brand performance with eWOM by studying the customer engagement on Twitter platform (Asur and Huberman, 2010; Lassen, Madsen and Vatrapu, 2014; Dijkman, Ipeirotis, Aertsen and van Helden, 2015) but limited studies have been performed on FB platform. In studies related to FB platform, contrasting results have been shared about the influence of engagement on brand performance depending on the eWOM metric. While a set of studies that uses volume metric of eWOM shows a positive correlation between FB engagement and brand performance (Mukkamala, Vatrapu and Hussain, 2013; Frick, Tsekauras and Li, 2014; Oh, Roumani, Nwanpka and Hu, 2017), another set of studies that uses valence metric of eWOM shows a mixed result (Frick et al., 2014; Gopinath, Thomas and Krishnamurthi, 2014). Hence, a lack of consensus of the results for a same brand has been observed (Frick et al., 2014; Gopinath et al., 2014).

Apart from the volume and valence, research has found that the behavioural characteristics of the representative customers (Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012) also influences brand performance. These characteristics change dynamically throughout the product’s life with change in customer profiles. And can be captured by the shift in Product Life cycle (PLC) stages (Rogers, 2010). Hence, the PLC stages have become a key consideration during strategy formulation (Anderson and Zeithaml, 1984). At the brand level, the PLC concept takes the form of Brand Life Cycle (BLC) (Bivainiene, 2010). To the best of our knowledge, the existing literature haven’t uncovered the influence of brand life stages on brand performance as an effect of social media engagement. Hence, there is a need to investigate the dynamics between FB engagement and performance within a brand’s life. So the study intends to address “How does FB engagement and brand performance dynamics change with brand life?”

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES
To uncover the brand life stages, we use the concept of change points- tipping point and tripping point. The concept of tipping point and tripping point in product diffusion represents the shift in upward growth trend (Barash, Cameron and Macy, 2012) and downward trend (Brown, 2005) respectively. Existing research claims word-of-mouth communication as a key influence of product diffusion (Arndt, 1967) to reach the tipping point. While a brand’s failure to adapt with the changes as the cause for the downward trend beyond tripping point (Brown, 2005). Our study investigates the impact of customer engagement in FB on brand performance with respect to the change points in the lifecycle stages of brands.

The performance of a brand is measured through its sales as in existing literature (Lassen et al., 2014; Tang, Fang and Wang, 2014). Facebook engagement is measured on user comments with positive composite valence-volume measure (Rosario, Sotgiu, De Valck and Bijmolt, 2016), that represents both volume and valence measurement. Operationalizing the variables, we posit:

Hypothesis 1a: Positive composite valence-volume leads sales volume till the maturity stage.

Hypothesis 1b: Sales is independent of positive composite valence-volume at the decline stage.

Hypothesis 2: Tipping point of positive composite valence-volume will lead tripping point of sales.

The user engagement data from FB is extracted using Application Programming Interface (API) – Netvizz (Rieder, 2013), and the associated comment sentiment is extracted using Sentistrength to study FB engagement. The tool assists in segregating the positive sentiment and the negative sentiment of each text with the help of an in-built pre-defined set of words.

RESEARCH CONTEXT
As the Indian auto industry has the third highest fan base in FB with a total count of about 94 million fans, our work funnels down to study the influence of FB customer engagement on car sales in India. Car sales data is shared by Team-BHP forum (www.team-bhp.com/forum/), which provides reviews, news, and sales report about Indian cars. We have considered the monthly recorded sales data of 96 Indian car brands under 15 umbrella brands from January, 2011 to June, 2016. Existing research shows that 91% of car purchase takes place within one year of consideration (Putis and Srinivasan, 1994). Therefore, car brands that existed for a minimum of two years in the considered time period were chosen for further analysis, as it will enable us to capture the lag effect on sales, if any. On this basis, a total of 24 brands under 5 umbrella brands across categories were considered.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS
The monthly sales volume of the 24 car brands is considered as unit of measurement for sales. Brands are considered only when there is a significant change-point in sales data that translates to the
two-stages of BLC. The change point analysis of the 24 brands provides significant change points for 14 brands. The user comments on the FB posts from the 14 FB fan pages were analysed to extract the sentiments from it.

FB engagement leads sales in all the stages of brand life except decline stage. However, the decline stage captured by the tripping point exhibits that sales leads FB engagement. By combining both the observations, we find that FB engagement leads sales in the non-decline stage, whereas sales lead FB engagement in the decline stage. Thus, the study supports all the hypotheses, which builds to conclude that FB engagement leads brand performance at all BLC stages till the decline stage.

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How Does Nostalgia in Advertising Increase Brand Love in Different Cultures?
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
This paper investigates the effects of historical and personal nostalgia advertising on branding in different cultures. Our results indicate that in both a collective culture and an individualistic culture, historical and personal ads impact affective responses whereas cognitive responses are only elicited when the individual is submitted to historical ads.

BACKGROUND
Over the last few years, we have seen an increasing interest among both practitioners and academics in an extremely positive emotion that consumers may feel toward a brand conceptualized under brand love (Albert, Merunka, and Valette-Florence 2009; Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi 2012; Rossiter, 2012) which can increase brand performance (Zarantonello, Formisano and Grappi, 2016). Brand love can be defined as the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a brand (Carroll, Aaron & Ahuvia, 2006). Brand love can lead to affection and passion and also contain a memory dimension as the consumer may associate the brand with his/her past life (Albert and al., 2008; Batra and al., 2012). This memory dimension has led us to consider the relationship between nostalgia and brand love. The definition of nostalgia which is accepted as a reference is the one provided by Holbrook and Schindler (1991) as “a preference (general liking, positive attitude, or favorable affect) toward objects (people, places, or things) that were more common (popular, fashionable, or widely circulated) when one was younger (in early adulthood, in adolescence, in childhood, or even before birth”’. Some scholars also define nostalgia as a “bittersweet affective reaction” (Davis, 1979; Kennedy, 1994). This definition stresses the affective dominance of nostalgia which could lead to brand attachment but also indicates that past experience can also elicit negative emotions if associated to tragic historical memories (Hertz, 1990). No research has so far studied the relationship between nostalgia and brand love. The objective of our research is therefore to determine whether brand love can be increased by using different forms of nostalgia in brand communication across cultures. Marchegiani and Phau (2011) highlighted the need to examine nostalgia as two separate reactions and have identified that personal and historical nostalgia reactions can be elicited by advertising and can create different intensity levels of common emotions. Personal nostalgia focuses on the actual past experiences that the individuals have personally had (Baker and Kennedy 1994), while vicarious or historical nostalgia (Stern 1992), may be associated to something that actually happened in the past but wasn’t experienced by individuals directly. This type of nostalgia is more collective as people living in the same country have the same history whereas personal nostalgia tends to be more individualistic. Previous research has confirmed that nostalgia advertisements can enhance the consumer’s emotional bonds to the brand (Holak et al., 2007, Fournier, 1994). Therefore we suggest:

Hypothesis 1: Personal nostalgia and historical advertising will increase the feeling of love for the brand after exposure to an ad.

Hypothesis 2: Personal nostalgia advertising will increase the feeling of love for the brand after ad exposure in an individualistic culture.

Hypothesis 3: Historical nostalgia advertising will increase the feeling of love for the brand after ad exposure in a collectivistic culture.

METHOD
This study is structured as a Pretest-posttest quasi experimental design with an untreated control group (Cook and Campbell, 1979). Respondents were first asked to respond to questions about their love towards the brand Coca-Cola using the brand love measure developed by Zarantonello, Formisano and Grappi (2016). Then, respondents were exposed to one of three types of ads: a personal nostalgia ad, a historical nostalgia ad or a no nostalgia ad (control group). As a manipulation check, respondents were asked questions about the level of personal and historical nostalgia they felt in relation to the ad assigned to them; these questions were taken from Muheling and Pascal (2011). After being exposed to an ad, respondents were again asked questions on brand love. To reduce memory effects, they were instructed to focus on how they felt at that moment, without trying to remember their previous responses. The survey was administered by a market research agency (Qualities) to a national representative sample of 300 British and 315 Indian adult consumers. All ads were pretested with a different sample of respondents in a preceding study.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS
Manipulation check. Respondents who were exposed to an advertisement stimulating personal nostalgia vs. control group felt stronger personal nostalgia (M = 5.16; SD = 1.42) compared to the control group (M = 4.50; SD = 1.60) (t (df) = 4.08 (369); p < .001). Similarly, respondents who were exposed to advertising stimulating historical nostalgia vs. control group felt stronger historical nostalgia (M = 4.74; SD = 1.59) compared to the control group (M = 3.57; SD = 1.86) (t (df) = 6.39 (368); p < .001).

Test of hypotheses. To test H1, a pairwise t-test analysis was conducted for three conditions separately on the aggregate sample of British and Indian respondents. In relation to the two experimental conditions, for personal nostalgia the difference between brand love before (M = 4.45, SD = 1.76) and brand love after (M = 4.57, SD = 1.67) being exposed to an ad is significant (ΔM = .12, p < .001). For historical nostalgia, the difference between brand love before (M = 4.25, SD = 1.68) and brand love after (M = 4.34, SD = 1.79) being exposed to an ad is significant (ΔM = .09, p = .026). With respect to the control condition, the difference between brand love before (M = 4.44, SD = 1.55) and brand love after (M = 4.54, SD = 1.57) being exposed to an ad is not significant (delta M = .10, p > .05). These findings suggest that being exposed to personal nostalgia, and to a lesser extent to historical nostalgia, can increase peoples’ love toward the brand represented in the ad. Our H1 is therefore supported. To test H2 and H3, we conducted a series of regression analysis separately for each group of respondents. For British consumers, the relationship between brand love before and after being exposed to an ad is higher for personal nostalgia (STD beta = .910, p < .001) compared
to historical nostalgia (STD beta = .881, p < .001). In contrast, for Indian consumers, the relationship between brand love before and after being exposed to an ad is higher for historical nostalgia (STD beta = .929, p < .001) compared to personal nostalgia (STD beta = .899, p < .001). These findings support our H2 and H3.

CONCLUSION

From a theoretical perspective, our research offer an initial consideration of the relationship between nostalgia and brand love which to the best of our knowledge has never been stipulated so far. Our results indicate that the use of nostalgia in advertising can increase brand love across the culture. More specifically, in a collectivistic culture (India), historical nostalgia increases brand love significantly whereas in an individualistic culture (UK), personal nostalgia works better. From a managerial perspective, as the concept of brand love has become so strategic, we would recommend managers adapt their communication to different cultures and use historical nostalgia in collectivistic cultures and personal nostalgia in individualistic cultures. Like all research that explores new ground, this study has several limitations. The biggest concerns the limitation of the results in the context of the study which was limited to three print ads for a well-known brand. Further studies should address these limits, by replicating our research with different media and with different types of brands.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We investigate in this research how multiple institutional logics may interact to accelerate the vanishing or the revival of a market in case of a threatened heritage product “the Tunisian Sefsari”. Data were generated through in depth interviews with main actors in the market and participant observation.

While the globalization phenomenon has led to the homogenization of marketplace resources and cultures (Sandikci and Ger, 2002), local consumption practices that have a sociocultural role in historical civilizations continue to be the subject of strong interest. We investigate in this research how a threatened heritage product – the Sefsari traditional women’s dress – strongly resists and emerges in the Tunisian market, in a country whose culture is under the pressures of globalization and its corollary of homogenization of consumption modes and lifestyles. In fact, belonging to MENA region (Middle East and North African countries), and being located on the southern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, Tunisia has been a meeting point of European cultures on the one hand and Middle-East cultures on the other hand. The western features has fostered modernity and distanciation from tunisian traditions and the middle-east features has brought specific styles and tastes that are more grounded in eastern societies. It is in this context of dual globalization forces that some local, traditional Tunisian products are superseded by their foreign counterparts.

Cultural heritage refers to set of elements that are handed down from generation to generation in a tangible/material or an intangible/immaterial form (Edson 2004). It refers to a social and a cultural construction. In this sense, cultural heritage has different meanings depending on individuals (Barrière 2015; McDonald 2011). This contributes to the increased issue of heritage conservation and protection (e.g. Bergadaa and Lorey 2015). Tensions, conflicts and even “dilemmas” may appear and be amplified when it comes to preserving a cultural heritage product, especially when the different committed stakeholders (consumers, organizations, international-govern-ment and local institutions), don’t share the same interests and goals (Monteiro, Painho and Vaz 2014; McDonald 2011).

Born in the 16th century, the Sefsari, is a white-ivory draped suit, assimilated to a veil, usually handmade in natural silk that was worn by most Tunisian women (Ben Tanfous et al., 1978). The fabrication of the product uses a heritage of craftsmanship, of a know-how handed down through generations who attempt to protect their informal heritage, particularly in terms of reputation (Barrière 2015). Sefsari is considered an heritage cultural product carrying multiple symbolic meanings. Firstly, it represents an authentic cultural Tuni-
sian heritage and it’s common to see women with Sefsari on Tunisian postcards (Revault 1967). Secondly, the product is still transmitted from generation to generation of women, which makes it an inter-generational heritage product. It’s viewed as a conveyor of people’s traditions, identity and history. Recently, some Tunisian designers tried to modernize the Sefsari by proposing revisited versions that fit modern lifestyles better.

Under different pressures, the wearing of this historical costume and its demand are starting to decrease. The whole channel and craft weaving are on the verge of disappearing. However, some people, organizations and groups on social media, call for an attempt to revive this cultural heritage and traditional dress, which is signaling some market evolution.

When investigating markets evolution composed of multiple committed stakeholders, practices, beliefs and rule systems, previous research has showcased the coexistence of plural, at times, conflicting logics in some markets (Giesler, 2012; Ertimur and Coskuner-Balli, 2015). Giesler (2012) has demonstrated that the shifts in emotional brand can help sustain the Botox product legitimacy over time in a network of diverse and competing interests. In the case of the American Yoga market studied by Ertimur and Coskuner-Balli (2015) through an institutional theoretic lens (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), the plural logics (spirituality, fitness, and medical) they have identified contribute to market expansion and existence.

We aim in this research to: 1- Identify the logics underlying the different market actors' discourses surrounding the heritage product “Sefsari”, 2- Understand how a heritage product, near to disappearing, can be revived in a market dominated by plural logics.

To achieve these goals, we adopted a qualitative interpretive approach composed of in-depth interviews and participant observation (McCracken 1988). We conducted 12 in-depth interviews with multiple actors operating in the market around the Sefsari, as a heritage product: i) 4 Sefsari specialized craftsmen, ii) 1 representative of a heritage preservation association (the Tourathna association), iii) 1 researcher (archaeologist and art historian), iv) 4 representatives of the National Office of Tunisian Crafts working under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism and Crafts, v) 2 researchers-ethnographers (in trade and heritage sciences). The interviews were focused on the history and meanings attached to the Sefsari, its past, present and future. Interviews were recorded (some were filmed with the agreement of the interviewees) and entirely transcribed. Two authors have engaged in participant observation by participating in an annual event organized by a consumer association during which the Sefsari is worn and a city walk is undertaken in a festive atmosphere to show the product. An interpretative analysis was undertaken (McCracken 1988) using an emerging coding.

Results allowed us to reveal four conflicting logics supporting stakeholder discourse and contributing to the atomization of heritage management among an unbalanced landscape of stakeholders (Martinez, 2017). These logics “provide the formal and informal rules of action, interaction, and interpretation that guide and constrain decision makers in accomplishing the organization’s tasks and in obtaining social status, credits, penalties, and rewards in the process” (Thorton and Ocasio, 1999, p.804).

The logics we identified (emotional, economic, survive and scientific pragmatism) diverge in terms of the roles played by each stakeholder, the actions they are undertaking with regards to the heritage product “Sefsari”, the value attributed to the heritage product, and the way they derive legitimacy. Our data reveal a hierarchization of these logics and demonstrate that the conflict is between the identity/emotional and the economic logics. In our case, the dominant economic logic led by the government actor, through a delegitimization process acts to exclude the Sefsari from the market by calling into question its characteristics such as low economic value, lack of compatibility with modern Tunisian society, and lack of possibilities to be declined in other versions, colors, etc.: “We didn’t worked on Sefsari in our events, communication, marketing strategy for different reasons : 1- because it’s rejected by tunisian society and modern women, 2- We don’t think that it can be declined in many colors, models, ....3- due to silk problem : the craftsmen don’t have resources or ability to import the silk from China, that’s why the Sefsari is disappearing.....this problem of imported silk has a direct impact on price, the product will not be economically profitable .... We should be pragmatic as a government”

Meanwhile, the less dominant identity/emotional logic, tries to legitimize the product by arguing that such a vulnerable product that symbolizes the Tunisian identity has a sociocultural role and cannot be reduced to its economic value. Through an emotionally charged discourse they deconstruct the dominant logic discourses and call for this product to be kept in the market. Actors committed to this logic even demonstrate some innovative strategies to keep this contested heritage product in the market by proposing new revisited versions, by increasing the opportunities to product exposure and communi-

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cation and by trying to establish a conversation with the dominant logic actors.

In this research, we expand the literature on market dynamics operating under the coexistence of plural logics (Giesler, 2012; Ertimur and Coskuner-Balli, 2015) which mainly focused on cases of market creation and expansion. We contribute to this literature by investigating an understudied case of market vanishing and revival where actors maintain interdependent relationships and operate under opposing logics.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Four experimental and field studies show that the onset of mortality salience decreases consumers’ evaluations of brands with exciting vs. other personalities. This occurs because (a) mortality salience makes consumers more sensitive to aspects of brands related to perpetuity, and (b) exciting (vs. other) brands are perceived as less perpetual.

Consumers are frequently exposed to death-related information (e.g., news about terrorist attacks, natural disasters), which makes their mortality salient (MS). Yet, the understanding of how MS influences everyday consumption is still limited (Ferraro et al. 2005). Adding to this literature, we propose and show how MS can systematically impact consumers’ responses to brands with different personalities (Aaker 1997). In six studies we demonstrate that MS dampens consumers’ responses to brands with an exciting but not with other personalities. This occurs because (a) exciting (vs. other) brands are associated with the lack of perpetuity, and (b) MS sensitizes consumers to perpetuity-related aspects of brands.

Consumers “manage” the fear of death by seeking to arrive at a form of perpetual existence (Lifton 1973). Accordingly, we propose that MS is likely to increase weighting of perpetuity in consumers’ judgements. We study this proposition in the context of branding. Brands possess five personalities - excitement, sincerity, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness (Aaker 1997). We suggest that these personalities are associated with perpetuity to a different extent. Specifically, many of the traits forming an exciting brand personality are fleeting in nature (e.g., young, trendy). Moreover, exciting states are also short-lasting (Eysenck 2012). Thus, brands with an exciting (vs. other) personality are likely to be associated with lack of perpetuity. Overall, MS can systematically alter consumers’ responses to brands with exciting (vs. other) personalities, because (a) MS sensitizes consumers to perpetuity-related brand aspects, and (b) exciting (vs. other) brands are perceived as non-perpetual.

Six studies test this theorizing. A pilot study showed that exciting (vs. other) brands are perceived as non-perpetual. 120 participants evaluated the perpetuity of the 42 brand traits forming brand personalities (Aaker 1997). Validating our assumption, exciting brands were associated with lack of perpetuity, compared to sincere ($t(1,59)=-10.485, p<.001$, competent ($t(1,59)=-10.033, p<.001$), sophisticated ($t(1,59)=-4.238, p<.001$), and rugged ($t(1,59)=-6.302, p<.001$) brands.

Study 1 established the effect of MS on brand evaluations. 462 participants were assigned to a 2 (MS vs. control) × 2 (exciting vs. control brand) between-participants experiment. Participants in the MS (vs. control) condition described their own death (vs. watching TV; Ferraro et al. 2005). Subsequently, participants evaluated an exciting (vs. control-sincere) brand (Aaker 1997). A significant two-way interaction ($F(1,458)=5.668, p=.018$) supported our predictions: exciting brand was evaluated lower in the MS compared to the control condition ($F(1,458)=4.416, p=.036$). Accordingly, in the MS (but not the control) condition, exciting brand had lower evaluations than sincere brand ($F(1,458)=14.527, p<.001$).

Study 2 tested the mediating role of brand’s perceived perpetuity. 374 participants were assigned to a 2 (MS vs. control) × 2 (exciting vs. control brand) between-participants experiment, with identical manipulations to Study 1. We used a different brand and dependent variable (purchase intention), and measured brand’s perceived perpetuity. We found a significant two-way interaction on purchase intention ($F(1,359)=10.651, p<.001$). Purchase intention for exciting brand dropped under MS compared to the control condition ($F(1,359)=5.285, p=.022$). Thus, under MS, purchase intention for exciting brand was lower than that of sincere brand ($F(1,359)=23.015, p<.001$).

A moderated mediation analysis showed that, as predicted, the MS × brand personality interaction on perceived perpetuity was significant ($β=-.75, p=.022$). The latter had a significant effect on purchase intention ($β=-.57, p<.001$). Moderated mediation index excluded zero (95%CI = [-.81, -.07]). The indirect effect of MS was significant for the exciting ($β=-.26, 95%CI=[-.53; -.04]$), but not for the control brand (95%CI=[-.10, .46]).

Study 3 directly manipulated perceived perpetuity of exciting brands. 240 participants were assigned to a 2 (MS vs. control) × 2 (perpetual exciting vs. non-perpetual exciting brand) between-participants experiment. We manipulated MS as in Study 1. Participants evaluated pretested descriptions of a perpetual vs. non-perpetual exciting brand. We found a significant two-way interaction on brand evaluation ($F(1,235)=4.406, p=.037$). As predicted, non-perpetual exciting brand was evaluated lower in the MS compared to the control condition ($F(1,235)=4.213, p=.041$), while evaluations of perpetual exciting brand did not change ($F(1,235)=.803, p=.371$). Accordingly, non-perpetual exciting brand was evaluated lower than perpetual exciting brand under MS ($F(1,235)=38.904, p<.001$). Analysis similar to that of study 3 showed a significant moderated mediation with perceived perpetuity (95%CI=[-.20, .86]).

Studies 4a-4b explored implications of MS on brand equity of real brands, following two death-remininding tragedies: 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina. We utilized a large-scale dataset collected quarterly by a leading consulting firm (Mizik and Jacobson 2008). For each quarter of each year, the dataset contained a representative U.S. sample of, approximately, 6,000 consumers evaluating 2,000 brands.

We used a difference-in-differences method. Brand equity was the dependent variable, and ratings for exciting brand personality and a dummy variable for MS (0=Quarters before, and 1=Quarters after 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, respectively for each study) were independent variables.

Study 4a showed a significant exciting personality × MS interaction on brand equity ($β=-.055, p=.002$). The positive impact of exciting personality on brand equity significantly decreased after 9/11 by about 6%. A spotlight analysis showed that equity of very exciting brands (1 SD above the mean) decreased following 9/11 ($β=-.130, p<.001$), while brands low in excitement (1 SD below the mean) were not affected ($p=.367$).

Study 4b revealed a similar significant exciting personality × MS interaction ($β=-.043, p=.008$). Again, the positive effect of exciting personality on brand equity significantly decreased after Hurricane Katrina by about 4%. A spotlight analysis showed that equity of very exciting brands (1 SD above the mean) significantly decreased after Hurricane Katrina ($β=-.069, p<.001$), while brands low in excitement (1 SD below the mean) were not affected ($p=.383$).

In summary, four experimental and two field studies converged on the idea that MS dampens consumers’ responses to exciting brands because the latter are associated with the lack of perpetuity.
This research contributes to literature on MS by showing that MS sensitizes consumers to perpetuity, affecting their judgments. We add to branding literature by demonstrating that MS can systematically influence consumers' responses to brands with different personalities. We also document a novel distinction among brand personalities – brand’s perceived perpetuity.

REFERENCES

The Effects of Death-Related Media Information on Value Orientation and Consumer Scope Sensitivity
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
This research demonstrates that exposure to death-related information in media shifts consumers’ focus from extrinsic to intrinsic values, resulting in less attention and consequently lower sensitivity to the magnitude of products and services. These effects are different from those of mortality salience.

Death-related information is prevalent in today’s information age (e.g., news about lethal accidents, deadly diseases, wars). Death-related information also often co-exists with marketing stimuli in the same media context. For example, promotional ads may appear on the same page of the newspaper with news reports related to death. In the current paper, we investigate the impact of death-related media information on consumers’ value orientation and scope sensitivity to marketing cues.

There are two seemingly contradicting predictions regarding the impact of death awareness on consumers’ value orientation. First, Terror Management Theory (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, and Solomon 1986) suggests that when people are reminded of their mortality, people may resort to consumerism and materialism as a way to escape from death anxiety (Kasser and Sheldon 2000; Rindfleisch, Burroughs, and Wong 2009). Thus, it is plausible that death awareness increases people’s orientation toward extrinsic (vs. intrinsic) personal values. Second, according to the Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (e.g., Carstensen 1995), when people consider that their future is limited (e.g., death), they are much more likely to form emotionally focused goals (often in intrinsic domains such as connectedness with emotionally significant friends or loved ones; e.g., Carstensen et al. 2000). Thus, we might also expect to observe shifts in value orientation—from extrinsic to intrinsic—after individuals are exposed to death-related information.

Such discrepancies may reflect divergent psychological mechanisms. The enhanced extrinsic value orientation induced by mortality salience is mainly driven by the motivation to defend against anxiety about one’s own death (e.g., Greenberg et al. 1986), whereas the shift towards intrinsic value orientation is often observed when death thoughts are activated without incurring anxiety (e.g., Cozzo-lino et al. 2009). As the prevalence of death-related information in media may make people accustomed to such information and people may not relate others’ mortality in media to themselves (e.g., Huang and Wyer 2015; Rindfleisch and Burroughs 2004), we propose that death-related media information may induce death thoughts but not self-related death anxiety; consequently it may predispose people to prioritize intrinsic values over extrinsic values.

Meanwhile, people pay more attention to and thus are more sensitive to information that is relevant to their personal values (Balcetis and Dunning 2006; Moskowitz 2002). Our consumption behaviors, and consequently the perception of differences in marketing information, are mostly driven by extrinsic values (Belk 1985; Richins 2011). Given that the exposure to death-related media information will lead consumers to focus on their intrinsic (rather than extrinsic) needs, we predict that after encountering death-related media information (vs. thinking about one’s own mortality), consumers will be less (vs. more) sensitive to the scope of subsequent marketing stimuli.

Three studies investigated these possibilities. In study 1, participants in the mortality-salience condition first completed a classic manipulation of mortality salience (e.g., Arndt et al. 2004). Participants in the death-in-media condition were asked to evaluate six print ads of an insurance company, all featuring casualty caused by various natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes and volcano eruption). Participants in control conditions skipped these tasks.

After a delay, we measured participants’ marketing scope sensitivity in a context of price perceptions (Shen and Urminsky 2013). Participants indicated how expensive they perceived a hotel room of US$138 or US$344 per night to be. Afterwards, they completed manipulation checks of death-thought accessibility and death anxiety.

All data are reported in table 1. The manipulation checks indicated that death-related media information activated death thoughts as mortality salience did, but the former did not trigger death anxiety as the latter did. More importantly, participants who had read death-related ads perceived smaller discrepancies between hotels with high versus low prices (i.e., weakened scope sensitivity) compared with control. However, thinking about one’s own mortality resulted in greater price sensitivity than control.

Study 2 tested the underlying mechanism. In addition to manipulating death awareness as in study 1 and measured participants’ scope sensitivity to hotel prices, we also recorded the time they spent on reading and rating the hotel information as a measure of attention to this information (Hoch and Ryan 1996). Value orientation was measured by the 30-item Aspirations Index (Rindfleisch and Ryan 1993, 1996).

Participants in the death-in-media conditions showed less scope sensitivity and those in the mortality salience conditions showed greater scope sensitivity to the hotel prices than control. In addition, compared with those in the control condition, death-related ads made participants spend less time on the price information and attach greater importance to intrinsic values versus extrinsic values than control, whereas mortality salience had the opposite effects. Value orientation and attention sequentially mediated the effects of both death-related media information and mortality salience.

Study 3 tested the mediating mechanism by manipulating the type of values associated with the consumption. After the death awareness manipulation and delay, participants imagined a book purchasing scenario. Participants reported the amount of money they would be willing to pay for 5 books (small scope) and 10 books (large scope). The book titles are related to extrinsic values such as money, fame, and physical attractiveness (extrinsic value association), or related to intrinsic values such as personal growth, social relationship, and community involvement (intrinsic value association).

When consumption was associated with extrinsic values, people in the mortality salience condition showed greater scope sensitivity to the information compared with control, whereas exposure to death-related media information made people less sensitive to marketing scopes. However, when intrinsic values are attached to the consumption, death-related media information made people more scope-sensitive and mortality salience decreased marketing scope sensitivity than the control condition.

The present research extends the literature in several ways. We found that although exposure to media information can increase materialism in general (Shrum et al. 2005, 2011), exposure to a particular type of media information (i.e., death-related information) can de-
crease materialism and foster a focus on intrinsic values, resulting in less marketing scope sensitivity. Our findings contribute to research on death awareness by providing a systematic framework to understand the effects of death-related information, and to the literature on antecedents of scope sensitivity by identifying a new antecedent, namely, exposure to death-related information.

REFERENCES


Desire-Tinted primes: When Desire Facilitates and when It Inhibits Priming Effects
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We investigate the influence of desire (specifically desire experience vs. desire fulfillment) on the susceptibility to priming procedures (both desire-relevant and desire-irrelevant). We demonstrate how desire instigates desire-centered processing of primes, either inhibiting or facilitating their subtle influence on consumer decision making.

We investigate the influence of desire (specifically unfulfilled desire vs. fulfilled desire) on the susceptibility to priming procedures (both desire-relevant and desire-irrelevant). We demonstrate how desire instigates desire-centered processing of primes, either inhibiting or facilitating their subtle influence on consumer decision making.

Priming research shows how incidental exposure to environmental cues can profoundly influence feelings, motives, and cognitions in unrelated domains. For example, writing with an orange or a green pen makes people more likely to select products with corresponding colors (Berger & Fitzsimons, 2008), and a website’s background color can prime safety or frugality and subsequently influence product choices (Mandel & Johnson, 2012).

For most studies, the typical point of departure is the exposure stage during which the unwitting person is unobtrusively exposed to the priming stimulus (Légal et al., 2012). However, surprisingly limited attention has been devoted to the stage preceding cue exposure, disregarding the fact that oftentimes consumers do not arrive at the priming setting with a blank mind, in a specific state of tabula rasa, which only later gets filled with prime-related associations. The core of consumer modus operandi revolves around desire—hot, appetitive state, characterized by specific sense of urgency (Belk, Ger, & Askegaard, 2003) that can profoundly affect consumer responses to priming stimuli. Desire-driven consumers concentrate predominantly on immediate satisfaction of their needs and wants.

We expect that consumers will see encountered primes through desire-tinted glasses only when desire is unfulfilled, not when it has been fulfilled. While experiencing desire consumers predominantly focus on desire-relevant stimuli, disregarding desire-irrelevant ones (Kavanagh, Andrade, & May, 2005). Thus, we posit that the effect of desire-relevant primes is particularly pronounced when people experience desire. In contrast, when desire has already been fulfilled, the influence of such cues is largely attenuated, resulting in inhibition of desire-relevant priming effects (see Experiment 1). Further, our predictions reverse for desire-irrelevant primes, which are expected to impact decision making in the ‘fulfilled desire’ condition, but not when desire has not yet been fulfilled (see Experiment 2). Looking at the world through desire-tinted glasses has yet another important implication for priming—dynamic meaning-making of the environment as a function of experienced desire entails that consumers approach ambiguous primes with no direct relation to the pursuit of desire with a desire-centered mindset. This top-down processing of encountered stimuli presupposes that if the context in which these primes could be used aligns with the experienced desire, the desire-irrelevant cognitions evoked by desire-irrelevant primes become desire-relevant and used in desire-relevant contexts (see Experiment 3).

Experiment 1. 230 students (52.2% male; \( M_{\text{age}} = 21.46, SD = 2.58 \)) participated in a 2(prime: money vs. neutral) × 3(unfulfilled desire vs. fulfilled desire vs. control) between-subjects design experiment. We measured our core dependent variable during a coin and currency identification task, during which participants needed to recognize as fast and as accurately as possible whether the presented coin or currency symbol is real or a bogus coin or currency symbol.

A 2(money prime vs. neutral prime) × 2(unfulfilled desire vs. fulfilled desire) revealed a two-way disordinal interaction between the prime and the desire state \( F(1, 147) = 3.92, p = .05, \eta^2 = .03 \). Further, a 2(money pictures vs. neutral pictures) × 2(unfulfilled desire vs. fulfilled desire) ANOVA resulted in a marginally significant two-way interaction between the type of the prime and the desire state \( F(1, 154) = 3.12, p = .08, \eta^2 = .02 \).

Experiment 2. 250 Dutch students (65.2% male; \( M_{\text{age}} = 20.63, SD = 2.70 \)) participated in a 2(prime: orange vs. white background) × 2(unfulfilled desire vs. fulfilled desire) between-subjects design experiment. We measured our main dependent variable by giving participants the choice between two products (slider with a 100-point scale). 13 choices were made between two versions of the same product—one marketed by a Dutch brand (e.g., coffee from Douwe Egberts) and one offered in the Netherlands by a foreign brand (e.g., coffee from Jacobs). Product choices were made on either a white or an orange desktop background.

We conducted a 2(prime: orange vs. white background) × 2(unfulfilled desire vs. fulfilled desire) analysis of variance on the log-transformed mean preference for Dutch products across 9 trials of interest. A significant interaction effect between desire state and color of the desktop background emerged \( F(1, 246) = 4.51, p = .04, \eta^2 = .02 \). Since we expected that the orange background will exert an effect only for participants in the ‘fulfilled desire’ condition, we further explored the interaction through additional simple main effect analyses. The preferences for Dutch brands were influenced by the desktop background in the state ‘fulfilled desire’ \( F(1, 246) = 5.51, p = .02, \eta^2 = .02 \). People indicated greater preference for Dutch brands when the product choices were made on an orange \( M = 56.82, SD = 12.93 \) rather than white background \( M = 52.12, SD = 10.23 \).

Experiment 3. 156 participants (44.9% male; \( M_{\text{age}} = 20.63, SD = 2.70 \)) were recruited in a 2(prime: soft vs. hard object) × 2(unfulfilled desire vs. fulfilled desire) between-subjects design experiment. Participants first touched either soft or a hard object and subsequently provided logo recommendations for a new product not yet launched on the market, related to their current pursuit of desire—Healthy Lunchbox. We summed up all circular choices across all logo concepts of interest. Priming procedure and logo recommendations either preceded their visit to a restaurant (unfulfilled desire) or happened only after the visit (fulfilled desire).

A 2(prime: soft vs. hard object) × 2(unfulfilled desire vs. fulfilled desire) on the summed number of circular logos chosen revealed a significant interaction between desire state and priming procedure, \( F(1, 152) = 3.78, p = .05, \eta^2 = .02 \). Simple main effects provided evidence that touching a soft piece of blanket resulted in more circular logos chosen than touching a hard piece of wood in the ‘unfulfilled desire’ state \( F(1, 152) = 14.24, p < .01, \eta^2 = .09 \). Participants recommended more circular logos for Healthy Box when they touched a soft object \( M = 4.07, SD = 1.64 \) in comparison with a hard object \( M = 2.73, SD = 1.61 \) before they ordered food.
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Perfectionism and Risk Perception in the Market Place: How Perfectionism Affect Consumers’ Risk Perceptions and Choice?

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We predict that consumers’ healthy conquest for perfectionism may counteract with their risk perceptions. We find that women with high standards and high self-worth are more likely to undergo a cosmetic procedure (a potentially risky decision) as they constantly strive for excellence and feel confident that their desires will materialize.

Some consumer decisions can entail considerable risk. For example, following an extreme diet might help to shed pounds, but it can also pose health risks. Buying a designer handbag can enhance one’s status, while also creating financial risk. Undergoing cosmetic surgery can create a more youthful appearance, while also risking social disapproval from others, particularly if the change to one’s appearance is radical. In some reality TV shows like The Biggest Loser, Top Model and Top Chef, consumers compete with others to become “the best” when it comes to losing pounds, being named the best model, or creating the perfect dessert. Participants can reap social benefits of being named “the best”, but they also face social and potentially economic risks, particularly if they fail to become the best.

In this paper, we examine consumers’ desires for perfectionism; a construct that has received little attention in consumer behavior. We ask whether desires for perfectionism influence the extent to which consumers are willing to engage in purchase decisions that entail risk. Borrowing from cognitive psychology, we conceptualize perfectionism as a multidimensional construct that has both positive and negative qualities. A positive dimension of perfectionism involves setting high vs. low standards for the self. Yet a negative dimension involves being overly critical about one’s mistakes, as mistakes can be treated as evidence of a lack of self-worth. Based on these dimensions, prior research has identified two different types of perfectionists: (1) adaptive perfectionists set high standards, yet they do not view mistakes as evidence of a lack of self-worth; (2) maladaptive perfectionists set high standards, but they lack self-worth. For them, mistakes are regarded as evidence of failure; a conclusion that confirms their already low self-worth (Frost et al. 1990; Hamachek 1978).

We argue that the influence of perceived risk on consumers’ intentions to engage in a consumption activity (e.g., use a service, buy a product, participate in a competition), depends on whether they are perfectionists or not and whether they have high or low self-worth. More specifically, we suggest that consumers who tend to set high standards (i.e., perfectionists) for themselves and who have a healthy self-view wish to reap the benefits of being the best. They view high standards as a challenge, rather than a necessity. While increasing risks from purchase might give them a pause, these consumers’ high self-worth makes them confident that they can handle the risks and still obtain outcomes that match their high standards (and be the best). Hence risks may have a rather limited effect on reducing their purchase intentions.

On the other hand, those who tend to set perfectionists standards but have an unhealthy self-view are motivated by a fear of failure. When considering future purchases involving risks, these consumers may interpret the risks as opportunities for failure (Hamachek 1978). As risks increase, so too does their concern over failure. Outcomes that fail to achieve their high standards threaten their already fragile self-worth. Hence, compared to perfectionists with high self-worth, those consumers may be considerably more sensitive to risks. As a result, these perfectionists’ intentions to engage in consumption activities that promise to meet their high standards decreases more strongly than is the case for perfectionists with high self-worth as risks rise.

We believe that self-worth plays a different role in how non-perfectionists respond to increasing levels of risk. Specifically, non-perfectionists with low self-worth may be more willing to accept high risks on a product/service that can lead to self-enhancing benefits (e.g., a better appearance). Because their self-worth is already low, they may interpret a product or service as an opportunity to achieve outcomes that make them feel better about themselves. Hence, they may be less sensitive to increasing levels of product risk compared to non-perfectionists with high self-worth. Non-perfectionists with high self-worth already feel good about themselves. They do not need to tolerate the risks associated with a risky product to make themselves feel better.

We conducted a study (N=857) with women concerning cosmetic surgery; a commonly used method for helping people “look their best” (Delinsky 2005). We measured the extent to which participants held high (perfectionistic) vs. low (non-perfectionistic) standards about their appearance, their self-worth, and the risks they perceived that are associated with the use of cosmetic procedures. High vs. low standards about appearance were measured through three-items (α = .84), and self-worth was measured through three-items (α = .82). We measured risk as a multifaceted construct which included financial, performance, health and social dimensions of risk through eleven-items (α = .80). The dependent variable concerned respondents’ intentions to undergo a cosmetic procedure in the future.

The results show the predicted three-way interaction between high vs. low perfectionistic standards x high vs. low self-worth and high vs. low perceived risks associated with using cosmetic procedures. As predicted, both adaptive and maladaptive perfectionists were sensitive to risks. However, intentions to choose a cosmetic procedure in the future declined at a faster rate for perfectionists with low self-worth than perfectionists with high self-worth. For non-perfectionists, on the other hand, the pattern was the opposite. For non-perfectionists, intentions to undergo a future cosmetic procedure declined at a faster rate for consumers with high self-worth than consumers with low self-worth, supporting our predictions.

In summary, our results lend initial evidence that consumers’ conquest for perfectionism can counteract risk perceptions and influence their risky choices. While still being sensitive to risk, consumers who set high standards but have a positive sense of self-worth are more willing to engage in consumption activities than those with low self-worth as perceived risks rise. On the other hand, consumers’ risk sensitivity reverses under low perfectionism conditions. We have several experiments in progress designed to manipulate standards, self-worth and risks. Our research adds to the literature by (a) introducing a new construct of perfectionism, (b) demonstrating that different types of perfectionists react differently to risks, and (c) providing some policy implications about risk taking behavior and consumption.
REFERENCES

I propose consumers rely on others’ variety-seeking to infer others’ level of expertise. Empirical findings suggest consumers think more favorably of high-variety- compared to low-variety choosers. Consequently, they infer high-variety choosers are more likely to be product-category experts, are more willing to take their advice, compared to low-variety choosers.

Consumers often need to solicit others’ advice without having prior knowledge regarding others’ degree of expertise in the product category. This research proposes that consumers use the degree of variety in others’ choices to draw inferences regarding others’ product-category expertise.

Previous research has demonstrated that consumers think more favorably, and expect others to think more favorably, of people who seek variety than of people who do not (Ratner and Kahn 2002). I posit that, due to a halo effect (the tendency of overall evaluations to influence evaluations of specific properties in a way that is consistent with the overall evaluation (Asch 1946; Nisbett and Wilson 1977)), consumers’ favorable view of people who seek variety positively influences their inferences regarding these people’s category expertise. In particular, I propose that consumers infer that people who seek more variety are more likely than people who seek less variety to be product-category experts.

Participants in Study 1 (n = 200) were asked to imagine noticing the choices of three artisan cheese out of a selection of six cheeses, made by another person in the store. Participants in the high-variety chooser condition were told the other person chose one cow cheese, one goat cheese, and one sheep cheese, whereas participants in the low-variety chooser condition were informed the other person bought three goat cheeses. Next, participants indicated how likely they were to take the advice of the person whose choices they had observed, if they wanted to get advice on the best artisan cheese to choose, and to what extent that person was an artisan-cheese expert (1 = Not at all, 7 = Very much). Supporting the research hypotheses, the results revealed that participants who were informed the other person chose a high-variety set indicated they were more likely to take that person’s advice and inferred that person was more likely to be an artisan cheese expert, compared to participants informed the other person chose a low-variety set.

Study 2 provided evidence that a halo effect underlies consumer’s expertise inferences. Participants’ impressions (n = 400) were experimentally manipulated by exposing them to a positive or to a neutral social behavior in which the other person (whose choices they observed) engaged. Replicating past research (Ratner and Kahn 2002), the results indicated that participants had more positive impressions of others who engaged in a positive social behavior than on other engaging in a neutral social behavior. Consistent with the research hypotheses, the nature of the other person’s social behavior moderated expertise inferences: in the case of low-variety choosers, the positive impression induced by the positive social behavior attenuated the relatively negative impression consumers typically have of low-variety seekers (Ratner and Kahn 2002). In the case of high-variety choosers, however, the positive impression induced by the positive social behavior had a weaker impact on participants’ already positive impression of high-variety seekers (Ratner and Kahn 2002). Therefore, the difference in consumer impressions regarding the high- and the low-variety seekers was smaller in the positive-social-behavior condition than in the control condition. Consequently, the effect of variety seeking on inferred expertise was lower in the positive-social-behavior condition than in the neutral condition.

Study 3 revealed that the effect of other’s variety seeking on consumers’ expertise inferences and willingness to take advice is robust to variations in consumers’ own preferences. After observing the choices of two other people—a high-variety chooser and a low-variety chooser, participants (n = 50) ranked the available choice options according to their personal preferences. Replicating the results of the previous studies, participants inferred the high-variety other was more likely to be an expert and were more willing to take this person’s advice, compared to the low-variety other. Participants’ rankings did not predict their expertise inferences or willingness to take advice.

Study 4 demonstrated that the effect of other’s variety seeking on consumers’ expertise inferences and willingness to take advice occurs among experts as well as among novices. Participants (n = 300) observed the choices of a high-variety chooser or a low-variety chooser, indicated the likelihood that person was a product-category expert, the willingness to take this person’s advice, and rated their product category knowledge. As before, expertise inferences and willingness to take advice were higher in the high-variety chooser condition than in the low-variety chooser condition. Importantly, this effect maintained regardless of participants’ self-rated knowledge level.

Together, the results of these four studies support the notion that consumers infer that high-variety choosers are more likely to be category experts and are more likely to take their advice, compared to low-variety choosers. These inferences result from consumers’ tendency to hold a favorable impression of variety seekers, which spills over to their expertise inferences. These findings were consistent for varying degrees of consumer knowledge and across different consumer preferences, and were moderated by the presence of additional sources for consumer impressions.

The finding that consumer infer that others who seek more variety are more likely to be category experts is especially interesting given previous research reporting that experts are actually less likely than novices to seek variety (Clarkson, Janiszewski, and Cinelli 2012; Fox, Ratner, and Lieb 2005). If consumers indeed erroneously believe that others choosing more variety are more likely to be experts, they may take advice from those who are actually less likely to be experts.

References

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This research investigates the effect of spouse attractiveness on the perceived morality of a focal person and the credibility of their firm. Five studies demonstrate that a man with an unattractive wife is perceived to be more moral because the couple shares a stronger and more communal relationship.

The spouses and romantic partners of CEOs, politicians, and celebrities are often in the public eye themselves. For example, Melinda Gates, Priscilla Chan, and Miranda Kerr are as well-known as their spouses. Additionally, several service providers and retailers (e.g., financial advisors, contractors, automobile dealers) routinely feature their spouses in their professional profiles and commercial messages. How does the beauty of the spouse impact perceptions of the focal person?

The person perception literature concludes that, in general, beautiful people reap more benefits from society than unattractive people (Dion, Berscheid, and Walster 1972, Langlois et al. 2000, Mobius and Rosenblat 2006). This research focuses on the effects of a person's own beauty, not the beauty of people associated with a target person. In contrast, we demonstrate that judgments about a focal person's traits can be based on the attractiveness of their spouse, and explicate why an associated person's physical attractiveness can be detrimental to perceptions of a focal person. In particular, using entitativity theory and social exchange theory, we explain how the physical appearance of an associated person can signal information about a target person's morality, one of the more important dimensions in marketing and consumer behavior.

Entitativity is defined as the cohesiveness and unity of a social group, such as a sports team, work group, or family (Campbell 1958; McConnell et al. 1997). When gauging the entitativity of a group, judges may consider fixed characteristics or dynamic processes underlying the relationship (Wai-man Ip, Chiu, and Wan 2006). Fixed characteristics are immediately observable physical features and signal psychological similarity. Dynamic processes underlying the relationship include the behavior and movement patterns of a group, and signal common goals and attitudes of the group members (Wai-man Ip et al. 2006).

Social exchange theory (Blau 1964) posits that married couples exchange physical attractiveness, social status, and wealth. Of these, physical attractiveness is the only immediately observable fixed characteristic that entitativity judgments about a married couple can be based on. There are three different combinations of a married couple's relative attractiveness: (a) a physically similar couple, in which both people are equally attractive, (b) when the wife is more attractive than the husband, and (c) when the husband is more attractive than the wife. The first combination - two equally attractive people - is consistent with extant entitativity theory. When both individuals in a relationship are similarly attractive, they indicate entitativity through fixed characteristics, and are likely perceived to be psychologically similar. The second pairing has been studied and concludes that men married to attractive women are perceived to exchange wealth or social status for physical attractiveness (Baumeister and Vohs 2004).

The third of three possible pairings of married couples (i.e., the wife is less attractive) is the most interesting and least researched. The presence of an underlying reason for a couple's bonding encourages judges to search for a connection within members of this group (Yzerbyt, Corneille, and Estrada 2001). We contend that when there is no observable justification for a mismatched couple's relationship, judges analyze dynamic processes (i.e., common goals and values) to justify the relationship. We propose that, in contrast to entitativity theory, when a man is paired with a less attractive woman, their relationship will appear to be founded in communality and similar values rather than an exchange of resources (Blau 1964; Clark and Mills 1983). Because entitativity judgments based on common goals override judgments based on physical similarities, the relationship between a man and a less attractive woman will be perceived to be stronger. As a result, the husband (the focal person) will be perceived to value the morality traits his partner offers, and embody those traits himself.

Further, because women are more likely to detect communality and use it to form impressions of others (Wojciszke et al. 1998), we expect that female judges who view a man married to a less attractive woman will be more likely to detect a communal relationship between the couple than male judges. This in turn will increase the perceived strength of the target person's relationship. Men will be less likely to form judgments about the strength of a couple's relationship based on spouse attractiveness. Further, because women do not value the physical attractiveness of a significant other as much as men do (Hakim 2011), inferences about a female focal person will not be drawn based on her husband or characteristics he may exude. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** Women perceive a man married to an unattractive woman to be more moral than those married to an attractive woman. Men do not show this perception.

**Hypothesis 2:** Perceived relationship strength mediates the influence of spouse's attractiveness on the perceived morality of the focal person.

In five studies, we find support for our main hypothesis, test for the mediating relationship, and identify boundary conditions for the effect. In our first study, we test the general effect among both male and female judges evaluating married men and women. In the second study, we test a marketing implication – perceptions of a firm based on perceptions of the morality of its leader among both male and female judges evaluating married and single men and women. We identify a boundary to the hypothesized main effect in our third study, and provide process evidence through measured mediation in study 4 and moderation in study 5.

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The Smart Joker: Resolving Incongruous Humor in Advertising Triggers Impressions of Competent Advertisers

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In four studies, we show that humorous incongruity in advertising triggers inferences of increased advertiser competence in consumers who successfully decode the incongruity. Process evidence suggests that the effect is driven by consumers projecting decoding-induced self-competence to advertiser. We discuss implications for the use of humor in impression management.

Humor is a common executional tactic in advertising (Eisend 2009). Given that humor affects impression formation in inter-individual settings (Greengross, Martin and Miller 2012), we propose that humor influences the impressions that consumers form of a company that uses humor in advertising. Although both warmth and competence impressions can result from observing humor, we focus on the competence impressions, which take priority in consumers’ choice of products and service providers (Kirmani et al. 2017). The first goal of this research is, therefore, to identify a humor execution that particularly enhances competence impressions of advertisers. The second goal is to explain why this effect occurs.

Research has identified three humor processes that can elicit laughter, namely incongruity-resolution, tension-relief, and humorous disparagement (Speck 1991). Incongruity-resolution represents a humor process in which perceivers first experience something surprising, peculiar, or unusual and later are able to resolve it. This process is characteristic of humor forms such as puns, punchlines, or comic irony. Since the resolution of incongruity requires cognitive skills (Martin 2010), we predict that incongruous humor, if successfully resolved, triggers competence impressions of advertisers. Tension-relief, on the other hand, mainly induces laughter as a way to release nervous energy. This humor process leads perceivers to experience empathetic emotion, which can be transferred to improve any subsequently evaluations of advertisers, but not specifically competence evaluations. Lastly, humorous disparagement mostly harms, rather than improves competence impressions, since it may imply unjust ridicule and ignorance of social boundaries (i.e. other-disparagement) or draws attention to the deprecators’ real weaknesses (i.e. self-disparagement) (Greengross and Miller 2008).

Study 1 (N = 3487) explored the effects of all three humor executions. We distributed 300 real ads to eight groups of Mturk raters; each group rated a subset of ads on a different variable. Specifically, a group evaluated either the extent to which ads used one of the three humor executions or rated ads on one of the impression dimensions (warmth/competence). The results indicated that both incongruity-resolution and tension-relief had positive effects on competence impressions, while both self- and other-disparagement had negative effects. Incongruity-resolution did not alter warmth impressions, while tension-relief enhanced both warmth and competence impressions. This suggests that tension-relief improved the overall impression of advertisers via a rather generic affect transfer account. Contrarily, humorous incongruity, once successfully resolved, specifically and most strongly enhanced competence impressions. Our subsequent studies, hence, focused on incongruity-resolution.

Study 2 (N = 100) aimed to replicate the effect of incongruity-resolution on competence impressions. Since Study 1 was a correlational study, an alternative explanation for its findings may be that competent advertisers tend to use incongruous humor (rather than incongruence-based humor triggering competence impressions). To rule out this explanation, we asked Mturk participants to evaluate incongruous/congruous ads of the same advertisers; their impressions of the advertisers were then compared across ad conditions and participants. The results confirmed a positive causal relationship between humorous incongruity and competence impressions.

Study 3 (N = 300) examined whether the effect of incongruity persisted when the advertisers were not perceived as the humor source (i.e. when an external agency produced the ads). Furthermore, since incongruous ads are often creative, Study 3 examined whether creativity was the driver of the effect. The study had a 2 (ad: incongruous vs. congruous) × 2 (ad agency: major vs. minor) between-subject design. The ad-agency manipulation was intended to alter the belief about whether the advertisers were the source of humor. Specifically, we predicted that when consumers perceived a bigger (compared to smaller) external agency as being responsible for the ad, they would be less likely to see the advertisers as the main contributors to the ads, and thus less likely to form competence impressions about the advertisers. The results confirmed our prediction: Incongruity-based humor, when successfully resolved, enhanced competence impressions of the advertisers, but only in the minor-agency condition. Furthermore, when controlling for the effect of perceived ad creativity, the positive effect of incongruity-resolution remained, suggesting that creativity was not the only driver of the effect.

Study 4 (N = 301) tested a competence projection process as a potential driver of the effect of incongruity-resolution. Extant research supports the idea that appreciation of humor, especially incongruity-based humor, signals similarity between the perceivers and the source of humor (Flamson and Barrett 2008). On one hand, similarity is an antecedent of projection, the act of introspecting one’s own qualities and ascribing them to others (Ames 2004). On the other hand, resolution of incongruity may signal to the perceivers their mastery of competent skills such as flexible thinking and problem solving (Martin 2010). We thus proposed that perceivers, while resolving and appreciating incongruity-based humor, may project their perceived self-competence to the advertisers. To test this process, each participant in Study 4 evaluated one ad (incongruous or congruous) on the measures of incongruity, ad familiarity, advertiser competence, self-perception of competence, and perceived self-advertiser similarity. We then ran a serial mediation model where incongruity- and resolution was the independent variable, advertiser competence is the dependent variable, while self-perception of competence and perceived self-advertiser similarity were the two mediators. The results confirmed significant serial mediation, and thus supported the proposed process. Particularly, those who successfully decoded incongruous humor first perceived themselves as more competent and then more similar to the advertisers (on competence domain); this dual perception (which might have caused competence projection) then led to increased competence impressions of the advertisers.

It is well established that humor influences our impressions of people in social settings. However, the fact that this mechanism also applies to companies using humor in their marketing has not been demonstrated until now. Our research addresses this gap by documenting that incongruity-resolution is the only major humor execution that specifically enhances competence impressions of advertisers.
ers. This effect seems to work via competence projection, a novel process that distinguishes incongruity-resolution from other types of humor. Practically, our findings provide implications to optimize the use of humor in impression management, which is essential in guiding consumers’ choices and interactions with companies (Sanders 2010; Kirmani et al. 2017).

REFERENCES
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

What makes a message appear original? We suggest that the same message may appear more original when its source is a-typical rather than typical. For example, a pro-gun-rights message appears more original when advocated by a Democrat than by a Republican. Perceived originality, consecutively, affects persuasion and WOM intentions.

What makes messages and ideas appear original and surprising? Research on originality has largely focused on the novelty of the message or the idea, and on individual characteristics and environmental factors that breed creativity (i.e. Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby & Herron, 1996; Toubia & Netzer, 2016; Wilson, Guilford and Christensen 1953). However, less attention has been paid to the source of the message as an originality determinant. Here, we propose that the source of a message can elicit surprise, which in turn would transfer to the message and enhance its perceived originality. Perceived originality, in turn, should enhance persuasion and engagement with the message.

To be surprising, a source should be a-typical, i.e. deviate from his group’s prototype in some way (Shaley and Morwitz, 2012), or generate an idea which is rare and uncommon among members of her social group (Wilson, Guilford and Christensen, 1953). When a person’s opinion violates the receiver’s expectations about the source’s social category, the receiver experiences surprise (Kunda & Oleson, 1995; Moskowitz, 2005). For example, when a religious man advocates gay marriage, or when the leader of a left wing party advocates for pay parity for women vs. men. The post writer was either a woman (a-typical) or a man (a-typical). Again, results supported H1 and H2, as perceived message originality mediated the effect of source typicality on persuasion. In addition, the a-typical source’s post identified as Republican (Democrat). After measuring perceptions of message originality and writer’s trustworthiness, we again measured participants attitudes regarding different issues including the U.S. economic condition. Attitude change was computed by subtracting the result of the first attitude measurement from that of the second measurement. H1 was again supported, as well as H2, as perceived message originality mediated the effect of source typicality on attitude change. In addition, study 2 also rules out the possibility that the effect of source typicality on attitude change is driven by source credibility or authenticity.

Study 3 (N = 190) generalizes the findings of studies 1 and 2 to a new domain, and examines whether source typicality motivates people to react and take action (H3). Participants were presented with a fictitious post, arguing that in order to fix the gender pay gap, women should be paid more than men. The post writer was either a woman (typical) or a man (a-typical). Again, results supported H1 and H2, as the a-typical message was perceived as more original than the typical message, and perceived message originality mediated the effect of source typicality on persuasion. In addition, the a-typical source’s post was more engaging and elicited greater intentions to share and respond to it on social media than the typical source’s post (H3). Again, no differences emerged between the typical and a-typical sources in their perceived authenticity or credibility.

Across three studies in different domains, we delineate a simple, way in which any ordinary message can appear as more original, and induce greater persuasion and engagement. Moreover, we show that perceived message originality mediates the effect of source typicality on attitude change and engagement.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Four experiments demonstrate that people adapt more to hedonic experiences (e.g., pleasuring images, tasty food) when the experience is more partitioned (versus less partitioned). This effect is driven by a feeling of repetitiveness resulting from identical, even partitions. Reducing the feeling of repetitiveness mitigates the effect of partitioning on adaptation.

Prolonged or repeated consumption usually leads to adaptation, or a decrease in enjoyment (Coombs and Avrunin 1977). People adapt more slowly when you categorize the consumption episodes more specifically (Kahn and Wansink 2004), by introducing variety (Epstein et al. 2009; Galak, Redden, and Kruger 2009), and when the rate of consumption is slowed (Galak, Kruger, and Loewenstein 2013).

In the current research, we explore another critical antecedent to adaptation—the extent to which a stimulus is partitioned. Specifically, we compare situations where people experience a stimulus as a whole to situations where the stimulus is partitioned into smaller portions. Contrary to the notion that partitioning may interrupt the adaptation process and cause dishabituation (Nelson and Meyvis 2008; Nelson, Meyvis, and Galak 2009), we argue that partitioning a stimulus with frequent, brief breaks can actually lead to more adaptation. Across four experiments, we find that people adapt more when the experience is more partitioned (versus less partitioned). We further show that this effect is not driven by partitioning per se, but rather by the feeling of repetitiveness resulting from identical partitions. When the feeling of repetitiveness is mitigated, the effect of partitioning on adaptation disappears.

Study 1 is an initial demonstration of the partitioning effect on satiation using a visual stimulus. 151 MTurkers participated in a between-subjects design (presentation schedule: unpartitioned, unpartitioned total time, partitioned) with repeated measures. First, participants in both unpartitioned conditions saw a pleasing image for ten seconds, whereas participants in the partitioned condition saw the image twice for five seconds with two seconds of black screen in-between. Participants were asked, “To what extent was it pleasant or unpleasant to view the image, just now?” (−4=extremely unpleasant, 4=extremely pleasant; Time 1 measure). Next, the unpartitioned-condition participants saw the image for 60 uninterrupted seconds, the unpartitioned–total-time-condition saw it for 82 seconds (which held overall time constant), and the partitioned-condition saw the image twelve times for 5 seconds with two second breaks in-between. Participants answered the Time 2 measure and three repetitiveness questions (Redden 2008; e.g., “How repetitive was your experience in the study?” 1=not at all repetitive, 7=extremely repetitive). The pleasantness ratings did not differ across the two unpartitioned conditions, so we combined these two conditions. Time 2 was subtracted from Time 1 to determine hedonic change. Results showed participants adapted faster in the partitioned condition (M=1.76) than in the two unpartitioned conditions (M=−.78, t(149)=−3.56, p<.01). The feeling of repetitiveness mediated the effect (indirect effect=−.23, 95% CI: .03, 1.32) Thus, partitioning hedonic experiences increases adaptation (greater decline in pleasantness) driven by feelings of repetitiveness.

Study 2 tests the generalizability of our findings in the domain of food. 108 students participated in a between-subjects design (degree of partition: low, high) with repeated measures. The low-partitioned condition had .49 ounces (15) of regular-sized M&Ms. The high-partitioned condition had .49 ounces (45) mini M&Ms. Participants in the low-partitioned condition were told to eat one M&M. Participants in the high-partitioned condition were told to eat three M&Ms one at a time. Time 1 measure was taken after participants in the low (high) condition ate the first M&M’s candy (the first three M&M’s candies). After giving their Time 1 rating, participants ate the remaining candies, gave their Time 2 rating, and rated repetitiveness. Those in the high-partitioned condition showed greater hedonic adaptation (reflected by greater hedonic change, M=1.55) than the low-partitioned condition (M=.44, t(106)=−3.19, p<.001), showing the effect generalizes to other forms of partitions, such as spatial division. Again, repetitiveness mediated the effect (indirect effect=.09, 95% CI:.002,.28).

Study 3 tests the proposed mechanism by manipulating the similarity of consumption episodes; when the consumption episodes are similar (versus identical), people perceive the partitioned experiences as less repetitive, and the effect should attenuate. 124 Mturkers participated in a 2 (presentation schedule: unpartitioned, partitioned) x 2 (stimuli type: identical, similar) between-subjects design with repeated measures. The identical condition procedure replicated study 1. The similar-condition participants saw ten visually similar images each for five seconds instead of the same image plus the target image first and last (12 exposures). Otherwise the procedure followed the identical condition. There was a significant interaction (F(120)=5.79, p<.05). Replicating study 1, the identical condition showed that participants adapted faster in partitioned condition (M=2.14) than in the unpartitioned condition (M=.88, F(120)=11.90, p<.001). In the similar condition, there was no difference between the conditions (F<1). The feeling of repetitiveness mediated the effect for identical stimuli (indirect effect=.16, 95% CI: .01, .34) but not similar stimuli (indirect effect=.12, 95% CI: -.01, .34), revealing that multiple partitions only increase repetitiveness when the stimulus is identical.

Study 4 manipulates the evenness of the partitions while holding the number of partitions constant, showing that the effect is not driven by partitioning per se, but rather by the feeling of repetitiveness resulting from even partitions. This study rules out alternative explanations such as distraction and annoyance. 102 students participated in a between-subjects design (low-partition, high-partition-even, high-partition-uneven) with repeated measures. The low-partition condition had .69 ounces (7) jumbo M&Ms. The two high-partition conditions had .69 ounces (63) of mini M&Ms. Participants in the low-partition condition were told to eat one jumbo M&M. Participants in the high-partition-even condition ate three mini M&Ms at a time, three times. Participants in the high-partition-uneven condition ate five mini M&Ms at a time, then one, and then three at a time. Thus the high-partition conditions ate the same amount but varied in their evenness. After giving their Time 1 rating, participants ate the remaining candies. Those in the high-partition-even condition always ate three M&Ms together whereas those in the high-partition-uneven condition ate between one and five M&Ms each time. Participants gave their Time 2 rating. Consistent with our prediction, participants in the high-partition-even condition adapted more quickly than the low-partition condition (Bonferroni post-hoc mean difference=1.32, p<.05). There was no difference in adaptation.
rate between the high-partition-uneven condition and low-partition condition (mean difference = .64, \( p > .05 \)).

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**Editing Entertainment: Length Constraints, Consumption Experiences and Motion Pictures**

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**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

We examine when product length constraints diminish the quality of entertainment experiences. When filmmakers lack enough good scenes to reach a 90-minute minimum requirement, for example, they will keep bad scenes to reach the constraint. Consistent with this conjecture, we find that poorly-rated Hollywood movies are about 90 minutes long.

Editing is essential to entertainment product development. To create hedonically-pleasing experiences, filmmakers, musicians, and writers employ a “create then cut” product development process. After creating a lot of content, producers cut dull, distracting, or redundant (i.e., bad) content in post-production (Murch 2001). Ideally, the editing process transforms a pre-release product with some good and bad content into a final product that has only good content. Cutting bad content improves entertainment because, all things equal, consumers prefer experiences that are more pleasing than not (Baumgartner et al. 1997; Vorderer et al. 2004).

If producers cut content until only good content remains, then a highly-pleasing consumption experience may be long or short depending on the amount of good content left after editing. Indeed, some Oscar-worthy movies are 178 minutes (The Godfather); others are 93 minutes (Annie Hall).

However, although the length of media products should depend on the amount of good content, some products cannot exceed a maximum or fall short of a minimum length constraint.

**PREDICTIONS**

We propose that a discrepancy between a length constraint and the amount of good content created during production alters producers’ editing decisions: Maximum length requirements cause producers with too much good content to cut some high-quality elements. Minimum length requirements cause producers with too little good content to keep some low-quality elements.

Length constraints alter editing decisions in predictable ways, depending on the amount of available high-quality content. Yet, it is less clear how these alterations affect consumption experiences. We propose that keeping low-quality elements (due to a minimum constraint) diminishes consumption experiences more than cutting high-quality elements (due to a maximum constraint). First, consumers are more aware of present rather than absent elements (i.e., wysiati; Kahneman 2011). Second, negative stimuli have a greater influence on impressions than positive stimuli (i.e., negativity bias; Baumeister et al. 2001).

We predicted that length constraints would systematically affect the length and quality of entertainment products. If no length constraint is present, length should be normally distributed and long and short products should be about the same quality. However, product lengths should pile just below a maximum constraint or just above a minimum constraint. Average product quality remains about the same for maximum constraints. However, average quality should drop near the minimum because consumers now experience low-quality elements that they wouldn’t normally. Thus, we predicted a positive relationship between length and quality when a production process is subject to a minimum length constraint (but not a maximum or no constraint).

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**STUDY 1**

The movie industry is a suitable case study to test our predictions for two reasons: First, filmmakers follow a “create then cut” production process. Second, the industry imposes a minimum constraint because movies need to be at least 90 minutes long to be theatrically released.

We investigated the running time and quality (IMDb score) of Hollywood movies released into theaters between 2000 and 2014 (N = 1014). As predicted, movie running time was positively skewed and positively associated with movie quality (all r > .28, all p < .001). This positive relationship held when controlling for production budget, number of opening weekend theaters, genre, production method, a sequel dummy, a high-quality director dummy, and year of release. We also used dummies to split running time into five equally sized quintiles. We regressed these length bins (the shortest movies constituted the baseline condition) on movie quality, and all control variables. Additionally, we controlled for a main effect of running time to account for the possibility that consumers like longer movies for the sake of being long. As predicted, the shortest movies received significantly lower ratings than all longer movies (all p < .05).

**STUDY 2**

We examined an alternative account for study 1’s findings: long low-quality movies are missing because they are released to video. To rule out this possibility, we examined the length and IMDb ratings of direct-to-video movies released between 2000 and 2014 (n = 405). When we added direct-to-video movies to the dataset of theatrical release, the deterioration of quality close to the length constraint was accentuated (r = .52, p < .001).

We also repeated the length bin regression analysis for the combined dataset by creating the five previously defined length bins. Replicating study 1, the average quality of the movies closest to the minimum length constraint was significantly lower than the quality of all longer movies (all p < .001). In sum, we are still able to attribute our findings to a length constraint on editing decisions.

**STUDY 3**

Next, we investigated a movie industry that imposes no length constraints on filmmakers: Bollywood. Although Indian movies need to be at least 70 minutes long to be considered feature films, filmmakers tend to produce considerably longer films. For instance, by “padding” their movies with popular music and dance sequences.

We investigated Bollywood movies released between 2004 and 2014 (n = 848). Bollywood movies’ running time was normally distributed and unrelated to their IMDb ratings (r = .034, p = .52). We also created five equally-sized length bins for Bollywood films and regressed them on movie quality (controlling for various variables). As expected, the shortest Bollywood movies were as good as their longer counterparts (all p > .24). Indeed, because a minimum length constraint is largely absent in the Indian movie industry, the findings of study 1 did not replicate.

**DISCUSSION**

Our inquiry examined how length constraints alter editing decisions. We proposed that producers who exceed a maximum con-
straint will cut some good content. Conversely, producers without enough good content to reach a minimum constraint will keep some bad content. These errors’ effect on product quality is asymmetric: keeping bad content hurts consumption experiences more than cutting good content. Consistent with this notion, bad Hollywood movies are around 90 minutes long. Supposedly because producers need to comply with a minimum length constraint. Our examination of alternative accounts was unable to explain this finding.

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Effects of Sequential Order and Time Constraint on Overall Evaluation of Complex Consumption Experiences
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We show that complex experiences, consisting in sequences of consumption episodes, receive better evaluations when episodes unfold along improving sequences (starting with the least attractive one), when time constraint is absent. When time constraint is present, this effect reverses, in favor of declining sequences (starting with the most attractive episode).

Many consumption experiences are complex in that they are composed of a set of episodes that unfold sequentially over time. Prior studies (e.g., Ariely and Zauberman 2000; Chapman 2000) found that people express better overall evaluations of such experiences when they unfold along an improving sequence of episodes, which starts with the least attractive episode and ends with the most attractive one, rather than a declining sequence, which starts with the most attractive episode and ends with the least attractive one. Studies on contextual moderators suggest that, when individuals are not exposed to factors that can limit their cognitive ability and/or motivation to process information (Bhargave and Montgomery 2013; Montgomery and Unnava 2009), they evaluate such experiences in a more analytical way and weight more the final episodes. As a consequence of this tendency, individuals may express more favorable evaluations for complex experiences that unfold along an improving (vs. declining) sequence of episodes. Conversely, when individuals are subject to factors that undermine their cognitive ability and/or their motivation to process information, they are less analytical and tend to evaluate complex experiences more holistically by resorting to heuristics (Biswas, Grewal, and Roggeveen 2010). Therefore, individuals tend to anchor their overall evaluations of complex experiences to the initial episodes and express better evaluations for experiences that unfold along a declining (vs. improving) sequence of episodes.

The present research introduces a new moderating factor by positing that the presence (vs. absence) of a time constraint can limit consumers’ cognitive ability. We hypothesize that the presence (vs. absence) of a temporal constraint could play a moderating role, such that, when this constraint is absent, consumers evaluate complex experiences more favorably when such experiences unfold along an improving (vs. declining) sequence consumption episodes. Conversely, when a time constraint is present, consumers evaluate complex experiences more favorably when such experiences unfold along a declining (vs. improving) sequence of episodes. We test this hypothesis in two distinct studies.

STUDY 1

A sample of U.S. respondents (n = 176) participated in a 2 (type of sequence: improving vs. declining) × 2 (time constraint: absent vs. present) between-subjects experiment. The study asked participants to look at a virtual brochure regarding a tour across three prestated Italian destinations with different levels of attractiveness: Rome, with the highest level of attractiveness; Naples, with a moderate level; and Bologna, with the lowest level. To manipulate type of sequence, we created two versions of a tour. In the improving sequence condition, participants were shown a tour that unfolded along an improving order (i.e., Bologna→Naples→Rome). In the declining sequence condition, participants were shown a tour that unfolded along the opposite order. To manipulate time constraint, we used direct instructions. In the time constraint absent condition, participants were asked to mentally visualize the tour and complete the whole survey without any time limit. In the time constraint present condition, participants were asked to do so in five minutes. Finally, participants reported their liking for the whole tour on a mono-item, seven-point scale.

The obtained results revealed a significant interaction effect between type of sequence and time constraint, F = 13.17, p < .001. As hypothesized, when time constraint was absent, respondents who were exposed to the improving sequence of tourist destinations expressed a higher liking for the tour in its entirety (M = 6.00) compared to those exposed to the declining sequence (M = 5.41), p = .005. In contrast, when time constraint was present, respondents who were exposed to the improving sequence of destinations expressed a lower liking (M = 5.50) than those exposed to the declining sequence (M = 6.00), p = .022.

STUDY 2

Study 2 had the same design as Study 1, but was conducted in the real context of an archaeological park in Italy, and involved 144 visitors. The park consists of three areas – a museum, an area with ancient Roman ruins, and a necropolis. A whole tour of this park lasts, on average, a hour and half. A pretest assessed that: the museum had the highest level of attractiveness; the Roman ruins had a moderate level; and the necropolis had the lowest level. Participants were approached at the entrance of the park and accompanied by a seemingly professional archaeological guide through a tour across the three areas. In the improving sequence condition, the guide showed participants around the park starting from the least attractive area and ending with the most attractive area (i.e., Necropolis→Roman ruins→Museum). In the declining sequence condition, the guide showed participants around the park following the opposite order. Time constraint was manipulated as in Study 1. In the time constraint absent condition, participants were told they could take as long time as they wanted to visit the park. In the time constraint present condition, participants were told they had to complete the visit in a hour and half. Finally, participants reported their intention to revisit the park in the future using two items assessed on a seven-point scale.

The analysis returned a significant interaction effect between the two manipulated factors, F = 13.75, p < .001. As hypothesized, we found that, when time constraint was absent, participants who visited the three areas in an improving sequence reported a higher intention to revisit the park (M = 6.13) compared to their counterparts who visited the same areas in a declining sequence (M = 4.95), p = .002. Conversely, when a time constraint was present, participants who visited the three areas in an improving sequence reported a lower intention to revisit the park (M = 5.06) than those who visited the same areas in a declining sequence (M = 5.74), p = .041.

The present research provides empirical support to our research hypothesis and contributes to literature by introducing a novel and relevant moderator of the effect of type of sequence on overall evaluations of complex experiences. Our results also have practical relevance in that they provide suggestions on how to arrange spaces and manage time to improve consumers’ overall evaluations of the experiences delivered.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

How much do experts and novices enjoy hedonic products? Is expertise a hedonic blessing or a hedonic curse? This inquiry examines how expertise develops by accumulating experiences in a product domain and how it affects enjoyment. We find that consumers draw back on past experiences to gauge present enjoyment.

Throughout their lives, consumers collect experiences with experiential products (e.g., movies, coffee). Obviously, there is variation in the type and number of experiences that consumers accumulate. Some gather a great variety, others only a few. A coffee aficionado, for instance, has frequented various coffee shops while an inexperienced coffee drinker might have mostly visited Starbucks. Past work found that consumers learn distributional information about stimuli (e.g., the range, the mean) through prior experiences which boosts sensitivity for value (i.e., knowledge factor, general evaluability theory; Hsee and Zhang 2010). However, the field is silent as to whether these findings apply to more experiential products because most past investigations examined numeric stimuli (e.g., prices).

Our investigation tests whether prior experiences increase value sensitivity and how the distributional features of consumers’ past experiences may trigger sensitivity. Given that distributions entail multiple potential reference points (e.g., range, mean, etc.), the question begs: Which aspect of the distribution of past experiences drives present enjoyment? Multiple possibilities were considered: a) Consumers may compare the new experience to the past average experience (Helson 1964; Hsee and Zhang 2010); b) rely on range information (minimum, maximum past experience; Hsee and Zhang 2010), c) determine the rank of the new experience (Stewart et al. 2010), or d) use a different strategy.

Study 1 tested our hypothesis in the domain of gaming apps. To avoid order effects, participants reported their distribution of past gaming app experiences before or after we measured their enjoyment of two target games. After watching videos introducing two gaming apps of lower or higher hedonic value, participants indicated their enjoyment of each game (1=horrible to 10=world class). The distribution of past experiences was measured with a distribution builder. We computed the range, sum, and the average valence of their past experiences from these answers. A mixed linear models revealed no 3-way interaction between range, game, and order (p>.27). However, the expected interactions between range and game valence emerged (p<.08). Participants’ enjoyment was more valence sensitive when they had accumulated a broad (+1SD; β=1.61, p<.001) rather than narrow range of apps (-1SD; β=-.430, p=.231). The interactions between the sum (i.e., average) and game valence were insignificant (all p>.243).

Experiment 2 removed moderate drawings from the distribution of experiences. We expected that their removal would not affect value sensitivity because only the range, but not the sum of past experiences drove valence sensitivity in study 1. Study 2 applied a 3 (only extremes vs. all drawings vs. irrelevant range) x 2(higher vs. lower value gift) between-subjects design. In the “all drawings” condition, participants saw 15 mountain drawings whose valence was normally distributed to ensure a broad range. In the only extremes condition, participants saw 6 drawings – the 3 worst and the 3 best. In the irrelevant range condition, participants saw 15 animal photographs. We measured enjoyment of each photograph or drawing on slider scales (1=do not enjoy at all to 10=enjoy extremely).

After completing six dot-estimation filler tasks, the participants received one of two novel drawings as a gift: a higher or lower value mountain drawing. A pretest ensured that these targets were of similar value than the extreme drawings in the first phase. Gift enjoyment was measured with two items: How happy are you about this drawing, How much do you like this drawing? (1=not at all to 9=extremely; α=.91).

A regression model revealed the predicted 2-way interactions between range (coded to compare each of the drawing conditions to the animal picture condition) and gift value (all p<.01). Participants’ enjoyment was more valence sensitive when they had seen all drawings or the extreme drawings (all p<.001) versus animals (p<.16). Next, we tested for assimilation and contrast effects. We correlated the distribution of the three lowest and the three highest value drawings with enjoyment. Enjoyment of the higher value gift correlated with higher value (r=.441, p<.01) but not the lower value drawings (r=.203, p=.157). Vice versa, enjoyment of the lower value gift correlated with the lower value (r=.333, p<.02) but not the higher value drawings (r=.062, p=.67). We thus find evidence for hedonic assimilation but not hedonic contrast.

Experiment 3 aimed to test whether consumers rank experiences by manipulating the range of experiences. Study 3 applied a 2(range: narrower vs. broader) x 2(higher vs. lower value gift) between-subjects design. In the broader range condition, participants saw the 15 mountain drawings from experiment 2. In the narrower range condition, participants saw 15 drawings of moderate value. The rest of the procedure resembled experiment 2.

A significant 2-way interactions between gift value and range (p=.016). Participants’ enjoyment was more sensitive to value when they had experienced the broader (p<.001) as compared to the narrower range (p=.09).

Study 2 demonstrated that experienced participants assimilated to similar past experiences. The ability to draw back on similar past experiences may therefore be what distinguishes novices from experts and creates value sensitivity for experiential products. Study 3 supports this notion. When similar past experiences were absent, sensitivity declined. These findings again raise doubts as to whether consumers compare their experiences to an average or rank them. More importantly, they imply that expertise for hedonic experiences may be local.

Our investigation demonstrated that prior experiences make consumers’ hedonic enjoyment more sensitive to hedonic value. Their enjoyment of higher vs. lower value drawings and gaming apps diverged strongly, while inexperienced consumers differentiated less. We replicated this finding with between- and within-subjects designs, and by measuring and manipulating prior experiences. Consistent with evaluability theory, the range/variety of prior experiences drove valence sensitivity (studies 1&2). Ostensibly, because a variety of past experiences provides similar past experiences that serve as assimilation standards (study 2). Extending beyond evaluability theory, expertise for experiences seems to be local. Participants were insensitive to the hedonic value of drawings outside of their range of past experiences (study 3). In sum, our work uncovered that consum-
ers may not use the same strategies when evaluating experiences and numbers.

REFERENCES


Mindfulness Promotes Green Product Choices via Environmental Awareness
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We conducted two experiments to test the thesis that mindfulness can help promote environmentally-friendly product choices as people are more aware of the environmental consequences of their decisions. Findings confirmed the effect. Mindfulness makes individuals more aware of the environmental consequences of their product choices.

Mindfulness refers to the state of being aware, taking note of what is going on within oneself and outside in the world, without shying away from thoughts or feelings that one does not like or does not wish to be true. Beyond improving welfare (Kiken & Shook, 2011), being mindful increases empathy (Winning & Boag, 2015) and prosociality (Flook et al., 2015), but it de-biases cognitive biases (Hafenbrack, Kimias, & Barsade, 2014) and changes how one makes ethical decisions (Ruedy & Schweitzer, 2010). Mindfulness is gaining traction in tourism with airlines and hotels providing mindfulness training for staff and customers alike (Barber & Deale, 2014; Frauman & Norman, 2004; Moscardo, 1996).

Mindfulness has been reported to increase sustainable choices and behaviours. Yet, research has focused on non-tourist contexts and relied primarily on survey methods (Amel, Manning, & Scott, 2009; Barber & Deale, 2014; Bahl et al., 2016; Ericson, Kjønstad, & Barstad, 2014). These findings indicate that, at the aggregate level, higher scores on trait mindfulness is correlated with greater awareness of the environmental and cultural impacts of one’s behaviours and decisions (Chambers et al., 2009; Shapiro et al., 2006). However, survey methods succumb to issues of cause-and-effect. Accordingly, we utilised experimental methods in this research to test the possible application of mindfulness to sustainable tourist practices. We used the context of Uluru to see if mindfulness would increase awareness of the environmental and cultural issues and in turn reduce intentions to climb the sandstone—an activity that harms the natural formation and culture of the Indigenous Anangu people in the area (Norman, 2017).

PROCEDURE

We recruited 413 Australian students from upper-level business courses (M age = 20.05 years old, S.D. = 2.00; 235 men, 175 women, 3 undisclosed gender). During pre-screening, we only recruited (a) self-reported Australian citizens and (b) those having lived in Australia for 10+ years since there are cultural differences in experiences with and attitudes toward Uluru (Parks Australia, 2017). We also only recruited those (c) who had never visited Uluru before to rule out a priori knowledge. However, climbing Uluru is a well-known practice and issue in the country (Norman, 2017) and so we reasoned that our student sample, though having never visited Uluru before, would be familiar with the controversy. All students completed the experiment inside the behavioural laboratory and were seated in cubicles.

Students were randomly assigned to listen to one of two audio recording tracks instructing mindfulness or mind-wandering using headphones that we provided to them. Please see Appendix. Then, students were asked to take part in an experiment for the tourism industry. Students randomly received information about one of two tour packages to Uluru in Northern Territory, Australia. In both conditions, the tour package consisted of economy airfare, 5 nights accommodation in a mixed-gender dormitory, and lunch (but not breakfast or dinner). It was also said that this package would cost AUS$599.

Since we recruited students, we felt that the price and hostel-style accommodations were appropriate—consistent with tour packages by student travel agencies in the area. In the “climbing” condition, a tagline stated “Come climb Uluru as part of your Australian adventures.” In the control condition, it stated “Come visit Uluru as part of your Australian adventures!” The words climb and visit were not stressed in the actual experimental stimuli. All students regardless of their condition were asked how appealing the tour package (1 = “Not at All” to 7 = “Very Much”) and how likely they would sign up for it if it were available over their upcoming summer holiday (1 = “Very Unlikely” to 7 = “Very Likely”). Please refer to appendix for an explanation for why we chose Uluru as our context.

Afterswards, to measure students’ sustainable awareness, all students indicated their agreement with the two following statements on separate 7-point scales: “When I decide which tour package to buy, it is important to consider the environmental and/or cultural impacts of my choices” and “It is important to consider how my tourist actions can affect the local environment and traditional peoples” (1 = “Strongly Disagree” to 7 = “Strongly Agree”). No student indicated any suspicion during debriefing, and so all responses were kept.

RESULTS

Tour Preference

We collapsed the two tour package preference measures to form a single index (r = .93, p < .001). A 2 (tour package: climb, visit) × 2 (state: mindfulness, mind-wandering) ANOVA revealed a main effect of package type, with a more positive preference towards the visit package (M = 3.27, S.D. = 1.81) than climbing one (M = 2.68, S.D. = 2.01), F(1, 419) = 11.45, p < .001, d = .33. Also, mindfulness produced a lower positive preference overall (M = 2.79, S.D. = 1.68) versus mind-wandering (M = 3.31, S.D. = 1.86), F(1, 419) = 8.66, p < .01, d = .28. Importantly, the interaction was significant, F(1, 419) = 6.58, p < .02, d = .25. This meant that tour package preference differed depending on the mindfulness and mind-wandering state induced. For the climb package, mindfulness lowered preference (M = 2.26, S.D. = 1.14) versus mind-wandering (M = 3.20, S.D. = 1.82), F(1, 242) = 17.92, p < .001, d = .64. But for the visit package, mindfulness did not impact preference (M = 3.28, S.D. = 1.93) compared to mind-wandering (M = 3.34, S.D. = 1.80) (p = .78).

Sustainability Awareness

The separate measures of sustainability awareness were similarly collapsed into a single index (r = .94, p < .001). The 2 × 2 ANOVA on this index revealed only a main effect of induction state, with mindfulness increasing one’s sustainability awareness (M = 5.11, S.D. = 1.28) compared to mind-wandering (M = 4.65, S.D. = 1.68), F(1, 419) = 14.38, p < .001, d = .37. There was neither a main effect of tour package type nor two-way interaction (ps > .23). Thus, mindfulness increased an awareness of tourism sustainability issues, directing them to re-evaluate their preference for the visit package (as it has sustainability impacts) but not the climb one (as it has less impacts).

Moderated Mediation Analysis

Finally, we conducted a moderated mediation analysis using Model 15 of Hayes’ (2013) bootstrapping protocols to determine if mindfulness (vs. mind-wandering) would increase sustainability awareness and thereby reduce preference for the tour package that
included climbing but not for the visit-only package. Induction state was entered as the independent variable, preference was the dependent variable, sustainability awareness was the presumed mediating variable, and package type (climb or visit) was the presumed moderating variable. For the climb package, the indirect effect was negative and significantly differed from 0 ($\beta = -.10, S.E. = .04; 95\% \text{ C.I.:} -.20 \text{ to -.02}$). But for the visit package, the indirect effect was not significantly different from 0 ($\beta = -.03, S.E. = .02; 95\% \text{ C.I.:} -.09 \text{ to .001}$). The index of moderated mediation was also significant ($\beta = -.05, S.E. = .02; 95\% \text{ C.I.:} -.16 \text{ to -.02}$). As such, the indirect effects were significantly different from each other. For the climb package, mindfulness lowered preference because of greater sustainability awareness. However, for the visit package, although mindfulness likewise increased greater sustainability awareness, this did not affect preference for the tour.

**DISCUSSION**

We find that mindfulness promotes awareness of sustainability issues and reduces students’ willingness to join a tour package that includes climbing Uluru. Policymakers have used intervention strategies that aim at changing people’s cognitions and behaviours to “nudge” them to make choices friendly to the planet on which they live. Mindfulness approaches this aim differently by having people consider the environmental and cultural impacts of their behaviours. The possibilities of mindfulness in sustainable tourism warrant attention. Given the popularity of mindfulness within tourism settings (Barber & Deale, 2014), it may be a viable way to encourage tourists to make more sustainable tourist choices.

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Green, Greener, Greenest: Can Competition Increase Sustainable Behavior?
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Across four studies in the lab, online, and field we show that competition – which is often associated with non-sustainable behavior – promotes sustainability. This is because competition appeals to pro-selves who are generally less motivated to act sustainably, whereas it does not alienate pro-socials.

Concerns regarding the environment are increasing rapidly. Yet, behavioral change among people in the realm of sustainability has proven to be very difficult (Dietz et al. 2003). Despite widespread pro-environmental attitudes among consumers (40%), only a handful of consumers (4%) actually behave sustainably (Luchs et al. 2010). One potential reason is that many pro-environmental campaigns are geared towards people who are socially conscious and already committed to the sustainability agenda (“pro-socials”, about 50% of the population; Balliet, Parks, and Joireman, 2009), while attempts to address the other half of the population, who is more concerned about taking care of the self (“pro-selves”), are lacking or ineffective (Corner and Randall 2011; Nisbet and Kotcher 2009). The current research proposes a counterintuitive, new marketing strategy to increase sustainable behavior that could potentially be effective for both pro-selves and pro-socials: Competition.

Competition is defined as a contest between people to achieve a certain goal that provides potential benefits to participants (or to other entities) based on participants’ relative performance to other participants. Applying competition to increase sustainability is not obvious as competing is often associated with non-sustainable behavior. Competition is however expected to be effective for pro-selves as it provides the opportunity to obtain outcome and process benefits for the individual. Importantly, we propose in addition that, although pro-socials are intrinsically less motivated to compete (Van Lange, Schippers, and Balliet 2011), competition might not hurt their motivation either, when it is used as a mean to a sustainable end – fostering outcomes for the common good. Then, competition will enhance sustainability by appealing to a broad public: Both pro-socials and pro-selves.

Across four studies in the lab, online, and field we test the effect of competition on sustainable behavior and how this is moderated by the extent in which people are pro-self versus pro-social (i.e., Social Value Orientation; McClintock 1968; Van Lange 1999). More specifically, we predict that competition, as compared to no competition, increases sustainable behavior (H1). In addition, we predict that pro-selves act more sustainably in a competitive setting as opposed to a non-competitive setting, whereas pro-socials act sustainably, independent of competition (H2).

Experiment 1 (N = 200) tested the basic effect (H1). Participants in the competition (no-competition) condition read that the University’s Green Office introduced a sustainability competition (discussion group) to promote sustainable behavior and were asked to write about how they could win the competition to become the most sustainable student (become the most knowledgeable student on the topic of sustainability). Results demonstrated that participants in the competition condition added more sustainable products to their shopping basket (M = 1.91, SD = 1.75), donated more money to WWF (M = 10.25, SD = 8.91), and recycled more paper (98%) than participants in the no-competition condition (M_{\text{Shopping}} = 1.37, SD = 1.40; M_{\text{Donation}} = 6.78, SD = 7.37; Prushing = 92%, F(1, 196) = 5.78, p = .02, F(1, 196) = 4.75, p = .03; \chi^2(1, 200) = 4.04, p = .04, respectively).

Experiment 2 (N = 332) tested whether the positive effect of competition on sustainable behavior was moderated by Social Value Orientation. First, participants filled out the SVO Slider Measure (Murphy, Ackermann, and Handgraaf 2011). After, they were asked to join the sustainability competition (initiative) of the coffee store on campus and win the competition by reducing most waste (take part in the initiative to help reduce waste). The results revealed that people were more willing to buy a reusable coffee cup in the competition than in the no-competition condition (F(1, 322) = 9.67, p < .01). In addition, the results showed that this effect was moderated by SVO (F(1, 322) = 8.45, p < .01): Pro-selves were more willing to buy a reusable coffee cup in the competition condition than in the no-competition condition, b = 0.43, t(328) = 2.89, p = .004, whereas the willingness to buy a reusable coffee cup for pro-socials did not depend on condition, b = 0.05, t(328) = 0.31, p = .76. Experiment 3 (N = 174) proved the assumption that pro-socials only respond well to competition when it serves a common (e.g., sustainability) end outcome, but not when it serves a self-interest (e.g., leadership) end outcome (F(1, 159) = 8.84, p = .003, part. \eta^2 = .05). For pro-selves, on the other hand, competition was effective, independent of the end outcome (sustainability vs. leadership; F(1, 159) = 0.03, p = .87, part. \eta^2 < .001). Secondly, the results showed that the findings cannot be alternatively explained by demand characteristics. If the results would be due to respondents merely following the instructions to compete, then, after activation of competition, performance would have increased across both groups in both domains.

Finally, experiment 4 (N = 1131) tested our hypothesis in the field making use of a natural segmentation distinguishing between pro-selves (economic students) and pro-socials (psychology students) people (Van Lange, Schippers, and Balliet 2011). An email from the university was sent to the economics (psychology) students, informing them about a green competition (initiative) and were asked to join the competition (initiative) to become the most (a more) sustainable economics (psychology) student. Opening the email served as our dependent variable. Consistent with Experiment 2, the results of a binomial logistic regression revealed a significant interaction between condition and department b = -.19, p = .01: Economics students opened the email more often in the competition condition (25.7%) than in the control condition (15.3%), b = .33, p = .003, whereas no difference between conditions was found for psychology students (respectively, 23.5% and 25.6%), b = -.06, p = .55.

Taken together, this research shows that competition – which is often associated with non-sustainable behavior – promotes sustainable behavior. Furthermore, it demonstrates that competition is especially fruitful as a marketing strategy as it appeals to pro-selves who are generally less motivated to act sustainably, whereas it does not alienate pro-socials. Overall, sustainable competition can be seen as a successful marketing strategy that might contribute to the efforts addressing the environmental problems we face today.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
This paper measures well-being as a multifaceted construct to find that both SC fosters and restrains consumers’ well-being. In particular, those engaging in activist behavior have a more meaningful life and a better view of themselves However, activism leads to an unsatisfying social life.

One of the unclosed issues in sustainable consumption (SC) literature is the relationship between SC and well-being: it is unclear whether SC is a source of satisfaction. As Venhoeven, Bolderdijk and Steg (2013) suggest, SC may have a positive impact on eudemonic well-being, as eudaimonia occurs when one’s life is consistent with one’s values; in contrast, it may influence negatively hedonic well-being, since SC implies personal restraint on consumption, which it is usually framed as detrimental to personal desires.

Notwithstanding the contribution of past scholarship on SC and well-being, there are three limitations in past research that this paper seeks to address. First, this stream of research has measured well-being as a single-faceted construct (Diener 2000). However, other authors have defended the need to broaden the well-being construct since it goes beyond the emotional experiences and life satisfaction (Zelenski and Nisbet, 2014). By examining the relationship between SC and the multifaceted construct of psychological well-being, past contradictory results may be reconciled. To illustrate, past studies have shown that sustainable consumers experience negative emotions when they become aware of the harm that human beings inflict on the planet but they realize they have limited power to solving the problem (Venhoeven, Bolderdijk and Steg 2016) or when they find limited alternatives or useful information to make sustainable decisions (Longo 2017). Thus, these experiences may negatively affect the dimension of well-being “environmental mastery”. However, as past studies have demonstrated that sustainable consumers feel meaningful (Moisander and Pesonen 2002), their assessment of the dimension “purpose in life” would be positive. Thus, we need to understand how SC impinge on the different facets of psychological well-being, in order to better understand the relationship between SC and well-being.

Another limitation of past research is that most studies have failed to distinguish among different pro-environmental actions under SC (i.e. boycotting, “boycotting”, among others (Papaioikonomou, 2013). For instance, activists have been found to experience higher levels of well-being and sense of meaning than less committed sustainable consumers (Eigner 2001) but also burnt-out (Sheldon et al. 2016) and social rejection (Bashir et al. 2013), which should affect negatively the dimension “positive relations”.

Finally, the influence of gender has been overlooked in the literature of SC and well-being; this is an important omission as gender has been identified consistently as a moderator variable in SC (Costa Pinto, Herter, Rossi and Borges 2014). In addition, gender has been found to be a moderator factor in well-being (e.g. Burns and Machin, 2010). Therefore, this study aims to (1) elucidate the effect of SC on the six facets of psychological well-being, (2) distinguish between conventional SC behaviors vs. activism to examine whether these behaviors influence psychological well-being differently (3) and test gender as a moderator variable.

This paper contributes to existing literature by showing that the relationship between well-being and SC is more intricate than what was deemed in previous literature. More pragmatically, this study focuses on young adults as they are a crucial stakeholder group in SC, represent the future market (Grebitus, Printezis, Printezis 2017) and have an increasing purchase power in developed countries (Experian, 2015). Understanding the relationship between SC and well-being in this segment will help provide frames to persuade more young consumers to embrace this lifestyle, as there is a need to escalate SC.

The sample consisted of 861 undergraduate students (427 women; aged 18) from a Spanish University. Assessment of Psychological well-being was measured using the Spanish translation of the Psychological Well-being Scale (EBP) (Díaz et al. 2006; Ryff, 1989). The independent variables, SC behaviors, was measured with an adaptation of Webb, Mohr and Harris (2008) scale to the local sample. Multi-group analyses with SEM were used to test the differences in relations for the two groups, that is, to test the moderating role of gender. The proposed unconstrained model reached good fit (=209.809, df=110, =1.907, GFI=.965; IFI=.974; TLI=.857; CFI=.974; RMSEA=.033) and significantly better than the fully constrained model ( =66.994, p=.05), confirming the moderating role of gender. The model shows that SC impacts differently the different facets of well-being. This is even more observable when we differentiate between two types of behaviors: activist and purchase-related. Purchase-related behavior do not influence significantly most of the facets of psychological well-being except for purpose in life. However, this significant relationship is only observed among women and not among men. As expected activist-type behaviors impinge negatively on personal relations, being the relation even more negative among men than women. However, activism influences positively the dimension “purpose in life” for men, and self-acceptance. These relationships are not observed among women.

In conclusion, our results show that SC fosters and but also restrains young consumers’ well-being. Our findings help to reconcile the contradictory results found in the SC literature: sustainable consumption is a driver of some facets of well-being but it also diminishes other facets, having no significant effect in the rest of them. Although Venhoeven et al. (2013) suggested this positive and negative effect, our study provides evidence that SC also influences negatively some dimensions of eudaemonist well-being. Moreover, the effects of SC on well-being are different depending on the type of behavior performed. Finally, we find that the relationship between SC and psychological well-being varies across gender. Results of activism are particularly relevant. Although activism may bring self-acceptance and a sense of purpose of life, it is also associated with an unsatisfying social life. This finding has relevant implications for policy maker’s interventions aiming at promoting SC in young consumers. As social relationships are crucial in emerging adulthood (Rueter et al. 2016) it will be necessary to generate spaces that create social support and interaction to mitigate the negative impact of activism. Although necessary for collective well-being, SC activism may have serious consequences for psychological well-being.
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Knowing, Owning, Caring – the Effect of Psychological Ownership on Pro-Environmental Behavior

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In four studies we provide evidence that instigating psychological ownership for the environment holds the potential to foster pro-environmental behaviors. The most promising way to instill a sense of ownership for the environment seems to be through increasing a person’s subjective knowledge about it.

Even though many individuals are aware of the need for environmental protection, many do not act accordingly (Newton & Meyer, 2013). One potential way to counteract this well-known attitude-behavior gap could be an increase in psychological ownership (PO) for the environment on an individual level. This feeling of something being “mine” (Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2003) engenders a personal desire to protect and care for the target object (Brown, Pierce, & Crossley, 2014; Kamleitner & Rabinovich, 2010). Whether, however, individuals are able to and how they could develop any notable amount of feelings of ownership for the environment is currently unknown.

According to existing research, an individual needs to make one of three key experiences for PO to arise (Jussila, Tarkiainen, Sarstedt, & Hair, 2015; Pierce et al., 2003): personal investment, perceived control, or intimate knowledge. Because the environment is omnipresent and ubiquitous target object, knowledge—which can be passively induced (i.e. we get something from the target object, rather than doing something to it) (Baxter, Aurisicchio, & Childs, 2015)—appears particularly promising for interventions.

Notably, psychological ownership amounts to a possessive claim that one needs to justify (Beggan & Brown, 1994). One justification could derive from the mere extent of one’s knowledge. Another justification could derive from the extent to which the specific knowledge entitles. When evaluating their own performance (Festinger, 1954), including their knowledge, individuals often make use of social comparisons. Feeling like holding superior knowledge to others, i.e. to feel that one’s knowledge is something special, may also justify possessive claims. Notably, this even should hold if a person perceives herself to know little overall.

Study 1 (n=124) aimed at measuring the effect of subjective knowledge on PO for the environment in comparison to the other two experiences. A questionnaire assessed the three key experiences and then PO for the environment. While subjective knowledge was the only significant predictor of PO (b=.26, p=.015), perceived control and personal investment had no effect

The objective of Study 2 was to ensure causality. A pretested quiz with either difficult or easy questions about the environment aimed at manipulating an individual’s subjective knowledge about it (Park, Mothersbaugh, & Feick, 1994). After the quiz participants (n=69) got the same items as in Study 1. The manipulation was successful (p<.001) and in a mediation analysis we found a significant positive effect of the quiz on PO via subjective knowledge. Perceptions of knowledge about the environment predicted PO for it (b=.35, p=.028). While supporting the role of subjective knowledge, Study 2 cannot rule out empowerment as a potential alternative explanation. Those in the easy quiz got more questions right, hence more positive feedback and could, thus, have also felt more empowered. Rather than subjective environmental knowledge, a sense of empowerment may have made them feel like owning the environment.

Study 3 aimed at ruling out this competing explanation and to show the effect of PO on real life behavior.

Participants (n=164) were randomly assigned to a different quiz with again either difficult or easy questions. On top of indicating PO and subjective knowledge participants indicated their felt empowerment over the environment (adapted from Spreitzer, 1995). To measure behavior participants could decide on how much of their remuneration they would be willing to donate for a real life project seeking to protect the Amazon rainforest.

The quizzes rendered the expected difference in subjective knowledge (p=.002) but had no effect on feelings of empowerment (p=.852). A parallel mediation analysis confirms that the quiz affected PO via subjective knowledge (b=.34, p=.003) but not via feelings of empowerment (b=.07, p=.363). Importantly, a serial mediation showed that PO subsequently also affected the amount of donations made (b=.412, p=.073).

Studies 1-3 had focused on the extent of subjective knowledge. Study 4 sought to investigate the potential moderating effect of knowledge specialization. To control for actual information, all participants (n=116) got the same quiz with easy, moderate and difficult questions. To manipulate perceived knowledge specialization, they however received different feedback when answering correctly. The specialization group was told that they knew what others did not know, the average group was told that they knew what others knew as well. In addition to subjective knowledge and PO we assessed environmental knowledge specialization (“How knowledgeable are in comparison to…?”), 4 items) (Bartkus, Hartman, & Howell, 1999) and asked participants for their willingness to sign an environmental petition. The manipulation yielded the expected difference in knowledge specialization (p=.023) and it also led to higher PO in the special feedback condition. As before the extent of subjective knowledge likewise predicted PO. Notably, a moderation analysis indicates that subjective knowledge only increased PO in the average condition.

Once participants were made to feel that their knowledge was special in the special condition, their extent of knowledge did not further boost their PO. Finally, a mediation analysis showed that, through PO, perceived environmental knowledge increased the likelihood of signing the environmental petition (p=.027).

Our research provides first experimental evidence for the role of knowledge in the development of PO, and, as such, supports existing theories. Results at hand also provide support for the notion of PO in fostering pro-environmental behavior and lend themselves to practical implications. Information campaigns aiming to increase pro-environmental behavior may be particularly effective if they either manage to instill a high degree of subjective knowledge or if they instill a sense of knowledge specialization. This later strategy seems to be particularly effective for those not feeling knowledgeable in the first place.

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Knowing, Owning, Caring – the Effect of Psychological Ownership on Pro-Environmental Behavior


Blogger and Audience Engagement: A Performance Theory Perspective
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Adopting performance theory, we examine how bloggers and their audience engage in the co-creation of blogs that bridge the commercial-communal tensions on brand-sponsored blogs. We analyse different types of performance on WeChat blogs and challenge previous notions that commercial content must be consistent with the blog subject to be accepted.

Performance theory has been utilized to study a variety of consumption phenomenon (Grove and Fisk, 1992; Grove and John, 2000). For instance, service encounters have long been conceptualized as a performance co-produced by both consumers and providers (e.g., Sherry and McGrath, 1989; McAlexander and Schouten, 1998; Kozinets et al., 2002; Tucker, 2007; Tumbat and Belk 2013). This stream of research adopted the dramaturgical perspective (Goffman 1959, 1961, 1967; Turner 1986) and focused on the role of consumers in the co-construction of performance. In this paper, we bring this discussion to studies of social media and examine how bloggers and blog readers engage in performances that co-create blogs. We conceptualize bloggers as actors, brand-sponsored blog contents as performance, social media platform as the stage, and blog readers as the audience.

In so doing, we seek to shed light on theoretical discussions regarding how bloggers sustain their popularity while engaging in the production of commercial content. For instance, Kozinets et al. (2010) noted the commercial-communal tensions embedded in the promotion of marketing messages and suggested that it is crucial that the commercial content on blogs is relevant to the blog’s subject and does not violate communal norms. McQuarrie, Miller and Phillips (2013) found that fashion bloggers could accumulate an audience by deploying taste and in turn gain considerable opportunities to collaborate with various brands. We focus on bloggers who regularly transform marketing messages into engaging and relevant stories for a devoted audience. In particular, we explore how bloggers engage the audience in their blogs that collaborate with different brands. We draw upon performance theory and use a qualitative approach to study commercially oriented bloggers on the Chinese social media platform WeChat.

With more than 963 million monthly active users (2017 Tencent ER REPORT), WeChat App has dominated Chinese social media space since its launch on January 21st 2011. WeChat successfully integrates a variety of social media functions offered only separately by other platforms, including major functions of WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, most of which are not available for Chinese consumers. This integrated social media hybrid provides a unique opportunity to examine how a relatively new technology platform shapes consumption practices (Kozinets, Patterson, and Ashman 2017). In this study, we focused on a particular function of the WeChat platform, WeChat Blog, or WeChat Public Account. WeChat bloggers create various blog content in several fields including food, health, fashion, travel, entertainment, art, film, or personal relations.

We used netnography (Kozinets 2002, Kozinets 2015) and in-depth interviews (McCracken 1988) to collect data. The first author followed more than 50 most active WeChat blogs from December 2015 to December 2017, read blog entries and comments left by blog readers. For the current study, we analyzed 10 popular WeChat blogs from December 2015 to December 2017. The selection of WeChat Blogs was based on the blog entry’s reading rate, ranking and they also represented a variety of different writing styles, but all heavily relied on commercial oriented cooperation in blogs (e.g. with WOMM messages integrated in entries). 28 in-depth interviews were conducted with 16 popular bloggers and 12 marketers who used WeChat public account for promotions in China. Informant selection began with the first author’s social networks and then used snowball sampling to access target interviewees. We also used social media public information to contact some popular bloggers. Our data analysis was based on several iterative movements (Spiggle 1994; Kozinets 2015) thus some informants were asked to conduct additional interviews focused on the derived questions until reaching sufficient interpretive understanding and the theoretical saturation.

The findings are organized around four themes. We found that successful bloggers in their brand sponsored blog entries utilised four strategies to reduce the tensions between bloggers’ commercial intent and the communal ideals in the blogosphere. These strategies are: 1) performance of gift-giving as a provider, in which bloggers use gifts to stimulate consumers’ engagement; 2) performance of professionalism, in which bloggers perform as an expert to offer useful information for the audience to diminish commercial-communal tension; 3) performance of anthropomorphism, in which bloggers infuse brands with personality to inspire brand love (Rauschnabel and Ahuvia 2014); and 4) performance of irony in which bloggers perform to create surprise and allow consumers to enjoy the entertainment through the frame (Deighton 1992).

Drawing on performance theory, this study has examined how bloggers perform different roles to balance the prominent tension between commercial and communal norms and stimulate communal consumption-related interests. While Kozinets et al’s (2010) findings emphasize bloggers’ four narrative response strategies of evaluation, explanation, embracing and endorsement in word of mouth marketing to reduce the tension; our findings offer an alternative perspective based on performance. First, drawing on Deighton’s (1992)’s framework of consumption performance, we found readers are happy to accept a good performance and enjoy the entertainment even it is in a commercial frame. Second, our finding highlights performance of gift-giving, professionalism, anthropomorphism and irony in brand-sponsored blogs to ease the discomforts of commercial-communal tension and stimulate a variety of consumption-related interests with different collaborated brands. Third, Kozinets et al. (2010) found that positive communal attitudes toward commercial content on blogs may emerge when it is consistently in line with the communication character of the blogger and it is important that the commercial content on blogs is relevant to the blog’s subject and does not violate communal norms. We found that WeChat bloggers can change their roles to produce a multitude of different brand-related performances and create engaging commercially oriented content for the reader audience.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In an ethos of sharing knowledge online, this paper contributes by revealing ‘knowledge hiding;’ consumers deliberately concealing knowledge from other consumers. Using interpretative techniques, it explores tensions between hiding and sharing knowledge.

The originality of form and function, pervasiveness of use, and criticality of knowledge production and consumption in digital platforms has spawned research as diverse as the role of reciprocity in exchanging information, ideas, and advice (Chan and Li 2010); fan communities as knowledge spaces (Price and Robinson 2016); informational support (relative to emotional) in online support groups (Ballantine and Stephenson 2011); and online reviews as complex social conversations (Kozinets 2016). A common understanding underpins the research: that consumers share by creating, appropriating, and disseminating knowledge. In contrast, this paper reveals ‘knowledge hiding,’ where consumers deliberately conceal knowledge from other consumers. It contributes by highlighting three forms of knowledge hiding: outright concealment, outright lying, and calculated hiding.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge hiding has been recognized in the eWOM literature as ‘underreporting’ or the intentional or unintentional withholding of information by some consumers from others (Hu, Pavlou, and Zhang 2009, Joshi and Musalem 2017, King, Racherla, and Bush 2014). The concern with underreporting in eWOM is the bias it creates in model estimation by building models on data that does not represent the fullness of eWOM behaviors. Beyond attributing underreporting to consumer overload due to the reporting demands, eWOM does not examine the phenomena from a socio-cultural consumption perspective. Other literature has ignored knowledge hiding, although research on virtual communities of consumption has investigated lurking, defined as “anyone who posts infrequently or not at all” (Nonnecke and Preece 2001). Lurking was until recently labeled passive but current research reveals lurking is a strategic activity that satisfies lurkers’ needs (Nonnecke and Preece 2001), is a mode of vicarious learning (Hartmann, Wiertz, and Arnould 2015), and socializing (Mousavi, Roper, and Keeling 2017).

CONTEXT AND METHOD

Data is drawn from phenomenological interviews (McCracken 1989; Thompson, Polio, and Locander 1994) with 14 anglers in the Great Lakes region of Canada and the United States. Angling is ingrained in the socio-cultural fabric of the region (Cayton, Sisson and Zacher 2007; Xaykaothao 2016). It is a time- and location-specific activity; hyper-local, real time, and trusted knowledge on weather, water, and fish locations is critical to its success. This makes digital platforms such as online fishing forums, mobile fishing apps, and crowdsourced bathymetric maps an integral part of knowledge production and consumption. Informants were male, 29-49 years old, most with some college education or higher, and modal income $50,000-74,000. Interviews ranged from 29-61 minutes (average 42), were conducted via Skype and phone, and transcribed verbatim generating 195 single-space pages. Interviews covered how anglers produce and consume information: focusing on acquiring, recording, storing, hiding, and sharing it.

RESULTS

We find consumers actively weigh the rewards/costs of hiding knowledge against sharing and decide from whom and what knowledge to hide. Knowledge hiding is driven by a number of motivations. In Cody’s case (Quote 1), Outright Concealment, the deliberate hiding of knowledge from others, is motivated by psychological ownership (Jussila et al. 2015). Cody, for whom angling is a competition against the fish, elements, other anglers, and himself, is adamant the spots are his and enacts concealment as a form of possession with no legal right. In Quote 2 he goes further invoking Pioneering West language to justify keeping anglers away from his ice-fishing spots. Other motivations for outright concealment include financial rewards. Nate C and his brothers compete in team tournaments and hiding the knowledge they scout on the fishing location is in their self-interest. Yet he feels a need to justify his hiding, arguing that he is not sure other anglers would trust it (Quote 3). Hiding intel sometimes stretches to outright lying (Quotes 4 and 5). Mario lies online about fish locations but he considers lies that endanger other anglers or their boats beyond the pale revealing a “do no harm” boundary (Mill 1859) to his lying behavior. Calculated Hiding is different from outright concealment and lying. Here anglers make deliberate decisions about hiding versus sharing intel and decide to neither completely conceal nor fully reveal their intel. We identify three types of calculated hiding: outsider hiding, location-based hiding, and Hiding in Plain Sight.

Outsider Hiding

Here consumers deliberately hide knowledge from anglers outside their social network but reveal it to insiders (Quote 4). Ronnie loves to share what he knows, but this is contingent on social tie strength (Granovetter 1973). He shares “really good information with his “close” friends (strong ties) not with weak ties. Ronnie’s hiding adheres with local norms; revealing GPS fish locations on the Internet “does not sit well” with the locals and could jeopardize his social relationships and their many attendant rewards (Quote 5).

Location Based

Cody hides GPS co-ordinates that pinpoint fertile fishing spots at the very same time as he provides helpful, but general, geographic tips on fish depths (Quote 6). This information helps other anglers saving them time they would waste in depths with no fish yet still protects Cody’s intel.

Hiding in Plain Sight (HPS)

In HPS, knowledge is shared in ways that makes it useful only to audiences with the requisite expertise “of reading the information” (Quote 7). Unlike the other knowledge-hiding strategies, information is not concealed from people because HPS exploits the polysemic nature (Hall, 1980) of fishing information; the coder knows that other experienced anglers will recognize its value, while a relative newbie cannot decipher where to go, what to catch, or how to catch it.
CONCLUSION
Our study contributes by expanding understanding of consumer knowledge practices to include knowledge hiding behaviors. Knowledge hiding is active, deliberate, and purposeful in knowledge production and consumption. While knowledge hiding has been discussed in the OB literature, this is the first paper to recognize it in consumer research. The discovery of three types of knowledge hiding demonstrates the trade-offs consumers make in deciding to hide or to share. It reveals hiding and sharing are related and highlights the role of contextual factors such as platform and knowledge characteristics in impacting hiding/sharing.

REFERENCES

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This ethnographic study examines the inherent complexities involved in the mobilisation of a public sharing economy platform by a UK local government council. Our findings indicate structural socio-economic and socio-cultural/ideological constraints impacting upon the endeavour leading us, perhaps inevitably, to the conclusion that problems stem from the politics of sharing.

The concept of ‘sharing’ has received considerable attention and critique (Belk 2010, 2013, 2014, 2016; Arnould and Rose 2016). The nature of exchange among participants of sharing economy platforms has galvanised marketing attention in particular (Corciolani and Dalli 2014; Harvey, Smith and Golightly 2017; Scaraboto 2015). Although some authors claim that the sharing economy isn’t about sharing at all (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012; Eckhardt and Bardhi 2015), others suggest that it facilitates ‘new hybridised forms of pro-social exchange [that are complex and challenging to theorise’ (Harvey, Smith and Golightly 2017: 369). Schor (2014) adds a moral dimension to the debate when she raises concerns that certain ‘for-profit’ platforms have co-opted what began as a progressive, socially transformative idea. She suggests ‘the key to making sharing economies socially just...[lies in]...nurturing collective, public forms of sharing’ (2014: 11). Hall and Ince remind us however that ‘real-life manifestations of sharing, whether they be skills, stuff or stories, are far more complex and contested than we might think’ (2018: 1).

This paper shines a light on the complexities of mobilising a public sharing platform. It does so by adopting an ethnographic methodology to analyse the initiation of a sharing platform by a local government council in the UK. Prior to launching the platform online, the council commissioned us to provide independent evaluation of a series of sharing pilots it had set up with various community groups for the specific purpose of identifying barriers and problems that inhibit sharing in this context. For the purpose of brevity, we focus here on a pilot for sharing stuff, which involved the council sharing gardening equipment with a residents’ association in order to facilitate the tending of open green spaces. Interviews were conducted with key members of the residents’ association and a member of the council and focused on the participants’ experiences of the sharing pilot. Influenced by Hall and Ince who advise that we ‘must think of sharing as a pervasive and contested practice which can bring to light multiple, contradictory dimensions of contemporary economic life’ (2018: 5), our research provides a preliminary understanding of political tensions which inhibit collective, public forms of sharing.

In order to advance our understanding of the political facets of sharing it is instructive to begin thinking about the sharing economy from the vantage point of the macro-level of the economy rather than the meso-level of a particular sharing platform and in so doing we take inspiration from the work of White and Williams (2018). Seeking an alternative to the capitalist economy, these authors look to the conceptual domain of anarchist thought and practice; promptly inviting us not to ‘reduce anarchism to its linguistic instantiation’ (Shukaitis 2009: 150 cited in White and Williams 2018: 177) since this brings to mind a very limited understanding. Instead they relay that the broad ambition of anarchist thought lies in changing unequal power relations within society. The authors juxtapose theoretical exposition of anarchism with empirical analysis of household work practice surveys to evidence concrete instances of ‘mutual aid’ (i.e. unpaid work for people in other households), which they argue is ‘consistent with an anarchist reading of organisation: i.e. not coerced, undertaken for non-economic rationales, altruism, reciprocity, and ethics of care’ (2018: 179).

Their research illuminates the ‘complexity and richness of economic life’ (2018:179), often masked by the rhetoric of the capitalist economy. Our empirical analysis demonstrates how macro-level phenomena – capitalism and anarchism - are played out at the micro-level of individual engagement in sharing. It does so by reporting on three tensions, which run through participants’ engagement in the sharing pilot under study. These tensions (on the left-hand side capitalism and the right-hand side anarchism) are namely; (1) Formal versus local/informal modes of organising; (2) Hierarchy of power relations versus changing unequal power relations, and (3) Monetary exchange versus mutual aid/altruism.

The tension between formal versus local/informal modes of organising is apparent in terms of health and safety. For example, it was clear that for the council, one of the key issues would be in working through formal rules and regulations with regard to the health and safety of volunteers. For the volunteers however, the formal training was simple common sense. Tensions arose in that given the time and resources involved only five volunteers had been trained and could therefore use the equipment. The hierarchy of power relations versus changing unequal power relations was palpable in terms of labour and the scheduling of work. For the council it was absolutely vital to delineate their role in the maintenance of open green spaces from the contribution that volunteers could make. However, administering this was problematic in that volunteers were expected only to do “an interim cut when we weren’t cutting [but]... It very quickly didn’t work like that because our teams were turning up and the grass was cut.” The volunteers clearly understood the predicament of the public sector spending cuts, but in viewing themselves as “working with the council” to achieve joint goals, were seemingly oblivious that they could be perceived as taking over council jobs. The tension between monetary exchange and mutual aid/altruism is particularly interesting since this is ambiguous for both parties. Despite admiring the work, time and commitment of the volunteers the council was dubious of being able to support the sharing initiative because of the financial costs. For the volunteers the priority was building a sense of community; however vestiges of individualistic financial motives were apparent in that many felt proper tending of shared green spaces would have a positive impact on house prices.

Adopting an ethnographic approach, this research heeds the call to refocus social analysis on ‘the problems of co-operation, co-existence, togetherness and being-in-common...precisely because it foregrounds the importance of thinking of sharing as a difficult practice’ (Barnett 2018: xiv). Similar to Corciolani and Dalli (2014) we shine a light on the desire to ‘liberate’ certain activities from the logic of the marketplace, but add to this observation a preliminary understanding of the political tensions in trying to achieve this.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Literature predicts that materialists dislike renting luxury. Though this is true a priori, after the acquisition, high (low) materialists feel similar (lower) ownership from renting versus buying. Non-luxury and self-affirmation eliminate this effect, due to the lack of motivated reasoning. Furthermore renting luxury leads to similar (more negative) product attitudes.

Luxury consumption is no longer limited to the highest social classes, as new forms of access such as renting have reached luxury goods (Belcher 2015). In general, renting produces positive effects on cognitive dissonance, self-exploration, budgeting and convenience (e.g. Yeoman 2011). However, renting may also blur the signaling power of luxury products (Wilcox, Kim, and Sen 2009) by making them less exclusive (Yeoman 2011). Furthermore, since renting means using the object for a limited time, it might not become part of the extended self (Belk 1988). Due to the lack of a mere ownership effect (Beggan 1992), the product may affect judgments less (Perkins and Forehand 2012). We predict that renting (vs. buying) has a weaker effect on ownership and therefore product attitudes.

Furthermore, given the strong connection between materialism and luxury consumption (Wong and Ahuvia 1998) it is unclear how materialism impacts renting. Since possessiveness and control of ownership are important to materialists, they might prefer buying over renting (Belk 1985; Berry and Maricle 1973). After the acquisition phase however, due to this high need for ownership (Richins 1994; Richins and Dawson 1992), materialists might actually be motivated to mentally construct a sense of ownership also over rental products (Doosjes, Spears, and Koomen 1995; Kunda 1990).

The literature on motivated reasoning (Kunda, 1990) has shown that giving people information that is in contrast with their preferred self-identity indeed causes them to process this information in a biased way (Dunning, Meyerowitz, and Holzberg 1989; Sanitioso, Kunda, and Fong 1990). For materialists, a preferred self-identity would be status signaling through ownership of luxury products (Shrum et al. 2012). If they process renting luxury as a type of ownership, renting would be in line with how they prefer to see themselves. As non-materialists’ self-identity is less likely to encompass luxury, they are less likely to process the information in a biased way. In 4 studies we will test this framework.

In study 1, 138 online participants (53 Men, M age = 35.47, SD = 12.55) read a luxury watch shopping scenario. They indicated whether they preferred buying or renting the watch and answered the Material Values Scale (Richins 2004). A logistic regression showed that the more materialistic respondents were, the stronger their preference for buying instead of renting. In the next study, we will examine whether this same aversion for renting holds after the acquisition phase.

In study 2, 353 online participants (150 Men, M age = 33.9, SD = 11.9) read a scenario in which they had already bought or rented the luxury watch. They indicated their sense of ownership over the watch (Peck and Shu 2009) and materialism. High materialists felt similar high sense of ownership in the renting and buying condition, but low materialists only when buying the luxury watch. This stands in contrast with the results from study 1 which showed a stronger aversion of materialists over renting. Thus, in study 3, we wanted to test the impact of motivated reasoning by decreasing materialists’ motivation for luxury ownership.

In study 3A, we added a non-luxury condition to the methodology from study 2, which should decrease materialists’ motivation for biased processing, as non-luxury products do not help them attain their desired self-identity. The results from 742 online participants (308 Men, M age = 39.7, SD = 11.0) showed a marginally significant 3-way interaction. The planned contrasts were significant, indicating that in the non-luxury condition people felt more ownership of bought than rented products, but there was no impact of materialism.

In the luxury condition, materialism again moderated the effect of the conditions on sense of ownership, such that high materialists felt similar sense of ownership in the renting condition.

In study 3B, we manipulated materialists’ motivation for luxury ownership through self-affirmation. Materialists suffer from a lower self-esteem (Mick 1996; Richins and Dawson 1992) and use material products to increase their sense of self-worth (Shrum et al. 2012). Increasing their self-esteem prior to consumption should decrease their need for status signaling through consumption, and thus their motivation to process luxury rental objects as owned. 884 online participants (342 Men, M age = 37.1, SD = 11.8) wrote either 4 (easy, self-affirming) or 12 (hard, not self-affirming) positive characteristics of themselves, and afterwards replicated the methods from study 2. The results showed a marginally significant 3-way interaction. The planned contrasts were significant, in the self-affirmation condition people felt more ownership of bought than rented products, with no moderation of materialism. In the lack of self-affirmation condition we replicated the interaction from study 2.

In Study 4, 204 students from a large university (113 Men, M age = 21.15, SD = 2.11) read a similar scenario manipulating renting or buying. They indicated their sense of ownership, attitude towards the watch and materialism. A moderated mediation analyses showed that buying luxury led to higher product attitudes than renting, but that this effect was moderated by respondents’ materialism and fully mediated by their sense of ownership. A bootstrap confidence interval for the indirect effect of renting versus buying and materialism through ownership no longer included zero at low and medium levels of materialism but not at high levels of materialism, showing that imagined ownership did not mediate the effect of renting versus buying on product attitude at high levels of materialism.

These findings show that renting luxury leads to less positive consumption experiences, in terms of ownership and product attitude, except for those high in materialism where the effects of renting and buying are similarly positive. Renting luxury might have positive long-term effects for materialists, allowing them to obtain expensive luxury items in line with their desired self-image whilst retaining money for other purchases. This stands in contrast with most materialism literature, which assumes that materialists would dislike renting due to their strong need for control and ownership. Thus, to our knowledge we are the first to show that materialists’ need for status signaling makes them more prone to motivated reasoning.

I Don’t Own It but Its Mine -
The Impact of Materialism on New Modes of Luxury Consumption
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REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Two studies explore status-driven motivations in access-based consumption. As long as others are in the dark whether a product is rented or owned, signaling with rental products leads to elevated feelings of status. However, similar to signaling with counterfeits, these status feelings come at the cost of feeling dishonest.

It is well established that people make inferences about others based on what they possess (Belk 1988; Belk, Bahn, and Mayer 1982; Kleine, Kleine, and Allen 1995). Consumers often choose a certain brand to express who they are and how they like to be seen by others. For example, consumers display luxury brands to signal wealth and status to themselves and others, a behavior that Veblen (1899) labelled “conspicuous consumption” more than a century ago. Previous research has shown that when consumer us a brand with a desirable personality, the brand personality may ‘rub off’ on consumers (e.g., the use of a Victoria’s Secret bag has been shown to make the person feel more good-looking, feminine, and glamorous (Park and John 2010). But what about a situation in which a product is only rented for a short period of time? Will positive associations equally rub off in a rental versus owned scenario? Or put differently: Does the general wisdom “you are what you own” extend to “you are what you can access”? (Belk 2014). Consider Rent the Runway, a service that provides designer clothing and accessory rentals. When the service was launched in 2009, the New York Times quoted an early customer: “I don’t spend $ 2,000 on a dress regularly, so it’s nice to be able to wear some of the more expensive brands I wouldn’t be able to buy otherwise” (Worthham 2009). One of the founders’ motivations was indeed to make luxury brands more accessible to consumers that are highly involved in fashion but cannot (yet) afford some of the brands. To some extent, by expanding the market for luxury goods and capitalizing on consumers that lack the financial powers to purchase these goods, services such as Rent the Runway have led to a “divorce” of social class and luxury (Eckhardt, Belk, and Wilson 2015). As a consequence, the signaling ability of luxury products may be diluted, after all “[if] one can pay a small membership fee to be able to access a BMW via a car sharing service a couple of hours, the BMW brand is no longer a symbol of the status [...]” (Eckhardt et al. 2015; p. 819).

As has been recently theorized in the literature on access-based consumption, for consumers who are driven by social motivations but lack the financial resources to purchase luxury items, renting a luxury consumption might be similar to counterfeits (Belk 2014). People turn to counterfeits to improve their self-perceptions and attain social goals (e.g., to signal high status or to fit in with a reference group) (Wilcox, Kim, and Sen 2009). However, although people buy counterfeits in order to communicate positive traits, research has also shown that actually using counterfeits may lead to unethical behavior (Gino, Norton, and Ariely 2010). In particular, in one of the experiments, participants cheated more when they wore purportedly fake sunglasses relative to a condition in which they were informed that the sunglasses were originals. When consumers signal with rented luxury products, they are aware that they do not hurt the brand; nevertheless, they might feel somewhat “unfair” from a social signaling perspective. Therefore, signaling high status with a rented luxury might lead to higher feelings of dishonesty.

Two studies investigate the effects of access-based luxury consumption on self-perceptions (study 1) and the perceptions of others (study 2). Four scenarios were developed in order to test effects of different consumption modes (rent luxury, buy luxury, buy counterfeit, buy mainstream brand) on feelings of status and dishonesty. Study 1 provides evidence that signaling with a rented luxury product leads to equally high feelings of status than signaling with a luxury product that is owned. In both conditions, feelings of status are higher compared to a counterfeit and mainstream scenario. However, elevated feelings of status in the rental condition come at the cost of feeling dishonest. In fact, these feelings of dishonesty are equally high than in the counterfeit condition. Study 2 flips the perspective and explores how another person is perceived in each of the four consumption modes. Findings show that another person will only be inferred to have high status when a luxury brand is owned, but not when it is rented, or when a counterfeit or mainstream brand is owned. In line with study 1, signaling with a rented luxury product seems to be perceived as “cheating” from a social signaling perspective; therefore, a person who signals with a rented luxury product is perceived to be dishonest.

Taken together, we find that as long as others are in the dark about whether a product has been rented or purchased, signaling with rental luxury products leads to elevated feelings of status. However, similar to signaling with counterfeits, these status feelings come at the cost of feeling dishonest. To our knowledge, we provided the first set of empirical studies that tested effects of signaling status with rental products on perceptions of status and dishonesty. Specifically, our study contributed to test recent conceptual claims that signaling status with rental products may be comparable to signaling with counterfeits (Belk 2014).

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

While luxury consumption can yield benefits for consumers, it can also make consumers feel inauthentic, producing “the impostor syndrome from luxury consumption.” This phenomenon is explained by the perceived gap between consumers’ true and projected selves, predicted by consumers’ psychological entitlement, and moderated by detectability and malleability of the gap.

Luxury brands symbolize cultural ideals and desirable qualities such as power, influence, and success, which embody individuals’ aspirations and vision of their ideal selves (Belk 1988). Projecting an ideal self by wearing luxury can yield certain benefits such as economic rewards, preferential treatment, and recognition from others (Lee, Ko, and Megehee 2015), but we argue that it can also highlight a discrepancy between consumers’ actual self and their self projected through luxury. Specifically, when individuals experience a mismatch between their external (projected) and internal (true) selves, they may feel inauthentic and like impostors. Self-authenticity is important because it impacts individuals’ physical and psychological well-being (Sheldon et al., 1997). But, the prior marketing literature has understudied consumers’ pursuit of self-authenticity, focusing instead on consumers’ pursuit of authentic products (Grayson and Martinez 2004), rather than an authentic self, and on the link of self-authenticity to counterfeit products (Gino, Norton and Ariely 2010), overlooking its potential link to authentic products.

We propose that, although consuming luxury products may garner external benefits, it may also make consumers feel like impostors, producing what we call the “impostor syndrome from luxury consumption.” This effect emerges due to consumers’ self-brand discrepancy – the gap that consumers perceive between their true self and the self projected through luxury. We propose that the impostor syndrome from luxury consumption is more pronounced among consumers with low psychological entitlement, who perceive a large discrepancy between their (deflated) view of their true self and projected self, than among those with high entitlement, who perceive a small discrepancy between their (inflated) view of their true self and projected self. This effect is moderated by the detectability and malleability of the self-brand discrepancy.

Six laboratory and field studies tested our hypotheses using different operationalizations of luxury (price, brand, personal experience), measured and manipulated psychological entitlement, contexts (when luxury is the norm vs. when it is not), and income levels.

In the pilot study, we surveyed female patrons (N=78) of the Metropolitan Opera in New York City to examine the relevance of the phenomenon for a target market of luxury brands. Participants imagined they were shopping for a dress to wear to the opera and indicated how authentically they felt their self projected through the brand compared to their ideal selves (i.e. ability to appreciate cultural, artistic, and luxury goods) as fixed or malleable. Framing cultural capital as malleable should lead people to perceive the gap between their true and ideal selves to be surmountable (vs. insurmountable when the cultural capital is framed as fixed). There was a significant cultural capital × entitlement interaction (b=.72, t=3.30, p=.001): the effect of entitlement on inauthenticity feelings persisted when cultural capital (and hence self-brand discrepancy) was fixed (p=.001), but not when cultural capital was malleable (p=.44). Framing cultural capital as
malleable (vs. fixed) reduced inauthenticity feelings of unentitled individuals (2.22 or lower on the entitlement scale, \( t = -1.98, p = .05 \)), and it increased inauthenticity feelings of entitled individuals (3.74 or higher on the entitlement scale, \( t = 1.98, p = .05 \)).

Our work adds to theory and practice by uncovering the impostor syndrome from luxury consumption, showing how consumption behaviors impact self-authenticity, and illustrating the role of psychological entitlement in driving consumer experiences.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Shame is experienced when the self is attacked. However, the harmed consumer-self can be restored through affirmational function of status consumption. Three studies with Chinese consumers show that shame leads to higher preference for status products, particularly those with high conspicuousness, and for consumers accompanied by psychologically less distant people.

Shame is a self-conscious emotion and it is caused by an attack on the self (Tangney 1990). While the Western literature suggests that shame leads only to a withdrawal tendency such as escaping or hiding (Dickerson, et al. 2005; Tangney, et al. 1996) or an externalizing tendency such as being angry or violent (Tangney, et al. 1992), recent studies suggest that a response to shame with a restorative tendency towards self-improvement and self-enhancement is typically found in Asian cultures (Sheikh 2014). However, only a very limited number of studies (De Hooge, et al. 2010; Gausel, et al. 2012; Tangney, et al. 2014) investigate the restorative response to shame. When applying this restorative response in the consumption field in China, the harmed consumer-self can be restored by responding to the shame with the affirmational function of status consumption (Sivanathan & Pettit 2010). Thus, in this paper, we examine the impact of shame as a trigger for a restorative response in Chinese consumption contexts with three experiments investigating the influence of shame on status consumption among Chinese consumers.

Before the experiments, pretests with an unstructured interview and survey were conducted to examine the particular behavior and conditions influencing Chinese consumers to respond to shame with restorative behavior and to identify the brand names that were considered to signal status.

In the first study, we hypothesized a positive impact of shame feeling on status consumption. Applying self-affirmation theory (Steele 1988), the good self-image with status signaled by certain products restores the attacked and defective self and thus maintains the individual’s self-integrity. This study contains a 3 (condition: shame vs. neutral vs. no activation) × 2 (product category: status vs. neutral) design with 116 female undergraduate Chinese students as participants. We first manipulated participants’ feeling of shame with a recall paradigm and then measured their buying intention towards status products. Results find that the shame primed group had a stronger feeling of shame (shame primed: M= 2.88; neutral: M= 2.22; no activation: M= 2.15). Additionally, the shame primed group also showed a higher buying intention towards status products (primed: M= 5.08; neutral: M= 4.07; no activation: M= 4.31).

Study 2 predicted that a feeling of shame leads to a higher preference for status products with a high level of conspicuousness (loud products) rather than those with low conspicuousness (quiet products). Researchers have found that loud products are more likely to serve the function of status products in terms of self-presentation and self-expression (Wilcox, et al. 2009). Therefore, loud products fulfill consumers’ social goals of presenting a good self-image distinctly with more easily discernible emblems when their self is attacked. This study has a 3 (condition: shame vs. neutral vs. no activation) × 2 (product category: loud product vs. quiet product) design with 114 Chinese students as participants. The feeling of shame was manipulated and consumers’ subsequent buying intention towards status products with high conspicuousness versus low conspicuousness was measured. The results show that a stronger shame feeling was evoked in the shame primed group (shame primed: M= 2.85; neutral: M= 1.94; no activated: M= 1.83). Our results also confirm hypothesis 2: consumers with primed shame feeling have a higher preference towards loud products (shame primed: M= 4.96; neutral: M= 3.22; no activation: M= 3.42).

Study 3 examines how companions with whom one has different proximate relationships influence consumers’ desire for status products through the feeling of shame. Shame is always experienced through an individual’s interaction with others. The role of “others” is very important and evaluations from “significant others” with whom one has a close relationship are highly valued (Iyer & Leach 2008; Smith & Louis 2009). Therefore, one would be more likely to present a good self-image in shame situations when accompanied by those significant others with whom one has a closer relationship.

We conduct a 3 (condition: remote relationship vs. medium relationship vs. close relationship) × 2 (product category: status vs. neutral) design with 125 Chinese students as participants in this study. Firstly, a recall paradigm of shame was primed for all participants. Participants were then randomly assigned to conditions with different relationship proximity. Finally, their purchase intention for status products was measured. When we categorized companions’ relationship proximity according to the recall paradigm, there were actually five conditions in terms of relationship proximity conditions: close relationship; medium relationship; remote relationship; purchase alone online; and “other”: a few observations that were difficult to categorize. Our results also indicated that those in relationships of close proximity have a higher purchase intention for status products (close relationship: M = 5.97; medium relationship: M= 4.14; remote relationship: M= 3.99; purchase online: M= 4.26; hard to identify: M= 4.17).

This study theoretically contributes to the literature on shame response with a restorative tendency in status consumption and develops our understanding of further conditions under which the shame feeling may motivate consumers’ preferences for status products. It also offers insights based on the particular psychological aspect of shame, which is deeply embedded in shame-affirming culture in China. Practically, it provides insights for marketers to apply shame-related strategies. However, marketers should carefully identify the product category in response to shame restorative tendency during consumption since different cultures with different levels of economic development may perceive status-signaling products differently. Therefore, we recommend further research into shame with restorative tendencies by investigating different product categories to fit the specific conditions in different cultures.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This conceptual paper explores the potential role front line (FL) service robots play in the future. It provides a definition of FL robots and examines consumer perceptions, beliefs and behaviors related to FL robot-delivered services. Finally, it provides an overview of the ethical questions surrounding robot-delivered FL services.

The service sector is at an inflection point with regard to productivity gains and service industrialization similar to the industrial revolution in manufacturing that started in the 18th century. Rapidly improving technology that becomes better, smarter, smaller, and cheaper will transform virtually all service sectors. Especially exciting are the opportunities offered by robotics in combination of cameras, sensors, speech recognition, big data, analytics, and artificial intelligence, which will be further enhanced by biometrics, mobile technology, cloud technology, geo-tagging, drones, the Internet of Things, and other technologies. Robotics in combination with these technologies will bring opportunities for a wide range of service innovations that have the potential to dramatically improve the customer experience, service quality, and productivity at the same time (e.g., many hotel, restaurant and hair stylist services are likely to be robot-delivered in the future), lower cost will make high-end services available to the broad consumer base (e.g., personal concierge services, image consulting, and high-end personal tuition), and will lower the cost of basic services (e.g., health screening, health care, and education), while potentially offering new services we have not thought of yet.

This conceptual paper explores the potential role front line (FL) service robots will play in the future. The contribution of this article is three-fold. First, it provides a definition of FL robots, describes their key attributes, contrasts the key features and capabilities of FL employees and FL robots, and provides an understanding for which types of tasks robots will dominate in service delivery and where humans will dominate. Second, this article examines consumer perceptions, beliefs and behaviors as related to FL robot-delivered services. Third, it provides an overview of the ethical questions surrounding robot-delivered FL services at the individual, micro level, at the market, mezzo level, and at the societal macro level.

The object of this article is to explore the potential role front line (FL) service robots will play in the future. The article does not focus on the implementation of service robots into the frontline or customers' acceptance during the advent of robot-delivered services, we assume that front line (FL) service robots will be implemented, will be accepted by consumers, and will deliver a quantum leap in productivity gains in the service sector in the future. Further, we assume that robotics-relevant technology and AI systems will continue to rapidly advance and that robots will be able to conduct a wide-range of cognitive and physical tasks in the next decades to come. Second, this article examines consumer perceptions, beliefs and behaviors. Given these developments and the expectation that more and more robots will be providing front line service, this conceptual paper explores how this new kind of service delivery differs from people-delivered service, derives key conceptual models that explore robot-delivered services and advances a future research agenda.

Specifically, the contribution of this article is three-fold. First, it provides a definition of FL robots, describes their key attributes, contrasts the key features and capabilities of FL employees and FL robots, and provides an understanding for which types of tasks robots will dominate in service delivery and where humans will dominate. Second, this article examines consumer perceptions, beliefs and behaviors as related to FL robot-delivered services. Third, it provides an overview of the ethical questions surrounding robot-delivered FL services at the individual, micro level, at the market, mezzo level, and at the societal macro level.
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In six experimental studies it was found that participants were more willing to harm others (pedestrians) with an autonomous self-driving car as compared to when they made the decision themselves (in a regular car). These findings have implications for consumers, manufacturers and policy makers deliberating the adoption of autonomous vehicles.

Imagine that you are driving down a main street at normal speed and suddenly a pedestrian appears in your direct path. There is not enough time to brake and completely stop. You have to decide between keep going and hit the pedestrian or swerve to the side and hit another vehicle or an electric pole, which could injure you. What would you do? Your moral intuitions may urge you to act and not hit the pedestrian in your way. Now imagine that you are in a self-driving car (SDC) instead, which is fully autonomous and is programmed to respond to such scenarios. Should the SDC be programmed to avoid hitting the pedestrian or rather protect you against harm?

Such moral dilemmas are considered the grand challenge for artificial intelligence (AI) researchers and an entirely new field of Machine Ethics or Machine Morality has emerged (Deng 2015; Wallach Franklin and Allen 2010). A common approach in machine ethics is to develop algorithms based on public opinion about the suitable moral actions for autonomous agents. In a pioneering study, Bonnefon, Shariff and Rahwan (2016) conducted online surveys about proper moral response for an autonomous vehicle, and found that people expected such vehicles to be utilitarian and minimize overall harm (e.g., sacrifice a passenger to save 10 pedestrians). As an extension of this approach, researchers at MIT have devised a web-based tool to collect large-scale public opinion on moral dilemmas with autonomous vehicles. While product engineers, psychologists, philosophers, and computer scientists are vigorously debating this issue, consumers remain skeptical about handing over control to autonomous vehicles. A recent survey suggests that 78% of Americans fear riding in an autonomous SDC, and only 19% say they would trust such cars (Shariff, Bonnefon and Rahwan 2017). In contrast to the AI-based approaches that seek the most appropriate moral algorithms, the current investigation highlights how autonomous agents can alter the existing moral norms in the social system.

It is posited that the consumers’ own moral intuitions may not be perfectly aligned with the moral calculus they expect of an autonomous agent. When driving a regular car, consumers have complete control over their decisions and feel fully responsible for the consequences of their actions. Being the sole agent in full control, the (intentional) act of harming a pedestrian and the felt responsibility for this harm will be highly salient. Accordingly, consumers driving a regular car will have an urge to act and avoid harming a pedestrian in their path. In contrast, if consumers had to choose how an autonomous agent (SDC) should respond to this dilemma, the agency and control is transferred to the agent. Accordingly, the responsibility for any harmful consequences can be partly attributed to the agent. This responsibility attribution mechanism can provide justification for people to choose self-protection at the expense of harming pedestrians. In other words, more people may expect the autonomous agent to protect them (and harm pedestrians) as compared to when people are the agent (driver) themselves. In contrast, from the pedestrian’s perspective, who is the target of harm, the SDC should act in the same way as a human agent and protect the bystander as much as a regular human driver would.

The above propositions and the associated mechanism were tested in six experimental studies. Study 1 assigned participants to a regular car or an SDC, and tested the appropriate action in the moral dilemma between harm to pedestrian versus self-harm. As proposed, participants were more willing to harm the pedestrian in an SDC as compared to a regular car. Study 2 used the same design and found that the number of pedestrians that could be harmed (1 vs. 5) attenuated this effect. Study 3 used a semi-autonomous car, where participants were randomly assigned to full control (human agent) versus the car in control (autonomous agent). As before, significantly more participants chose, and considered it appropriate, to harm the pedestrian when the autonomous (vs. human) agent was in control. Study 4 used this semi-autonomous car dilemma and allowed participants to choose the agent of control: self (human) versus the car (autonomous). Participants that chose the car (autonomous) as the agent were more willing to harm pedestrians as compared to those that chose themselves to be in control. Study 5 manipulated the assigned liability of the consequences to the car manufacturer versus to them. Assigning liability to the manufacturer (vs. self) increased the likelihood of giving up control to the autonomous agent, and consequently that increased the willingness to harm pedestrians. Study 6 took the perspective of the pedestrian, and found that as a pedestrian, people expect an SDC to act in the same way as a human driver.

The current research adds to the vast literature on the use of moral dilemmas to illuminate our underlying moral psychology (Cushman and Greene 2012). The current findings suggest that consumers are employing their pro-social moral intuitions to avoid harming others, and even so at the expense of self-harm. But when an autonomous agent is in control, the above moral intuitions seem to be attenuated and a process of responsibility attribution and moral justification of harm (to others) may be operative. Within the domain of marketplace morality, the current research examines moral behavior in an AI-enabled marketplace. This has implications for other consumption contexts where autonomous / smart products and services are being adopted. The findings also have implications for the adoption of SDCs and for policy makers concerned about regulations for such vehicles. Potential adopters need to be aware of and possibly choose the moral calculus for the autonomous vehicle they want to purchase (e.g., European researchers have recommended an “ethical knob” in autonomous SDCs; Contissa, Lagioia, and Sartor 2017). But the apparent discrepancy between the moral expectations of the adopters versus the other parties could further increase consumer anxiety about SDCs. It could also lead to difficult conflicts in cases of harm caused by such autonomous vehicles.

REFERENCES


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**Will Self-Driving Cars Make Us Less Moral? Yes, They Can**

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Can a Computer Vision Algorithm Predict New Product Adoption?
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
We examine whether machine learning can predict the success of new crowdfunding ventures based on innovative design. Results from two field studies on Kickstarter and Indiegogo show that a computer vision API that mirrors the human capacity to efficiently categorize objects predicts project success.

The ability for machines to learn and solve problems without being explicitly programmed to do so—machine learning—is one of the most pervasive trends across industry domains. Yet no area has seen as much impact as the area of design and innovation. While machine learning can enhance functionality and performance during prototype design (Conti, 2017), it is unclear whether these algorithms can augment design to predict whether a new project venture will make it to the market.

To wit, one of the most important applications of a market-based machine learning algorithm would be during actual prototype optimization. Yet few are privy to the exclusive and often secretive discussions that precede the introduction of most of today’s innovations, with one critical exception: new venture crowdfunding platforms. While the literature on crowdfunding has identified numerous communication-oriented drivers that predict successful venture financing (Mollick, 2014; Parhankangas and Renko, 2017; Davis et al., 2017), scholars have yet to account for one of the most obvious antecedents, and that is whether or not the product actually looks innovative (see Davis et al., 2017). One reason for this omission is that it is rather challenging to measure innovative design. To that end, we adopt a simple definition: truly innovative designs are aesthetically ambiguous—i.e., they often incorporate visual cues that cannot be easily linked to any one specific product category (Chandy and Tellis, 1998; Goode et al., 2013; Gregan-Paxton et al., 2005; Noseworthy and Goode, 2011). Using this definition, we explore the possibility of taking a machine learning algorithm that is predicated on mirroring the human capacity to efficiently and effectively categorize visual objects and co-opt it to exploit its uncertainty as a proxy for innovative design.

METHOD
We examine how product design for new technology is associated with crowdfunding success. More specifically, we examine whether visual processing in machine learning (i.e., computer vision) can predict the venture funding for a new technology based on its visual ambiguity and confidence with which it can categorize the product. In effect, despite recent efforts to dramatically improve machine learning algorithms for automated categorization, we are taking an inverse approach, exploiting the inability to categorize as an intuitive signal that something is indeed novel.

Study 1 – Kickstarter
Our first study examined a dataset of 19,755 Kickstarter technology projects. Each project entry provided a project ID, funding goal, amount pledged, number of backers, whether it was featured as a staff pick, the project launch date, and deadline. It also provided the project’s title, a short text description of the project, and a link to the project image. Each image was run through the Google Cloud Vision API uses machine learning to interpret digital images. The algorithm annotates the image with the first label based on maximizing the confidence score associated that label. Subsequent labels are added if the algorithm detects visual ambiguity, where it recognizes multiple distinct entities within the image. This annotation process enabled us to create two distinct variables for our analysis: (1) visual ambiguity, represented by the number of labels annotated to an image (between 0 and 5); and (2) label confidence, represented by how certain the algorithm was with associating the image with its primary label (between 50-100%).

We ran a hierarchical linear regression with dollars pledged as the dependent variable, which revealed a significant interaction of Ambiguity × Confidence ($\beta = -0.46, t = -7.18, p < .01$). Planned contrasts showed that visually ambiguous projects low in primary classification confidence increased pledges ($\beta = 0.12, t = 4.28, p < .01$).

Here, truly innovative designs would be perceived as being associated with multiple entities and have low confidence in these categorizations. This effect was robust to the inclusion of a battery of control variables (see Table 1). We also find the same pattern of effects on the number of backers and the probability of achieving a funding goal.

Study 2 – Indiegogo
Replicating these findings on a more dynamic, flexible, and potentially higher risk platform where we could also control for strategic alliances was the motivation for Study 2. We examined 34,448 technology projects on Indiegogo. Their funding goals tend to be smaller and success rates are lower than Kickstarter (18% vs. 36%) (Barnett, 2013). In addition, Indiegogo does not require a working prototype to launch a project campaign. They also offers partnership opportunities that can be embedded into the project posts to signal viability to potential backers.

The same general pattern of findings emerged relative to Study 1. There was a significant interaction of Ambiguity × Confidence affecting pledges ($\beta = -0.13, t = -2.76, p < .01$). As the image classification became more visually ambiguous, projects that lacked confident primary classification significantly increased pledges ($\beta = 0.09, t = 5.30, p < .01$). We replicated our hypothesized effects across all dependent variables of interest, demonstrating that visually ambiguous projects that lacked certainty when initially classified were the most supported on the platform. This inability to recognize boundary-spanning products seems to represent genuine innovative design, demonstrating a novel application of computer vision algorithms.

GENERAL DISCUSSION
By adapting an engineering perspective of machine learning to venture funding, we find that a visual algorithm can potentially optimize the communication of new prototypes. To our knowledge, we are the first to apply a computer vision algorithm to a market-oriented outcome, specifically the willingness to support a new product. In doing so, we address a major gap in machine learning research by advancing machine learning from a generative platform, which facilitates prototype development, to an intuitive platform—one that implicitly understands consumers and ultimately predicts how the market will respond to product design innovations. From a praxis perspective, this work offers a new tactical tool that entrepreneurs and investors can use to assess market sentiment towards a new product venture. Traditionally, prototype testing could take months and costs thousands for a single product design. Computer vision...
presents a unique proxy for market research that can forecast new product adoption for thousands of different product design iterations in a process that takes minutes for the cost of a fast-food meal.

REFERENCES
**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Self-discrepancy regarding one’s body shape impacts product preferences for angular versus curved products among women. Individuals higher on body shape satisfaction are found to assimilate towards products shaped similar to their own shape, while those lower on body satisfaction contrast away from their body types, as a dissociation coping strategy.

This research investigates whether preference for product curvature or angularity may be influenced by self-perceptions about the curvature of one’s own body. For women, satisfaction with their body shape, or body shape self-esteem, determines whether there is assimilation or contrast with respect to their product curvature preferences. Comparative evaluation of one’s own body image against idealized images subjects women to feelings of self-discrepancy (Festinger 1954; Richins 1991; Wan et al. 2013). A subsequent product evaluation task affords a means of coping (Mandel et al. 2017), with an affinity towards products that reflect either the “current satisfactory” or “ideal desired” body shape. When body shape satisfaction is high, there is a positive correlation (or assimilation) between one’s own curvature and preferred product curvature or angularity. However, when body shape satisfaction is low, there is contrast between own body shape and product curvature preferences - a dissociation coping strategy (Mandel et al. 2017; White and Argo 2009).

In study 1, 293 female Amazon M-Turk workers participated in a one factor (body shape = salient/not salient) study. Half completed a body-shape evaluation task, presented as a “Health and Fitness study,” prior to a product evaluation task (“salient” condition) while the sequence was reversed for the other half (“not-salient” condition). In the purported health and fitness study, participants comparatively assessed themselves on weight, health and fitness and indicated their body shape from a chart of female body types varying in curviness, and assessed the “curviness” and “boxyness” of their own shape. In the subsequent “Product Evaluation” task (administered first in the “non-salient” condition), participants evaluated 15 product images, either angular or curvy, on liking.

A composite average liking score for all angular products was the dependent variable. The mean-centered own body curviness score was the main independent variable. Salience of body shape (0 = not salient/1 = salient) was the independent factor while the mean-centered body shape satisfaction variable was the proposed moderator. The estimated coefficient for salience was significant and negative (β = -.22, t = -2.51, p = .01), while the two-way interactions were not significant. The anticipated three-way interaction was significant and negative (β = -.05, t = -3.74, p = .0002). A spotlight analysis revealed that those high on net curviness who are less satisfied with their body shapes show increased liking for angular products (contrast), arguably a dissociation strategy (White and Argo 2009; Wan et al. 2013). There was no correlation in the non-salient condition. The moderating role of product type is investigated in study 2.

In study 2, 256 female participants completed a body shape evaluation prior to product evaluation where they indicated preferences between curvy and angular product pairs on semantic differential scales across different product categories, pretested to be high and low on self-referent (Sirgy 1982). Control product pairs differing on aspects other than curvature were included to mask the purpose of the research.

The average score across all test pairs (higher indicating preference for curvy) was the dependent variable. The main independent variable was mean-centered body curvature, a composite of the two scales measuring body curviness (α = .63). A category-specific self-referent score was the first, while individual body shape satisfaction was the second moderator. Own body curvature was significant and positive (β = .08; t = 2.05, p = .04), indicating that more curvy women preferred curvy products (a main effect). However, the interaction of interest was the moderating effect of body shape satisfaction and self-referent on the slope (β). When body satisfaction is high (+1 SD), the slope of body curvature is positive, or there is assimilation between own body and preferred product curvature. However, when body satisfaction is lower (-1 SD), this slope is negative but only for products high on self-referent (+1 SD). In other words, contrast preferences, or dissociation coping behavior is only seen for products high on self-referent.

In Study 3, we investigate the impact of bolstering body shape satisfaction on the relationship between body shape and product curvature preferences. 199 women participated in a one factor (bolstering = domain specific/general) “lifestyle research survey” which, among filler questions included the test battery of questions on body shape categorization, measures for curviness, weight, height and body satisfaction, as measured previously. Following this, half the subjects completed a general affirmation task (Townsend and Sood 2012). The rest were subject to body shape specific bolstering— they were informed they would be evaluating an alleged “new Women’s magazine” which among other things featured a fictitious article about a worldwide men’s survey regarding preferences for female body types. The article mentioned that their specific body shape had emerged as a preferred shape among men. In the final part of the research, all completed a “product evaluation task” on the same scales as study 2, including self-referent product pairs.

Own body curvature was significant and positive (β = 2; t = 2.43, p = .01), while the interaction between the bolstering factor and body curvature was significant and negative when bolstering was not domain-specific (β = -.26; t = -2.15, p = .03). The positive correlation between own body and preferred product curvature is reduced when body shape satisfaction is not specifically bolstered. Post bolstering body satisfaction mediated the relationship between own body curvature preference for curved products. The effect was significant and negative in the non-body-specific bolstering condition (-.03; 95% CI [-.085, -.0006]; moderated mediation; Hayes 2013). When body shape satisfaction is not bolstered we see contrast in curvature preference—in other words, the use of dissociation as a coping strategy by those less satisfied with their body shapes. This contrast is not present when body satisfaction is boosted via bolstering.

This research adds to a body of work studying compensatory consumption in response to appearance-related threat (Hoegg et al. 2014; Aydinoglu and Krishna 2012; see also Mandel et al. 2017). It also contributes to an emerging body of work studying the relationship between products aesthetics and the self (Romero and Craig 2017; Weiss and Johar 2016), with important implications for product design.
REFERENCES


Tasting Who You Want to Be: Product Experience and Psychological Needs
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Across three studies, we show that those who desire a particular identity evaluate food products associated with the desirable identity as tastier. We argue that food will taste better when answering the motivation, or psychological need, to draw closer to and defend a desired identity.

People are generally motivated to create and sustain a favorable and consistent identity (Gecas, 1982; Turner, 1982; Berzonsky, 1993; Epstein, 1980). Among other strategies, consumers employ products to support desired social identities (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1975). The more important an identity is, the more attractive the products associated with it become (Kleine III, Kleine, & Kernan, 1993).

Our choices are led not only by our current selves, but by possible selves—our ideas of what we might, would like to, or are afraid of becoming (Markus & Nurius, 1986). People go about purchasing products that are consistent with, enhance, or in some other way fit well with their future self (Ross, 1971). For example, people may dress in particular clothing (Kang, Sklar, & Johnson, 2011), undertake plastic surgery to achieve an attractive body shape (Schouten, 1991).

Consumers may use product choices to not only build but defend their identities. For example, loss of control (Levav and Zhu 2009) or power (Rucker and Galinsky 2008) may shift consumers’ choices to restore control or power. Similarly, felt deficits in affiliation needs (Lee and Shrum 2012) and intelligence (Gao, Wheeler, and Shiv 2009) can shift people towards choices that are congruent with identity.

Here, we show that the experience of a product may change when it serves such an identity-related purpose. While previous research has already demonstrated that food tastes better when it answers physiological needs, we argue that food will taste better when answering the psychological need to support a desired identity.

In general, enjoyment is enhanced when objects fulfill needs. For instance, enjoyment of warmth depends on body temperature (Cabanac, 1969). Similarly, fasting can improve taste experience (Cabanac, 1979; Cabanac, 1992). Pleasure in food can indicate the presence of nutrients required by one’s body (Drewnoski, 1995; Drewnoski et al. 1992; Bertino, Beauchamp, & Engelman, 1982). The more useful a nutrient is, the tastier it is.

If pleasure does generally signal need fulfillment, then fulfillment of psychological needs, as well as physical needs, should lead to increased pleasure.

**Hypothesis 1:** Taste evaluation will be higher for consumers who desire an identity the product supports.

Further, support for identity may be particularly relevant when one possesses it. If one does not feel athletic, eating an energy bar will not suffice to establish identity. However, if one feels an identity, consuming identity-relevant food may not only support the identity, but protect it.

**Hypothesis 2:** There will be an interaction between current identity and extent of identity desirability, such that taste is enhanced for those who see themselves as possessing the desired identity.

**STUDY 1: IDENTITY DESIRABILITY AND TASTE EXPERIENCE**
Amazon Mechanical Turk participants (N=62) were presented with a list of eight food brands, and rated their tastiness on 9-point Likert scales. They also rated how desirable they found the image tied with each food.

There was a significant effect of identity on taste evaluation in a mixed model with repeated measures, such that people who expressed stronger desire for the identity tied to the food evaluated it as tastier. The effect was significant at a <.0001 level: F(1,60)=336.27.

**STUDY 2: TASTES LIKE BEING IN SHAPE**
Study 2 was designed to provide evidence for H2. To examine this, we separated desired vs. current identity by measuring not just the desirability of an identity but belief about current identity. Participants (N=85) were asked to taste and evaluate powdered Gatorade, described as a sports drink consumed by athletes.

Participants rated the drink’s taste and quality on 9-point Likert scales. They also rated how much they’d like to be perceived as part of the group of the drink’s consumers, and whether or not they perceive themselves as athletic.

We tested our hypotheses using a general linear model which included the effect of desire for identity, self-perception as an athletic person, and the interaction between the two on taste. There was a significant effect of desire for an identity on taste, such that people who aspire more strongly to possess the identity of those who consume the drink experienced the drink as tastier: p=.01 level: F(1,84)=11.20, η²=.11.

In support of H2, we found an interaction between desire for identity and self-perception as an athletic person. Specifically, desire for identity was positively related to taste experience and drink quality evaluation only for those who perceive themselves as athletic: F(1,83)=8.32, p=.01, η²=.08 for taste experience, and F(1,83)=3.89, p=.05, η²=.04 for food quality evaluation.

**STUDY 3: DARK AND SOPHISTICATED**
Participants (N=166) in a large Northeastern University completed this for-credit study. Participants were randomly assigned into two conditions: one where the link between dark chocolate and sophistication was created, and one where it was not. They tasted and rated dark chocolate on a 9-point likert scale. They also rated their desire to be sophisticated and whether they currently see themselves as sophisticated.

Results indicated that participants rated chocolate as tastier the more they desired to appear sophisticated, with stronger results for those who consider themselves sophisticated (consistent with study 2). This only occurred for participants who were given an explanation about the link between dark chocolate and sophistication. In other words, there was a significant 3-way interaction between sophistication of dark chocolate, desire to appear sophisticated, and feeling like a sophisticated person (p<.05).

**GENERAL DISCUSSION**
The more a person desires to be perceived as having a particular identity, the tastier he or they say products matching that identity are. In the same way that food would taste better when it fulfills nutritive
needs, it would taste better when it fulfills psychological needs. More generally, subjective product (food) experience is improved when a product helps support a psychological need (desired identity).

The studies contribute to our understanding of the relation between identity and product choice. In general, these findings indicate a role for motivation in liking. When products fulfill a motivation, be it physical or psychological, their experience is improved. This research also contribute to our understanding of branding by stressing the importance of branding focusing on fulfilling a desired identity.

REFERENCES
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

“Value-oriented management” is a buzzword in Marketing. From a scientific perspective, self-congruency theory indicates: a fit between consumers’ and retailers’ values could enhance images and spending. But as people seem to expect different values from retailers than from themselves, it is important to know exactly which values should be attributed.

Values are crucial for explaining social and personal organization and change (Durkheim 1897/1964). According to Schwartz (2012), values are used to characterize cultural groups, societies and individuals as well as companies and brands. Values might also explain the motivational basis of consumer attitudes and behavior, elicit goals and guide actions (Verplanken and Holland 2002). Particularly recently, retailers have been endeavoring to communicate a value-based image and to underpin this communication policy with diverse actions, such as focusing on health by decreasing the amount of sugar in retail brands, caring for the environment by abolishing plastic bags or promoting locally grown food, or trying to communicate their value orientation via store design. Although substantial research deals with value congruence between consumers and brands (Tuškej, Golob, and Podnar 2013; or service brands, Zhang and Bloemer 2008), little research addresses whether a value-based image can influence consumer behavior only if there is a fit between values attributed to a retailer and consumers’ own values. Do retailers’ value-related efforts enhance consumers’ attitudes, and are there any economic consequences? There is a research gap particularly concerning whether there should be a match between values attributed to a retailer and personal values (proposed by self-congruency theory and similarity-attraction theory, claiming that people are more attracted to those similar to themselves, Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman and Johnson 2005; Zhang and Bloemer 2008). Beyond that – as people tend to apply double standards when it comes to self versus others (Wiedmann and Raffée 1986) – consumers may expect retailers to embody quite different values (for instance, a kind of “hypermorality”) from those they hold privately. Because of this potential discrepancy, it remains unclear whether a match of consumers’ and retailers’ values is necessary for improving images, or whether focusing on consumers’ personal values might be a more promising approach.

Our study contributes to value research in two ways: first, by testing three differing hypotheses, we consider whether such a match (the more retailers’ and consumers’ value orientations resemble each other with respect to all (H1) vs. most significant values, H2) is important or whether some crucial values must be fulfilled by retailers from a consumer’s point of view irrespective of the fact that these values are also essential in consumers’ personal lives. Second, we use an innovative approach for value measurement that allows intuitive attribution of values to self and to retailers without cognitive filtering (see below).

We test three hypotheses, differing in the above-mentioned operationalization of the predictor variable, to ascertain which form of value attribution contributes most to understanding the relationships between values, attitudes and behavioral intentions in a retailer context:

Hypothesis 1: The smaller the difference between personal value orientation and the values associated with a retailer, the more positive the attitude towards that retailer, which in turn positively influences consumers’ willingness to spend money (WTS) at this retailer.

versus

Hypothesis 2: The smaller the difference between consumers’ most relevant values and the retailers’ perceived positioning concerning these values, the more positive the attitude towards that retailer, which in turn positively influences consumers’ WTS at this retailer.

versus

Hypothesis 3: The stronger the attribution of purchase-relevant values to a retailer, the more positive the attitude towards that retailer, which in turn positively influences consumers’ WTS at this retailer.

Empirical study: To test H1-H3, we conducted a study in four different German cities and interviewed participants (n = 398) of various ages (1/3: 18-30 years, 1/3: 31-50 years, 1/3: > 50 years). First, to ascertain consumers’ value orientation, participants were asked to attribute diverse values to themselves according to perceived relevance. Next, participants were asked to attribute the same values to three different grocery stores according to how strongly they perceived the retailers to represent these values.

We chose the picture-based scale for value measurement (Groeppel-Klein and Kobel 2017), which is based on Schwartz (1992) but portrays 26 subtle facets (i.e., according to Schwartz et al. 2012, p. 664, “a finer set of meaningful, conceptually distinct values”) instead of subordinate value categories and leads to less SDB than verbal scales. This picture scale was implemented via an intuitive touchscreen device to reduce cognitive filtering by obtaining more spontaneous reactions (supported by a pretest): participants expressed the relevance of each value by sliding the picture towards themselves (represented by a stick figure) if the value was important as a guiding principle in their life, or away from the figure if the value was not relevant. The software computed similarity-measures (metrical values ranging from 0 = not similar at all to 1 = total match) to convey the relevance of each value to the participant. The same technique was used for value-attribution to the retailers in the second part of the study.

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The results show that values attributed to a retailer affect attitude and WTS (operationalized by asking participants to indicate how much of a voucher they would spend at retailer 1/2/3/others). However, they also reveal that the relationship between personal and retailer value orientation is not the most important; rather, the attribution of generally expected values from retailers has a stronger impact on consumers’ WTS (via attitude) than a match between personal and retailer values, as the size of the completely standardized indirect effect is highest (Hayes 2013, 187) within this case (EffectSize1_indirect = |-.1347|, EffectSize2_indirect = |-.1073|, EffectSize3_indirect = |.2094|). People’s expectations towards retailers are decisive.

Our study contributes to a deeper understanding of the value-behavior relationship as the insights of self-image congruency can help explain the relevance of value-congruence in the retailer context. As self-congruency theory suggests, a match between consumers’ self-concept (including values) and retailers’ personality (expressed through value positioning) leads to benefits for retailers. However, more importantly, consumers appear to expect retailers to stand for ethical values, whereas these values are less relevant than others (e.g., friendship, trust) in consumers’ private lives.

REFERENCES

The Predictability Utility: Product Recommendations Increase Enjoyment of a Consumption Experience
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Companies like Netflix or Spotify heavily rely on algorithms that predict consumers’ preferences. Across three consumption domains, we demonstrate that consumers derive additional enjoyment from products assigned to them based on overt and accurate preference prediction. This “predictability utility” results from individuals’ desire to verify their existing preferences.

Companies like Netflix, Spotify, and Amazon heavily rely on recommendation systems that provide customers with personalized recommendations of movies or songs, thanks to algorithms that predict customers’ preference based on their consumption history.

Whereas existing research has documented the impact of recommendation systems on a macro level, little is known on their psychological impact. In particular, it remains unclear how consumers feel about “being predicted”, and whether the awareness of being predicted can impact their consumption experience. Consider, for instance, Susan who likes a particular song; would she enjoy this song more if she purposefully selected it from her playlist, if she heard it on the radio, or if the song was recommended to her by Spotify based on overt preference prediction?

In this research, we propose that when customers are aware that their preferences have been predicted and as long as the prediction was accurate, they will enjoy a recommended product to a greater extent compared to a situation in which they chose the product themselves, or a situation in which they are unaware that they have been predicted. In other words, we expect that Susan will enjoy listening to a song most when she knows that her preferences were predicted. We term this effect “predictability utility”: merely knowing that one’s preferences have (accurately) been predicted can increase consumption enjoyment.

We argue that the predictability utility is grounded in self-verification theory (Swann, 1983), which suggests that individuals desire feedback that confirms preexisting self-views, or in the case that we investigate, feedback that confirms their preexisting preferences. Individuals typically desire to self-verify for traits that are central to the self-view (Markus, 1977; Sedikides, 1993). Applied to the context that we study, if self-verification explains the predictability utility, then it should emerge particularly if the predicted preferences are central to individuals’ self-view.

In Studies 1a-3, we investigate the predictability utility effect in the domain of music. By means of factor analyses, we developed recommendation system for songs: we created a questionnaire in which participants evaluate 24 artists, and based on these evaluations, an algorithm provides personalized song recommendations.

In Studies 1a, 1b, and 2, participants first completed the artist evaluation questionnaire, and were then asked to evaluate a song. Depending on the experimental conditions, we programmed the algorithm such that the song accurately (vs. not accurately) matched participants’ preferences. In addition, depending on the experimental conditions, participants were assigned the song and were told that it was based on their preferences, or they were assigned the song and were told that it was selected randomly, or they could choose between this song and another one. We found that as long as the song accurately matched participants’ preferences, they expected and experienced greater enjoyment when it was assigned reportedly based on preference prediction, compared to when the same song was allegedly selected by chance, or when the same song was chosen by participants themselves. This illustrates the two necessary conditions of the predictability utility: (1) the recommended item matches consumers’ preferences, and (2) consumers are aware that their preferences were predicted.

In Study 3, we investigated the role of self-view centrality. We assessed the centrality of participants’ music preferences to their self-view by measuring their agreement with 10 statements (e.g. “The kind of music I listen to tells a lot about who I am.”). We found that the predictability utility was more pronounced for individuals who consider their music preferences central to their self-view.

The next two studies provide evidence of the predictability utility in a non-consumption domain, first names for a newborn. By means of hierarchical cluster analyses, we developed a dynamic questionnaire in which participants evaluate 44 to 66 names, and based on these evaluations, the algorithm provides name recommendations (these names were never included in the questionnaire).

In Study 4, we found that as long as the recommended names matched participants’ preferences, telling them their preferences were predicted increased their evaluations.

In Study 5, we demonstrated the role of self-view centrality by manipulating participants’ belief that a choice of name is central or not central to parents’ self-view. Participants either read a magazine article explaining that baby names express parents’ self-beliefs, values and personality (high centrality), or an article explaining that baby names are unrelated to parents’ self-beliefs, values and personality (low centrality). We replicated the predictability utility effect in the high self-view centrality condition, but not in the low self-view centrality condition.

Study 6 provides evidence of the predictability utility in the domain of paintings. We relied on research (as well as on pre-tests) suggesting that surrealist paintings are particularly liked by individuals who view themselves as experience-seekers (Chamorro-Premuzic, Burke, Hsu, & Swami, 2010). In contrast, impressionist paintings are liked by everyone, independently of their self-views. After completing a scale measuring experience-seeking tendencies, participants were asked to evaluate either surrealist paintings, or impressionist paintings. In addition, half of them were told that the paintings were selected to match their personality. As hypothesized, among high experience-seekers, telling them (versus not telling them) that their preferences were predicted increased their evaluations of the surrealist paintings. It was not the case among low experience-seekers, or generally for the evaluation of the impressionist paintings. Hence, the predictability utility emerged for items that were liked and central to self-views (as is the case for surrealist art among experience-seekers) but not for items that were liked but not central to self-views (as is the case for impressionist art).

In conclusion, our work makes at least three theoretical contributions. First, it adds to existing research on recommendation systems by highlighting the positive psychological impact of prediction awareness. Second, while past research has predominantly shown that individuals seek to self-verify, our research shows that having one’s core preferences verified—without purposefully seeking it—improves consumption experiences. Finally, we contribute to the literature on choice (Botti & McGill, 2010; Deci & Ryan, 1985) by documenting a case where a non-chosen option can result in greater enjoyment.
REFERENCES


The Asymmetric Effect of Recommendation Signs on Consumer Choice Commitment
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In this research, we show that commonly used recommendation signs (e.g., best seller), instead of assisting consumers during their decision-making, might make the decision process more complicated for consumers with a prevention (vs. promotion) focus and lead to negative consequences such as increasing the decision difficulty and decreasing choice commitment.

One of the common tools that retailers use to assist consumers to choose among a variety of options is product recommendation (Senecal and Nantel 2004). Product recommendation signs are widely used by online retailers to indicate the collective opinion of other consumers (e.g., best seller) or opinions of experts (e.g., award winner). Extant research indicates that recommendations can help consumers simplify their choice process and increase subsequent choice commitment (e.g., Häubl and Trifts 2000). Conversely, an emerging stream of research has begun to investigate the negative consequences of recommendations (Fitzsimons and Lehman 2004; Goodman et al. 2013). We contribute to this research stream in two major ways. First, although retailers typically use recommendation signs to help consumers during the decision process, we examine the effect of recommendation signs on consumers’ post-decision satisfaction. Second, we investigate how recommendation signs impact the decision-making process depending on consumers’ regulatory focus.

Regulatory focus theory (Higgins 1998) describes two major motivational orientations that people may adopt: promotion and prevention focus. Promotion (vs. prevention) focus facilitates the use of heuristics in the decision process (Pham and Avnet 2004). Consulting product recommendation signs induces a heuristic decision process and is therefore less compatible with the choice behavior of prevention- (vs. promotion-) focused consumers. Moreover, recommendations provided by marketers induce an action-oriented choice mode (Dellaert and Häubl 2012). We contend that this choice mode is more compatible if consumers have a promotion focus (vs. prevention focus) because promotion (vs. prevention) focus leads people to be more active and accommodating (Chernev 2004).

Therefore, we propose that in the presence of recommendation signs, prevention-focused consumers experience complexity and difficulty in their decision process. As a consequence, consumers cannot be confident that they are choosing the best option from the set and are more likely to switch their choice:

Hypothesis 1: The provision of recommendations decreases consumers’ commitment to their choice when they have a prevention focus but not when they have a promotion focus.

Hypothesis 2: The moderating effect of regulatory focus on choice commitment is mediated by decision difficulty. The provision of recommendations leads to increased decision difficulty and decreased choice commitment when consumers have a prevention (vs. promotion) focus.

Finally, we propose two moderators for this effect:

Hypothesis 3&4: The provision of recommendations decreases choice commitment among prevention-focused consumers when they choose from a large (vs. small) assortment and when the framing of recommended product conflicts (vs. fits) with their regulatory focus.

STUDY 1 (LAB STUDY; N=89)
Regulatory focus was manipulated by presenting a commercial video about promotion (vs. prevention) benefits of tea. Participants next asked to choose a product from an online tea store. In the recommendation condition, two of the products were labeled as “Top Rated”. Participants were then given the opportunity to change their choice of tea. The results revealed a significant interaction of regulatory focus and product recommendation on consumer satisfaction (Wald(1) = 4.38, p = 0.036). The provision of recommendation signs marginally decreased the percentage of participants who stuck with their initial choice in the prevention condition (58% vs. 83%, $\chi^2 (1) = 3.6, p = 0.057$).

STUDY 2 (ONLINE STUDY; N= 182)
We manipulated regulatory focus by asking participants to write an essay about their aspirations (promotion) or responsibilities (prevention). Participants were then asked to choose a product from an online toothpaste store and eventually were given the opportunity to change their choice. In the recommendation condition two of the toothpastes were labeled as “Award Winner”. The results revealed a marginally significant interaction (Wald(1) = 3.1; p = 0.078). The provision of recommendations marginally significantly decreased the percentage of participants who stuck with their initial choice in the prevention condition (74% vs. 89%, $\chi^2 (1) = 2.78, p = 0.096$).

STUDY 3 (LAB STUDY; N= 123)
We manipulated regulatory focus similar to study 1. Participants next visited an online store that offered 27 cereal bars and selected a product. In the recommendation condition, three of the bars were highlighted as “the most popular”. Participants next picked a product and the experimenter recorded their commitment to their initial choice. The results revealed a significant interaction effect (Wald(1) = 5.17, p = 0.023). The provision of recommendations significantly decreased the percentage of the participants who stuck with their initial choice in the prevention condition (38% vs. 68%, $\chi^2 (1) = 4.86$, $p = 0.027$) and increased the decision difficulty for them ($M = 4.1$ vs. $2.76$, $F(1,118) = 8.5$, $p = 0.004$). The results also revealed a significant indirect effect of recommendations on choice commitment in the prevention condition ($\beta = .44$, 95% CI: 1.0191 to 0.0912).

STUDY 4 (LAB STUDY; N= 493)
The manipulation of regulatory focus was similar to study 1. Participants next visited an online tea store that offered either 28 (large) or 6 (small) different types of tea. In the promotion-recommendation (vs. prevention-recommendation) condition two of the promotion-framed (vs. prevention-framed) products were labeled as “Best Seller”. The results revealed a marginally significant three-way
interaction (Wald(2) = 5.65, p = 0.059). The provision of recommendations decreased the percentage of participants who were committed to their initial choice from the large assortment when they had a prevention focus (54% vs. 73%, χ² (1) = 3.95, p = 0.047). The results also revealed that among participants with a prevention focus, the provision of recommendations which had the framing not congruent with their regulatory orientation significantly decreased choice commitment (46% vs. 73%, χ² (1) = 5.78, p = 0.016).

**GENERAL DISCUSSION**

In this paper, we showed that commonly used recommendation signs, instead of simplifying the decision-making process, might lead to negative consequences such as increasing the decision difficulty and decreasing choice commitment. This research has clear implications for online retailers. Our results suggest that retailers should consider the likely goal orientation of their consumers before deciding about employing recommendation signs. Moreover, there are many product categories that are primarily used to avoid negative outcomes. Based on our results, retailers may consider not providing recommendations in such categories.

**REFERENCES**


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We examine the impact of different framings of recommendations on consumers’ likelihood to follow them. We find that consumers are more likely to follow recommendations that are framed as user-based (e.g., “People who like this also like”) rather than item-based (e.g., “More products in this category”).

Consumers receive product recommendations on a daily basis. Whereas prior research mostly focused on how to improve the accuracy of recommendations (e.g., Bodapati, 2008; Swaminathan, 2003), research on how recommendations should be communicated to consumers (i.e., how they should be framed) is non-existent. This is particularly surprising, considering the billions of dollars companies like Netflix and Amazon invest per year in recommendation algorithms (Koblin, 2017).

Our research is intended to close this gap by exploring the impact of different framings of the same recommendation on consumers’ likelihood to follow it. We distinguish between two types of recommendation framings: User-based framing which emphasizes the similarity between users (e.g., “People who like this also like”) and item-based framing which emphasizes the similarity between items (e.g., “More international news”). In this research, we suggest that consumers are more likely to follow a recommendation when it is presented with the user-based rather than the item-based framing, which we term as the ‘framing effect’.

The framing effect can result from people’s conformity with similar others’ preferences under the user-based framing (conformity hypothesis), or people’s devaluation of the recommended item under the item-based framing (devaluation hypothesis). The conformity hypothesis is built on the prevalent finding that people tend to follow what others choose or like when they feel socially connected with others (e.g., similar in tastes) (Bearden & Etzel, 1982; Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). The devaluation hypothesis is consistent with prior research showing that people tend to avoid items that fall in the same category with what they have already consumed (Huh et al., 2016). In this abstract, we report three studies in which we demonstrate the framing effect (study 1), tease apart the conformity and devaluation hypotheses (study 2), and examine consumption knowledge as a moderator (study 3).

Study 1 is a field experiment that corroborates the framing effect. We collaborated with a media company that pushed daily articles. For each article, participants were randomly assigned to read either the user-based framing or the item-based framing used in study 1. On a 6-point scale, we measured participants’ interest in the recommendation and how much they perceived the recommendation as driven by user-similarity or item-similarity (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). Consistent with study 1, participants were more interested in user-based recommendations (M = 4.65) than item-based recommendations (M = 4.48), t(778) = 2.21, p = .028. Crucially, the framing effect was mediated by perceived user-similarity (95% CI of the indirect effect = [0.02, 0.97]), not by perceived item-similarity (95% CI of the indirect effect = [-0.03, 0.04]). This suggested that the framing effect was driven by how much people perceived recommendations as based on similar users and thus supported conformity hypothesis.

One important reason of social conformity is informational influence, resulting from people’s perception that others’ preferences and actions are the most appropriate ones (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). This influence should weaken as people possess more consumption knowledge and thus have a lower need to rely on information from others. Study 3 tested this proposition. We recruited 202 workers at Amazon Mechanical Turk to participate in an “Online Museum” study (79 females, M_age = 36.4). Specifically, they viewed 50 focal paintings in a random sequence and could “like” each painting by clicking on a heart-shaped button. When participants liked a painting, another button showed up saying either “People who like this painting also like” (user-based framing) or “Similar painting to this” (item-based framing), depending on the condition participants were assigned into. Effectiveness of recommendation was operationalized as the probability that people clicked through the recommendation. To measure consumption knowledge, we asked participants to report how often they visited art museums in real life (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = very often). Linear regression revealed a significant interaction between framing and museum-visit frequency. Consistent with our prediction, the advantage of user-based framing diminished among more frequent museum visitors (b = -0.07, SE = 0.01, t(482) = -4.82, p < .001).

Our findings imply that simply changing how companies describe their method of recommendation can have an impact on sales. The current research contribute to the theorizing of how consumers decode information about recommendations (Fitzsimons & Lehmann, 2004; Senecal & Nantel, 2004) and offer important insights to business practice.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Online shaming entails two contradictory outcomes: informal enforcement against deviant behavior, and violation of privacy rights. A set of studies shows this duality and demonstrates the role of morality in driving participation in online shaming. The results highlight the moderating effect of high (vs. low) identifiability of the wrongdoer.

Public shaming is defined as informally punishing individuals who have deviated socially by informing the public about their conduct in a disapproving manner (Petley 2013). This research focuses on consumers who engage in public shaming on social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook) against a wrongdoer who has acted immorally. In such contexts and given the growing prevalence of this phenomenon, public shaming may facilitate amending not only wrongdoers’ behavior but also the behavior of the people who surround them (Jacquet 2015).

Moral concern may be the driving force behind public shaming, since such concern involves the desire to protect others as well as the desire to restrain them from doing harm (Janoff-Bulman and Carnes 2013). However, the decision to engage in public shaming consists of two contradictory motivations: informal enforcement against deviant behavior (thereby preventing offenses such as animal abuse or discriminatory customer service) and the violation of privacy rights and dignity (exposing the personal details of the wrongdoer). Given this dual nature of public shaming, we hypothesize that morality is more likely to drive consumers to participate in public shaming when the wrongdoer identifiability is low rather than high. When the wrongdoer identifiability is low, the probability of hurting the wrongdoer is low and the likelihood of educating the public is still high.

A preliminary study tested the assumption that people acknowledge both positive and negative sides to sharing shaming information. We presented 100 participants with six real-life cases of online shaming. Three cases involved low identified target (a vague photo/first name only/job description only), and three cases involved high identified target (a clear photo, and in two cases, a full name as well). Participants rated both the expected positive and negative outcomes of shaming above the mid-point on a 7-point scale. Yet, the average ratings of the expected positive outcomes were higher for the low identifiability cases than for the high identifiable cases (M =4.87 vs. M = 4.32, t(99)=5.24, p<.001). Conversely, the average ratings of the negative outcomes were higher for the high identifiable cases than for the low identifiable cases (M =5.02 vs. M = 4.44, t(99)=5.26, p<.001).

In our first study we demonstrated how moral concern interact with identifiability levels of the wrongdoer in driving actual choices regarding participation in public shaming. Participants (n=141) were presented with several posts and were asked to click “like” on one of the posts through their social media accounts. After making their choices, participants completed a moral concern scale. Logistic regression found that moral concern significantly predicted the likelihood to choose to “like” a shaming post in which the wrongdoer identifiability was low rather than high (γ(12)=4.87, p=.027). Specifically, the exp(B) value indicated that an increase of one unit in the average moral concern score was associated with an increase of 62% in the odds ratio of choosing a low identifiable post.

In our second study, participants (n=278) were presented with a shaming post that included a photo of a woman (the wrongdoer) dragging a swan out of a lake. We manipulated the identifiability of the wrongdoer by presenting different angles of the image: half the participants saw a high identifiable wrongdoer, and half saw a low identifiable wrongdoer. Participants were asked to rate the likelihood they would share this post.

As expected, the mean-centered interaction between moral concern and wrongdoer-identification was significant (b=-.65, p=.0033): Using the Johnson-Neyman “floodlight” approach, we found that participants with moral concern above 1.86 were more likely to share the post in which the wrongdoer was unidentified rather than identified. In contrast, participants with moral concern below 1.295 were more likely to share the post in which the wrongdoer was identified rather than unidentified.

In a replication study, participants (n=374) were presented with a post that described a manager of a restaurant who had ignored a complaint about possible food poisoning. Half the participants saw a photo of the restaurant’s manager, and the other half did not. Again, the interaction between moral concern and wrongdoer-identification condition had significant effect on participants’ likelihood of sharing the post.

In our fourth study (n=393), we attenuated the negative outcomes of shaming by presenting more than one target as being shamed, thereby reducing the likelihood that a given wrongdoer would be hurt: Participants were presented with a post describing either a spa receptionist or a group of receptionists who had ignored an elderly customer. A photo of the receptionist or receptionists was presented either from the back (low identifiability) or from the front (high identifiability). Also, we manipulated moral concern instead of measuring them. An ANOVA found a three-way interaction: Among participants under the high-moral-concern manipulation, those in the low-identifiable-single-receptionist condition were more likely to share the post than were participants in the high-identifiable-receptionist condition (M=4.55 vs. M = 3.46, t(385)=2.59, p=0.01).

In our last study we focused on the underlying process of our interaction, as well as the moderating role of group relatedness. When a person is being shamed in his own community, the negative outcomes and the positive outcomes can be particularly strong. Participants (n=305) were presented with a shaming post about an airline passenger who had misbehaved. The passenger’s photo was either blurry (low identifiability) or sharp (high identifiability). Also, the passenger was described either as part of the participants’ ingroup (same nationality) or as an outgroup member (different nationality). Higher moral concern were positively correlated with sharing likelihood when the wrongdoer identifiability was low and was an ingroup member (b=-.25, t(297)=2.04, p=.04). Surprisingly, we also found a significant positive effect for moral concern when the wrongdoer identifiability was high and an outgroup member (b=.28, t(297)=2.83, p=.005). The effect of moral concern on sharing likelihood was mediated by expected positive outcomes of sharing the post (b=-.21; 95% CI: -.43, -.04) but not by the expected negative outcomes.

Taken together, our studies suggest that while people acknowledge the dual outcomes of shaming, morality and the extent to which the wrongdoer is identifiable affect the decision to participate in public shaming. While negative outcomes are acknowledged, the expected positive consequences are the ones that drive potential shammers’ decisions regarding whether or not to participate in public shaming.
REFERENCE
Cashless Payments, Pain of Paying and the Role of Attachment

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In three studies, we provide evidence that consumers feel lower levels of pain of paying when using mobile phones and watches as compared to credit cards. Further, the pain is moderated by the attachment consumers have with the payment tool. As attachment increases, the pain of paying increases as well.

Mobile phones have an essential role in consumers’ everyday life. We rely on them for many daily tasks such as writing emails and taking photos. Interestingly, through these functions mobile phones have become repositories of memories like communications, pictures and contacts. Consequently, we are emotionally attached to them (Vincent, 2006; Thorsteinsson and Page, 2015).

A relatively new function of mobile phones is the ability to use them to make payments. Mobile payment is defined as “the use of a mobile device to initiate, authorize or confirm a financial transaction” (Au and Kaufman, 2008) and it is expected to become broadly adopted in the coming years. From the perspective of a consumer, mobile payment offers a unique experience compared to other payment methods. Namely, the presence of both personal use functions and the payment function is unique to the mobile phone, and it clearly differentiates it from traditional payment methods like credit cards, which are used predominantly during a payment transaction.

Making a payment is commonly associated with an aversive feeling known as the pain of paying. Pain of paying is “a crude but effective reminder of the sacrifice that even a minor purchase will entail” (Prelec and Loewenstein, 1998). This feeling of pain is influenced by the tool used to make a payment (Hirschman, 1979; Feinberg, 1986). In particular, the transparency of the payment method, that is how easy it is to observe oneself parting with one’s money, affects the pain felt by consumers (Prelec and Simester, 2001). Less transparent means of payment like credit cards generate a lower level of pain compared to cash, which is the most transparent form of paying where the money spent is physically visible (Soman, 2003). From the perspective of transparency, mobile payments can be deemed similar to credit cards. However, major differences between mobile phones and credit cards lie in multifunctionality and emotional attachment domains.

We suggest that the multifunctionality of a mobile phone will contribute to the phone being a less transparent form of payment compared to credit cards thereby leading to less pain. We further suggest that whether and how the emotional attachment one has to her/his phone may affect pain of paying is less clear. Objects for which consumers feel a strong attachment are more difficult to part with (Kleine and Baker, 2004), and more likely to receive special care (Schultz et al., 1989) and commitment (Read, Robertson and McQuilken, 2011). Attachment can induce “feelings of self-loss when an object is lost” (Ball and Tasaki, 1992). It is thus important to identify whether emotional attachment affects pain of paying, as paying with a mobile phone makes consumers instrumentalize an object they are strongly emotionally attached to in situations that cause aversive feelings such as pain of paying.

In this article, we mainly focus on the differences between mobile phone and credit card payments. We further explore payments made by a watch as this represents another cashless payment innovation with marked differences with credit cards, and some similarities with mobile phones with respect to multifunctionality and emotional attachment to the object.

The analyses are based on three studies in which participants have been asked to respond to a scenario adopted from Raghubir and Srivastava (2008), which studied the differences in pain of paying between cash and credit cards. Following the approach used in the previous literature (Thomas, Desai and Seenivasan, 2011; Soster, Gershoff and Bearden, 2014), participants were additionally asked to indicate the pain they felt at the time of payment. Questions adopted from the scale measuring attachment proposed by Ball and Tasaki (1992) have been further used to measure participants’ level of attachment to the type of payment tool indicated in the scenario.

We find that compared to credit cards, mobile payment generated a lower level of pain of paying in consumers. Additionally, we find that the level of pain of paying felt by consumers is moderated by consumers’ attachment to the object they used to make the transaction. In particular, as attachment increases, the pain of paying that consumers feel increases as well. The moderating role of attachment can be observed for both mobile phones as well as watches.

The findings suggest that the use of new payment tools like mobile phones or watches could actually result in a better consumer experience as pain of paying is lower. However, consumers moderately to strongly attached to their personal objects may not benefit from this. The understanding of how personal devices will be perceived by consumers in a payment context is increasingly relevant as wearable technologies and internet of things become more commonplace.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Marketers often offer discounts by providing both initial and sale prices to consumers. The traditional explanation for the success of these deals has been the utility derived from the feeling of saving money, but we argue and show that perceived gains in quality are largely responsible for their appeal.

Marketers often offer deals to induce trial and to increase sales. One of the most common types of deal is a discount (Darke and Chung 2005). One prominent method is to supply both the full, or initial, price (i.e., a type of external reference price; ERP) and the final price. The effectiveness of reference prices is so well-supported in the literature that it has been called an empirical generalization (Kalyanaram and Winer 1995).

The traditional explanation for the appeal of this type of discount beyond simply the lower price has been transaction utility. Thaler (1985) describes two types of utility gained from purchasing a product: acquisition utility, the value of the good, and transaction utility, the “perceived merits of the ‘deal’” (p.19). Much work studying the effectiveness of discounts assumes that transaction utility, or the feeling of saving money, is the cause of reference price effects as researchers keep the product and final price constant, ostensibly keeping acquisition utility, or the feeling of gaining quality, constant. However, as we argue and show, the feeling of gaining quality actually varies because the initial price serves as quality cue (Kardes et al. 2004).

In study 1, we show that providing a reference price increases willingness-to-buy, but that this effect disappears when statistically controlling quality perceptions. In study 2, we experimentally control quality perceptions. In study 3, we both control and reintroduce quality differentials to illustrate the importance of gaining quality in the effectiveness of reference prices. Finally, in study 4 we manipulate the attention paid to gaining quality to alter the performance of providing a reference price.

STUDY 1

Participants (N=202) were randomized across a 2 order (uncertain quality task first, certain quality task first) x 2 deal (discounted price, final price) between-subjects design (order did not impact our results).

The uncertain quality task involved considering three hotel offers with uncertain quality. They saw a hotel originally priced at $200 but discounted to $150 for two nights and rated willingness-to-buy (WTB) and their perceived quality of the hotel. They also did this for hotels priced at $200 and $150.

The certain quality task involved considering 13 hotel offers with certain but different quality ratings. In the discounted (final) price condition, they saw each hotel’s rating (from 4.0 to 10.0) and were told it was originally priced at $200 but discounted to $150 (priced at $150). They then reported how likely they would be to book the hotel.

Results for the Uncertain Quality Task

A mixed model analysis including offer as a within-subjects factor revealed a significant main effect of offer. Participants reported being significantly more likely to purchase the final price (vs. initial price) hotel, greater WTB for the discounted (vs. initial price) hotel, and consistent with a reference price effect, greater WTB for the discounted (vs. final price) hotel. Perceived quality followed this same pattern.

The indirect effect of the discounted (vs. final price) offer on WTB through quality perceptions was significant while the remaining direct effect of the discounted (vs. final price) offer was not, suggesting that the observed reference price effect is fully accounted for by changes in perceived quality.

STUDY 2

Participants (N=223) were randomized across a 3 offer (final price, discounted, tax-free) between-subjects design. Participants had to choose between a cheaper bottle of wine, Bottle A ($26), and a more expensive bottle, Bottle B. In the final price condition, Bottle B was $39. In the discounted condition, participants were told that Bottle B was discounted from $43 to $39. In the tax-free condition, participants were told that Bottle B was originally $43 after tax, but $39 after the tax-off discount. Participants chose between the two options, and then rated which was higher quality.

We expected that participants would not infer higher quality in the tax-free condition, leading to a lower percentage of participants choosing Bottle B in the tax-free (vs. discounted) condition, which was confirmed in our results (tax-free: 13% vs. discounted: 27%).

STUDY 3

Participants (N=191) were randomized across a 2 discount (small, large) x 2 quality gain (absent, present) between-subjects design. In this paradigm, participants again chose between a cheaper option and a more expensive, but discounted, option. In the no quality gain condition, participants chose between two hotel rooms at the same hotel and then rated which was higher quality.

In the quality gain present condition, participants chose between two hotel rooms at different hotels. If the appeal of deals were largely from quality gained, we would expect the share choosing Room B to be higher in the large (vs. small) discount condition for the quality gain present (but not the no quality gain) condition. A logistic regression revealed a significant interaction of this hypothesized pattern.

STUDY 4

Participants (N=149) participated in this study for course credit. We used the same wine choice scenario as in study 2.

We employed a 2 focus (money, quality) between-subjects design. Participants were faced with the same task as in the discounted condition of study 2. However, participants in the money (quality) focus condition were asked to consider the feeling of saving money (quality) before making their choices and evaluations.

Analyses revealed that participants were significantly more likely to choose Bottle B and that Bottle B was considered to be of significantly higher relative quality in the quality focus (vs. money focus) condition.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

We show that the appeal of reference prices is in large part due to perceived quality gains, rather than perceived monetary savings.
When we statistically or experimentally control quality perceptions, reference price effects disappear. When we reintroduce a quality differential, a reference price effect reappears, attesting to the importance of quality gains. We also provide additional moderating evidence by showing that increasing the attention paid to gaining quality improves the performance of providing a reference price.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Both intuition and empirical evidences indicate that people like cheap products and free products are particularly attractive. But we showed a backfiring effect of zero price on consumer demand and identified a moderator that could drive the effect of zero price on demand into either positive or negative direction.

According to standard economic model, demand should increase as price decreases. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that demand should be significantly boosted if marketers set the price as zero. Extant literature indeed demonstrated that zero pricing dramatically increased demand (e.g., Shampianier, Mazar and Ariely 2007). Shampianier et al (2007) also argued that zero price could cause positive affect, which drove up demand.

We explore the possible negative effect of a zero price on demand. Based on the dual-system theory of judgment (Stanovich and West 2000), we propose that consumers might automatically feel happy when price is zero but also become suspicious about the free offer. That is because zero price violates the market-exchange norm, which implies that customers should pay a given amount of money for obtaining a product. We also argue that the relative impact of positive affect and suspicion on decision making depends on the level of incidental costs (i.e., the non-monetary costs that consumers may need to pay if they take the offer). Such incidental costs could be product-related (e.g., the product has a bad quality) or acquisition-related (e.g., obtaining the product requires extra time). We argue that zero price might serve as a trigger of deliberations on incidental costs. If incidental costs are indeed high, more deliberations can lead to more concerns, which might override the positive affect generated by the free signal. Therefore,

H1: When the offer suggests high incidental costs, a zero (vs. low) price decreases consumers’ intention to try the product.

If the incidental costs of a purchase are low, consumers’ negative concerns should be still low even though they engage in a deliberative thinking. In this case, the positive affect generated by a zero price might dominate. So,

H2: When the offer suggests low incidental costs, a zero (vs. low) price increases consumers’ intention to try the product.

STUDY 1

We used a 2 (price level: zero or low) × 2 (incidental cost: high or low) between-subjects design. Participants first received the basic information of hepatitis C and a vaccine for preventing it. In high incidental cost conditions, we told participants that the vaccine had not been completely launched into the market so that its overall performance should be further investigated. In low incidental cost conditions, we told them that the vaccine had been launched into the market and its effectiveness had been well supported. Then participants were informed of a vaccination event. The price of the vaccination was manipulated as either for free or by paying RMB¥5. Then, participants indicated their intention to attend the event (1 = not at all, 7 = very much).

We found a significant interaction between price and incidental cost on intention, \( F(1, 372) = 7.60, p = .006 \). When the incidental cost was low, participants in the zero (vs. low) price condition showed a higher intention to attend (4.44 vs. 3.93, \( F(1, 372) = 3.85, p = .051 \)).

But when the incidental cost was high, participants in the zero (vs. low) price condition showed a lower intention (3.37 vs. 3.87, \( F(1, 372) = 3.75, p = .054 \)).

STUDY 2

Study 2 tested the underlying mechanism. We used the same design as in Study 1. The context is about making a decision of taking a stress management course. Participants in the high incidental cost conditions were told that the classes would be held on another campus, about 40-minute trip from the main campus where they usually studied and lived in. For participants in the low incidental cost conditions, we told them that the classes would be held online. Next, participants were informed that they could take the trial lesson either for free or by paying $2. Then, we measured participants’ intention to attend the trial lesson. We also asked participants to write down their thoughts when they made the decision and indicate their feelings (1 = very unhappy, 7 = very happy) when they saw the offer.

Results showed a significant interaction between price and incidental cost on intention, \( F(1, 201) = 8.53, p = .004 \). When the incidental cost was low, participants in the zero (vs. low) price condition were more inclined to attend the trial lesson (3.49 vs. 2.94, \( F(1, 201) = 3.75, p = .054 \)). But when the incidental cost was high, the effect was reversed; participants in the zero (vs. low) price condition were less inclined to attend (2.50 vs. 3.12, \( F(1, 201) = 4.81, p = .029 \)).

A coder blind to the experimental conditions coded the thoughts. We formed an index representing concerns of incidental cost using a ratio score - “number of unfavorable thoughts on incidental costs / number of favorable thoughts on incidental costs/number of all thoughts”. The interaction between price level and incidental cost on the concerns was significant, \( F(1, 192) = 9.44, p = .002 \). As expected, zero (vs. low) price prompted more concerns on incidental cost only when incidental cost was high (\( .40 \) vs. \( .19 \), \( F(1, 192) = 10.98, p = .001 \)) but not when incidental cost was low (\( .17 \) vs. \( .24 \), \( F(1, 192) = 1.04, p > .30 \)).

The results of a moderated mediation analysis showed that positive affect significantly mediated the effect of zero (vs. low) price on intention to attend, irrespective of incidental cost, \( b_{\text{high incidental cost}} = .26, SE = .12, BC\ 95\% CI [.04, .53] \), \( b_{\text{low incidental cost}} = .42, SE = .15, BC\ 95\% CI [.16, .74] \). However, the mediation effect through concerns of incidental costs was significantly moderated by incidental cost; the mediation effect was significant only when incidental cost was high, \( b = -.15, SE = .07, BC\ 95\% CI [-.34, -.04] \), but not when it was low, \( b = .05, SE = .05, BC\ 95\% CI [-.03, .18] \).

Overall, our findings contribute to extant literature by showing the negative side of providing free offers and demonstrating the underlying mechanism for such an effect.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We introduce the “discounted credit”, store credit purchased at a price lower than its redeemable value, and explore how consumers process its derived savings. Findings suggest consumers who make multiple purchases with a single discounted credit do not mentally apply the savings derived from their credit towards redeemed purchases evenly.

Purchasing and spending discounted credit is becoming increasingly prevalent. Discounted credit are store credit that can be purchased at a price lower than its redeemable value, such as when a consumer pays $80 for a $100 restaurant voucher. When a consumer reaps savings by purchasing discounted credit and later redeems that credit for a store purchase, the purchase indirectly has a lower cost to that consumer. Discounted credit appears on the market either through retailers and third-party businesses selling directly to consumers or through the customer-to-customer gift card resale market.

As consumers pay with discounted credit to make multiple purchases across time, an open question is how much consumers perceive they are paying for those purchases. Because mental accounting is malleable (Cheema and Soman 2006), there is ambiguity concerning how consumers allocate their discounted credit gains across subsequent perceived purchase costs. For example, if a consumer pays $80 for a $100 restaurant voucher and pays for several meals with the voucher, which meal cost does the consumer mentally deduct the $20 discounted credit savings from? We believe that consumers may mentally adjust the perceived cost of each purchase proportionally to the credit’s discount percentage (e.g. 20% off perceived cost of each meal). However, a competing theory is that consumers mentally divide their credit gains to offset subsequent purchase costs in a more disproportional manner. We test how consumers mentally account for gains derived from purchasing and spending discounted credit in five studies, reporting three in this abstract.

In study 1, we explore how consumers allocate discounted credit gains to offset the cost of one initial purchase the credit is spent on. University student participants were randomly assigned to receive one of two promotional offers: 1) paying $12 to receive punchcard that exchanges for 12 donuts (discounted credit condition) or 2) subscribing to a promotion that allows them to pay $1 for each donut (control condition). Market price for donuts was $2 each. Participants reported how much they feel like one initial donut would cost (MDiscounted Credit =7.63; MControl =6.50; F(1, 186)=10.88, p=.001). There is a need to expedite depleting the discounted credit, which suggests that perhaps there is uncertainty whether the savings of purchasing the discounted credit could be fully reaped.

Study 2 examined whether the certainty of using the full discounted credit impacts how the gain derived from the discounted credit is applied to decrease the perceived cost of downstream purchases. In this study, we provide all participants with an equal size and equal percentage off a discounted credit (pay $20 for $40 credit) while manipulating the difficulty to deplete the entirety of the discounted credit in a two factor-design. We measured certainty of depleting the discounted credit and asked participants to report their perceived cost of their first purchase using the credit (priced at $10).

We found a main effect of the difficulty of depleting the discounted credit on the first purchase’s perceived cost (F(1, 215)=4.11, p=.04). In addition, participants were more certain that they would eventually use the credit’s entire value in the easy condition; Measy =7.35; Mdifficult =5.20; F(1, 215) = 45.86, p<.001. We found a significant effect of ease (vs difficulty) of discounted credit depletion on perceived cost of the first purchase through the uncertainty mediator (b=-.64, 95% CI [-1.20, -.17]). Results suggest that as ease and certainty to completely deplete a discounted credit increases, participants were more willing to mentally discount an initial purchase paid by discounted credit by a larger percentage.

In study 3, we track how participants’ uncertainty of being able to redeem an entire discounted credit influences perceived costs of each sequential purchase the credit is redeemed on. Participants imagined buying a gift card (pay $48 upfront for a $96) that can be used on four gym classes. Those in the certain (uncertain) condition were told they will definitely (possibly not) go to all four classes. Next, we sequentially told participants that they attended four classes, one at a time. After each class, we asked participants to report how much they perceived each class (Purchases 1-4) to cost.

We ran a mixed ANOVA analysis with uncertainty as the between-subjects variable, purchase number as the within-subjects variable, and perceived cost as the dependent variable. We found a significant interaction effect between uncertainty and purchase number on perceived cost (Wilks’ Lambda=4.05, p=.008). Within-subject contrasts suggested that the interaction had a linear trend (F(1, 297)=11.32, p=.001); those who were uncertain that their discounted credit would be depleted perceived their purchases to feel sequentially less expensive as they depleted more of the credit while those who were certain that their discounted credit would be depleted felt each of their purchases were equally highly discounted (see Figure 1 and Table 1).

We found initial evidence that under a range of contexts, consumers who pay for purchases using a single discounted credit do not equally mentally distribute their derived gains to offset the perceived cost of multiple purchases. First purchases made by a discounted credit feels more expensive than last purchases (when the credit is depleted), suggesting that consumers factor in their uncertainty that they may not spend the entire value of the discounted credit into cost of initial purchases.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Confirmatory information processing, or information distortion, is a ubiquitous bias. This work shows that distrust reduces distortion by disrupting its known driver: the motivation to maintain cognitive consistency within belief systems. Distrust drives negative hypothesis testing, thereby leading to reduced levels of consistency and less information distortion.

Trust is commonly believed to be a critical component of initiating and maintaining social relationships (e.g., Balliet and Van Lange 2013). The present paper focuses on the silver lining to the presence of distrust: reduced confirmatory information processing. Confirmatory information processing is a preference-supporting bias in which the evaluation of new information is biased in favor of one’s prior beliefs. This bias is commonly labeled “information distortion” (ID) because new information is distorted in favor of the individual’s emerging preference (for a review, see Russo 2014). This bias was shown to be driven by an automatic desire to maintain cognitive consistency within one’s belief systems.

Recent research has shown that distrust – defined as a mental state caused by the threat of being deceived – can fundamentally change the manner in which individuals process information (Schul et al. 2004). In particular, Mayo, Alfasi and Schwarz (2015) showed that distrust increases reliance on negative hypothesis testing strategies in a rule discovery task. That is, participants in the distrust condition were more likely to propose incongruent series to test the validity of an initial hypothesis.

In the phenomenon of information distortion, individuals strive for consistency between a) their tentative preference and b) the evaluation of new information. The “tentative” preference is the hypothesis generated by an individual that one of the options (e.g., buying one or another product) is superior to the other. Therefore distrust should induce individuals to test whether their initial tentative preference is wrong. Empirically, this reasoning process should yield diminished levels of cognitive consistency and distortion. We ran three studies in this regard. Studies 1 and 2 show that dispositional distrust (study 1) and situated distrust (study 2) reduce ID. Study 3 tests the process explanation through negative hypothesis testing and reduced need for cognitive consistency.

In Study 1, 145 participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk answered Yamagishi and Yamagishi’s (1994) trust scale and were then asked to complete a choice task, which allowed to measure ID with the stepwise evolution of preference (SEP) method (Russo et al. 1998). Following an initial description of a business venture, participants were asked on a 100-point scale whether they would commit to the business venture (0 = absolutely sure I won’t commit; 100 = absolutely sure I will commit; and 50 = I could go either way). The venture was then described with four sequential attributes. After the venture was described with four sequential attributes. After

To analyze the data of Study 1, we used a linear mixed model with a maximum likelihood approach in SPSS. The regression yielded two significant fixed effects, leaning toward investing ($F(1, 573) = 277.49; p < .0001$) and the interaction of leaning and distrust ($F(1, 573) = 15.84, p < .0001$). A stronger leaning toward committing yielded more positive ratings of the information, which shows that all participants tended to show ID ($b = .05, t = 16.66, p < .0001$). In addition, the strength of the leaning and dispositional distrust interacted such that the effect of leaning on diagnosticity was weaker when distrust was higher ($b = -.01, t = -3.98, p < .0001$).

Study 2 replicated Study 1 by priming distrust and compared the impact of this priming on confirmatory information processing. A total of 224 Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT) workers completed the study. The priming of trust was undertaken using an impression task shown to successfully increase distrust in prior research (Schul et al. 2004, 2008; Mayo et al. 2014). Following the manipulation of distrust, the participants completed a choice task similar to Study 1.

We analyzed the data in a way similar to Study 1. Three fixed effects reached significance. First, as in Study 1, there was a significant effect of leaning on information evaluation ($F(1, 580) = 146.38, p < .0001$). Second, the interactions between the two dummy variables and leaning reached significance levels (for trust: $F(1, 406) = 9.72, p < .005$; for distrust: $F(1, 660) = 9.92, p < .005$). The distrust condition yielded a slope coefficient for leaning that was lower than in the control condition ($b = -.02, t = -3.15, p < .005$), thereby demonstrating that distrust reduces confirmatory information processing.

Study 3 tested our process explanation through negative hypothesis testing and reduced need for cognitive consistency. A total of 300 Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT) workers completed the study. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: distrust, trust, or control. The manipulation was a scrambled-sentences priming task (Mayer and Mussweiler 2011). To measure negative-hypothesis testing, we used a procedure developed by Kleiman and Hassin (2013). Following the description of the negative hypothesis testing measurement, the participants completed the same choice task as in Study 1, which included a measurement of cognitive consistency (Carlson 2014).

Results show the effect of distrust on negative hypothesis testing was significant and positive, such that distrust increased the use of negative hypothesis testing ($t = 1.33, t = 3.23, p < .001$). The effect of negative hypothesis testing decreased the activation of cognitive consistency ($b = -.85, t = -3.10, p < .005$). Higher cognitive consistency levels increased distortion ($b = -.01, t = 3.15, p < .005$). A bootstrapping analysis (Preacher and Hayes 2008) with 5,000 samples was performed, and the mediation analysis yielded a significant bootstrapping interval of [-.03, -.02].

The present study builds on the extensive body of research on confirmatory biases but distinguishes itself from the previous literature by showing that distrust allows the impact of emerging preferences on information evaluation to be mitigated.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We show that relatively symmetric allocation results from a deliberative decision process where consumers engage in tradeoffs. More tradeoffs result in reduced differences in attributes weights thereby making alternatives appear equally appealing. We thus address the gap in the allocation literature by identifying the process underlying symmetric (and asymmetric) allocation.

Consumers constantly have to make decisions on how to apportion time, space, or money between different alternatives. For example, consumers going on vacations have to plan on how much time to spend on different activities or in different destinations, people constructing customized homes must decide how much space to allocate to each room, and philanthropists must decide how to allocate their charitable budget. Research on allocation decisions is surprisingly sparse and primarily in the domain of constructing financial portfolios (e.g., Benartzi and Thaler 2001; Huberman and Jiang 2006; Morrin et al. 2012). A well-known finding in the articles on investment allocation is that people allocate their funds approximately symmetrically across all available options, also known as the 1/n rule of equal allocation where there are n alternatives available, or between a chosen subset of alternatives, known as the conditional 1/n rule.

The allocation decision has primarily been examined in financial investment decisions (e.g., Benartzi and Thaler 2001; Fox, Bardolo, and Lieb 2004; Morrin et al. 2012), with an exception of Fox and colleagues (2005) who examined allocation decisions in other contexts such as the distribution of a charitable budget. A consistent finding in these articles is that people use a somewhat symmetric allocation strategy across all alternatives. This strategy of equal allocation is known as the 1/n rule, where n is the number of alternatives (Benartzi and Thaler 2001). According to this strategy, people allocate with slight variations around equal apportioning across alternatives.

Deviations from the 1/n rule have been observed such as when alternatives can be categorized or when decision makers are experts (Fox, Ratner, and Lieb 2005). The process leading to allocation decisions has not been examined so far though it has been conjectured that the symmetrical allocation outcome is a result of simplistic decision making (Morrin et al. 2012). In contrast, we demonstrate that relatively symmetric allocation is resultant of deliberative decision making. Specifically, we examine the decision process and propose that relatively symmetrical apportioning among alternatives is an outcome of increased tradeoffs.

Allocation decisions, relative to choice tasks, increase the number of tradeoffs that need to be made because allocation requires elucidating relative preferences across alternatives and apportioning accordingly. As a result, more detailed processing is required. Discrete choice tasks require determining whether the decrease in one attribute is justified by an increase of another attribute while in allocation tasks it is necessary to determine how much of one attribute can acceptably be sacrificed to increase another attribute.

There are two lines of reasoning to suggest that more tradeoffs make alternatives appear to be equally appealing. First, more deliberation in tradeoffs may make alternatives seem equally preferred because tradeoffs require consumers to shift their focus to what they may forego by selecting an alternative. In making tradeoffs, consumers not only consider attribute-level gains, but also attribute-level losses (Tversky and Kahneman 1991). The increased consideration of potential losses may make an alternative which is inferior on some attributes but possesses a unique or trivial attribute seem more appealing (e.g., Broniarczyk and Gershoff 2003). Thus, tradeoffs may make alternatives seem equally attractive overall.

Another line of argument suggests that more tradeoffs increase perceived similarity between alternatives because attributes which are ignored or not deliberated upon receive relatively lower importance weights. Essentially, tradeoffs are made to establish exchange rates between attributes – how much of a gain in one attribute is offset by a loss in another attribute. Given specific attribute values, equal attribute weighting makes the alternatives similar in overall utility compared to unequal attribute weighting.

In the present research, we investigate the relationship between tradeoffs and allocation using three theory-based approaches. First, following the deliberation literature paradigm, we limit how effectively cognitive resources can be used by inducing task effects such as increasing the amount of attribute information and imposing time limitations. Second, we modify the amount of cognitive load and thereby the availability of cognitive resources available for decision making. Third, we shift the psychological distance as it has been shown to impact tradeoff based decision strategies (Khan, Zhu, and Kalra 2011).

We argue that relatively symmetric allocation arises as more tradeoffs are made and focus is placed on the products’ attributes and benefits that need to be sacrificed, making the alternatives appear equally appealing. Because high deliberation, low construal level, and low psychological distance naturally increase the tendency to make tradeoffs, symmetric allocation is more likely when deliberation is high, cognitive load is low, or psychological distance is low. Formally stated, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: High deliberation will result in relatively more symmetric allocation than low deliberation.

Hypothesis 1b: Low cognitive load will result in relatively more symmetric allocation than high cognitive load.

Hypothesis 1c: Low psychological distance will result in relatively more symmetric allocation than high psychological distance.

Hypothesis 2: The number of tradeoffs made mediates the association between cognitive load, psychological distance, and deliberation and allocation symmetry.

In eight studies, we test and show support for our propositions and the underlying tradeoff based mechanisms. Study 1 examines real consumers’ allocation of flavors across a variety pack to provide evidence for the proposed main effect of cognitive load. Studies 2A and 2B test the effect of psychological distance on allocation symmetry, and study 3 tests the effect of deliberation on allocation symmetry. Study 4 delves into the underlying process, and uses a conjoint task to ascertain whether psychological distance influences the allocation of attribute importance weights. Our final three studies
provide process evidence through protocol coding (studies 5 and 7) and by analyzing how much time participants take to make allocation decisions (studies 6 and 7).

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Adding an option to a menu composed by two singleton options and their combination reduces the combination value in consumer’s eyes. This effect is driven by changes in the perceived Completeness of combinations rather than regret for the missing combination or consideration set formation accounts.

Imagine ordering starters at a restaurant. You notice that the menu offers four items. As for ease of exposition, let us refer to these items as A, B, C, and a combination comprising of half of item A and half of item B. Which product might you order? Now imagine if there were three instead of four items—A, B, and a combination comprising of half of item A and half of item B. Would the removal of option C from the choice set influence what you order? Rational choice theory predicts it would not (see Tversky and Kahneman, 1986).

We, however, argue that it might: preference for the combination will be higher in the second choice set than in the first. This occurs because the combination item in the second set is Inclusive – contains part of all the presented options- which leads to the assessment that it is complete. This feeling of completeness not only increases selection of the combination but also leads to a completeness premium: consumers are willing to pay more for the same combination item when it is Inclusive (containing all options) rather than Non-Inclusive.

Thus, we identify a bias and show support for a preference for completeness. This completeness bias may seem related to the compromise effect (Simonson 1989). The latter effect represents an unwillingness to entirely trade off one attribute for another; this leads to the preference of an option that embodies a partial trade-off. In our studies, the choice of a combination may also reflect the unwillingness to trade one option for another option. In that sense, the combination serves as a compromise option. The compromise effect research predicts that combinations are attractive; we show that their attractiveness crucially depends on whether they seem complete or not.

We provide support for the Inclusiveness effect in 6 studies, but we only present four in this abstract for brevity. We show robustness across evaluation, choice, and several product domains (ranging from foods to travel packages).

In study 1A, we randomly assigned 262 participants to the Inclusive or Non-Inclusive condition. Participants in the Inclusive condition saw a menu comprising two single items (Italian starters, A and B) and their combination (half portions of both A and B). Participants in the Non-Inclusive condition saw the same three options but also an additional starter, C, which they were told was out of stock. Participants in both conditions were asked to pick one starter among A, B, and the combination option.

The choice share of the combination option increased from 61% in the Non-Inclusive condition to 76% in the Inclusive condition, \( \chi^2 (1) = 6.66, p = .01 \).

In Study 1B, we extend the Completeness premium to valuation. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. In the Inclusive condition, they were shown a cruise list with two singleton options (A and B) and their combination. In the Non-Inclusive condition, they were shown three singletons (A, B, and C) and the combination of A and B. In both conditions, participants they were asked to indicate their WTP for the combination option. We found that showing an option not included in a combination decreased the valuation of the latter by $748 (from $6,463 to $5,715), \( t(260) = 3.50, p < .001 \).

Study 3A (N=642) contains four conditions. The Inclusive condition only presented two cruises and their combination. Three Non-Inclusive conditions presented the same two cruises and the same combination, with the addition of an excluded cruise of varying quality (rated as 55/100, 75/100 or 95/100). This allows testing whether quality of an excluded option affects the valuation of a Non-Inclusive option. Participants had to indicate a fair value for the Combination cruise (in dollars), rate the Combination option on Completeness and to express their Regret of missing the excluded option (both 1-7 items). These measures allowed us to test whether participants really considered the Inclusive combination as more Complete, and whether the lowered evaluation of the Combination option in the Non-Inclusive condition was caused by heightened Regret caused by the presentation of the additional option.

The valuation of the combination cruise did not vary across the three Non-Inclusive conditions, \( F(2,486) = .18, p = .84 \), but, aggregated they did differ from the Inclusive condition, \( t(640) = 2.76, p = .006 \). The Inclusive condition was also rated more Complete than the aggregated Non-Inclusive Conditions, \( t(640) = 4.34, p < .001, d = .40 \), with no difference in Completeness between the three Non-Inclusive conditions, \( F(2,486) = .30, p = .74 \). Regret did not explain the pattern of valuations across conditions.

In Study 4 (N=351), participants had to choose between a bouquet of Dahlias or a bouquet of Petunias, each containing flowers of two different colors. Participants either received no additional information (Control condition) or were told that the shop also offered a total of three colors of Petunias and a total of two colors of Dahlias (Comparison condition). In other words, in the Comparison condition, participants had to choose between an Inclusive (including all the options within its category: two out of two colors) and a Non-Inclusive combination (excluding one option within its category: two out of three colors).

The choice share of the Petunia bouquet dropped 11% from the Control (39%) to the Comparison condition (28%), \( \chi^2 (1) = 4.38, p = .036 \), where it was framed as Non-Inclusive.

CONCLUSION

We report a new, theoretically and managerially relevant framing effect: the same combination is considered more valuable when it contains all the options in a menu vs. excludes one or more options. This seems caused by a spontaneous preference for Completeness but not by higher attractiveness of or regret for excluded options, and this preference is also not affected by the number of excluded options, or by quality comparisons between the included options and the excluded ones. In sum, we contribute to and connect three streams of literature: the framing literature (Simonson, 1989, 1992) by showing a new framing effect; to the literature on combination evaluation (Chernev and Gal, 2010); and to the literature on Completeness (Arnheim, 1974). These findings suggest that managers should pay attention to how they present menus, as excluded options may influence evaluation and choice of combinations.
REFERENCES
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Upward social comparison can occur when superior others use less input to achieve the same output or when the superior others achieve greater output from the same level of input. This research examines how these two types of upward social comparisons motivate consumers differently on their goal pursuit. Past research on social comparison has shown that comparing with superior others increases consumers’ motivation to improve (Festinger 1954). This motivational impact of upward social comparison has been demonstrated when the comparison centers on output (e.g., the other loses more weight; Lockwood and Kunda 1997). Interestingly, consumers can also compare based on input (e.g., the other spends less time to lose weight; Huguet et al. 1999). While both input and output comparisons reveal the others’ superior advantage, the current research is the first attempt to study whether and how these two types of social comparisons motivate consumers differently on their goal pursuit. This research proposes that input and output comparisons provide different inferences about goal pursuit. Comparing with someone who uses less input to achieve the same level of output (e.g., uses less time to lose the same amount of weight) provides information about what it takes to attain the goal. If someone else can achieve the same goal with less input, it implies that it is not difficult to attain the goal. Therefore, people should be more likely to infer goal attainability upon input comparison. On the other hand, output comparison provides information on how much one can achieve in pursuing the goal. Knowing that someone can achieve more output with the same level of input (e.g., loses more weight while using the same amount of time) should lead to an expectation that they can similarly achieve more, which in turn increase the attractiveness and thus the perceived value of the goal (Austin and Vancouver 1996). This therefore suggests that output comparison should increase the perceived value of the goal. Altogether, it implies that both input and output comparisons can increase people’s motivation via goal attainability and value respectively. However, they can also have different motivational effects depending on whether consumers are more concerned about goal attainability versus value (Zhang and Huang 2010). In situations where people are more concerned about goal attainability, input comparison should be more motivating because this comparison signals that the goal is attainable. Conversely, as output comparison signals that the goal is of high value, it should motivate goal pursuit when people are more concerned about goal value. A set of three experiments demonstrated support to this framework.

Experiment 1 used a 3 (comparison: input vs. output vs. control) between-subjects design to show that both input and output comparisons increase motivation, but via different routes. Participants took part in a logical reasoning task. After finishing the first part, participants in input and output conditions received feedback that they got 55 points, while the other worker got 70 points. Participants in the input (output) condition further read that the reason for the difference was that the other worker spent less (same amount of) time while answering the same (more) number of questions correct, while those in the control condition were only informed of their performance. Then, perceived attainability and value of the goal were measured. Next, participants continued with the second part, which included some unsolvable questions. The time they spent on these questions was used as an indicator of their motivation. Results showed that as expected, either comparing with someone with used less time or answered more questions correct motivated participants, relative to the control condition. Further, the mediation analyses revealed that input (output) comparison increased motivation via goal attainability (value).

Experiment 2 aimed to show that the motivational effects of input and output comparisons depend on whether people are concerned about goal attainability or value. As people are more concerned about goal attainability (value) in low (high) progress situation (Huang and Zhang 2013), input (output) comparison should be motivating, because of its signal of goal attainability (value). This experiment used a 3 (comparison: input vs. output vs. control) x 2 (progress: low vs. high) between-subjects design. Participants read that they could earn points in the Remote Association Test (RAT). Following Huang and Zhang (2013), goal progress was manipulated by the number of points that they were endowed with: 30 (70) points in the low (high) progress condition. After completing the first part, all participants read that they got 15 points. Those in the input (output) condition further read that the other worker spent one minute less (same amount of time) and got 15 (20) points, whereas those in the control condition only read about their own score. After the feedback, they continued with the second part, which their time spent was used as measure of motivation. Results showed that under low progress, input comparison increased motivation relative to output comparison and control. On the other hand, when progress was high, output comparison (vs. input comparison and control) increased motivation.

Experiment 3 tested another moderator – maximizing. While maximizers care about getting the best possible outcome, satisficers are concerned about spending as little effort as possible (Schwartz et al. 2002). This implies that output (input) comparison should be more motivating for maximizers (satisficers). This experiment used a 2 (social comparison: input vs. output) x (maximizing vs. satisficing, measured) between-subject design. Participants were asked to imagine that they had been trying to lose weight to attend a friend’s wedding. Participants in the input comparison condition read that they had lost 10 pounds in 14 days, while those in the output comparison condition had lost 7 pounds in 10 days. Then, they read an advertisement of a weight loss program with a headline “I lost 10 lbs in only 10 days”. Following the advertisement, participants reported their interest in the weight-loss program. Results found that input (output) comparison increased satisficers’ (maximizer’s) interest in the program. A follow-up study replicated these findings using manipulated maximizing (Ma and Roese 2015).

Taken together, although both input and output comparisons imply a superior position enjoyed by the other, no research to date investigates whether these two types of comparisons have different motivational impacts. Therefore, this research contributes by providing a new perspective on how input and output social comparisons can motivate people’s goal pursuit differently.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to understand how young consumers market themselves with virtual stickers in Line. The methodological approach to this research followed an interpretive phenomenology. To some extent, the results demonstrated that virtual stickers bounce the idea of creating new metaphors, liberating young consumers from gender beliefs to virtual imagination.

Self-marketing or self-branding is now a rapidly growing business in its own right (Chen, 2013). Line, designed in Korea and launched in 2011, is one of popular social messaging applications for young consumers to market themselves with virtual stickers in social relations, particularly friendships (Lauria, 2017; Turkel, 2011, 2015). Taiwan is the Line company’s third-largest market around the world, and the number of registered users exceeds 17 million (Chiu 2013). Line’s virtual stickers have not only promoted Japanese “cute” style to satisfy young consumers, but recently also are introducing new styles (e.g., ugly, sarcastic, etc.) that may change lifestyle preferences in terms of alternative self-marketing promotion. Once young consumers switch lifestyle preferences, the self-expression of emotions and gender roles will be presumably changed. Thus, this paper aims to understand how young Taiwanese consumers choose virtual stickers to (re)construct digital identity, express emotions and gender roles in terms of self-marketing in Line friendships.

Reviewing and drawing upon the literature on cultural theory discussing about the self, emotion and gender role. Previous studies suggested that culture plays in basic processes of forming identity, labeling emotional experiences and displaying gender roles (Peterson, 2006). A body of literature showed that females are typically more willing than males to both verbally and nonverbally communicate (e.g., virtual stickers in this study) their internal emotional states, and they are more expressive of positive and negative emotions (Alexander and Wood, 2000). Taiwanese society similarly shares stereotypical gender beliefs that women are more emotionally expressive than men. These stereotypes have been closely associated with the opposition between masculinity and femininity. For example, femininity and female role are seen as the ability to express, experience and communicate emotions to others and even to empathize with others’ feelings, whereas masculinity and male role are associated with the ability suppress and control their own emotions (Chen, 2016b). We argue that masculine and feminine roles are learned, but masculine and feminine roles are not necessarily maintained for young consumers to market themselves in virtual environments. Therefore, there is a need to move beyond generalized discussions about these issues on a specific society (e.g., Taiwan) to look in rich empirical details at the complex ways in which new technologies and modern pop-culture are being used in real ways and in the virtual world.

The methodological approach to this study follows an interpretive phenomenology (Thompson and Haytko, 1997). Adopting a strategy of “posting” or “snowballing” was utilized to recruit volunteer participants in many Line chatting groups and looked for friends of friends who are interested in joining this study. Then, it gained access to a population of 79 young female and male Taiwanese who bought at least four packs of virtual stickers in the research periods and communicated with others every day in Line social activities. There are two stages of timeline research in this study. In the first stage, data collection consisted primarily of a netnographic approach involving immersion in the setting and context of the experience through participants’ self-diary reports (Kozinets, 1998). All participants were asked to conduct self-diary reports lasted from January 2015 to December 2015. In the second stage, it utilized in-depth interviews in order to develop account of the “live” experiences of the participants themselves in Line. This stage of timeline research took place during following fourteen months from January 2016 to February 2017. Regarding data analysis, data collection and analysis were simultaneous, consisting of an inductive, interactive process between data collection, preliminary analysis, idea generation, further data collection and more focused questioning (Glaser, 1992).

Overall, the results highlight that virtual stickers stimulating interactions with others in self-marketing of Line friendships seem to depend on dominant cultural frame in which specific social situations/norms are constructed and, therefore, cannot be separated from socio-culture patterns of thinking, acting and interacting. To some slight extent, virtual stickers bounce the idea of creating new metaphors of digital identity formations, emotional expressions and gender role performances, liberating young Taiwanese consumers from gender beliefs to virtual sticker imagination. Moreover, new styles of virtual stickers are shown to be in someway liberating, by young people to openly express emotions, successfully marketing themselves in a non-traditional way and engaging in gender play. Since such new styles of virtual stickers offered a great function to create a relaxing atmosphere for young people not to suppress intimate or negative emotional expressions, they might not dare to do in face-to-face communications in Taiwanese society. The main contribution of this study is that the knowledge young consumers gain about new ways of marketing themselves does not simply remain as forming digital identity, releasing emotion and doing gender with virtual stickers at a virtual level; rather it may become manifest in self-marketing practices in daily lives.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Places of departure and arrival are not just geographical concepts that can be mapped out, but are – from the perspective of mobility – inscribed in a temporal hermeneutic. We propose that mobility can be re-theorised at the intersection of consumption, geography and time, and term this phenomenon: anticipiplacement.

Acculturation research in consumer behaviour (Askegaard, Arnould, and Kjeldgaard 2005; Luedicke 2015; Peñaloza 1994) has been criticised for assuming linear mobility trajectories and that consumer identity is territorialized (Bardhi, Eckhardt, and Arnould 2012). Liquidity challenges this by claiming that globalization spurs “a consumer lifestyle that is detached from national geography” (Bardhi et al 2012: 511). However, so-called liquid identities seem to engage profoundly with geographical territories, places, scales, and networks (Jessop et al 2008), but do so over time. Respondents in Bardhi et al for instance describe moving from the US to the UK to Germany and back to the US etc. (Bardhi et al. 2012: 515-16). Liquidity is therefore subject to the critique of “flowsterism”: the idea that people, phenomena and processes somehow fly above the stickiness of space in an atmosphere of frictionless fluidity” (Jones et al 2007). We argue that liquidity theory overstates the malleability of identity under conditions of mobility, misconceives a binary distinction between mobility and object relations, and finally strangely ignores the roles of geography and time in consumer identity formation. This paper contributes to theory of consumer mobility by operationalizing the way time and space are correlated in identity formation and to “…what extent such categorization tools influence and are influenced by consumer choice” and geography (MacInnis & Folks 2010: 907). From the consideration of prior research, we ask: How does mobility’s specific, geographical context impact consumers’ experience of time and through this experience, consumer identity formation? To answer this question: we conduct 35 semi-structured, in-depth interviews of middle and upper class Indians currently living in London. These respondents have undergone a similar, specific migratory and diasporic experience from India to London, which is at the same time, a generalized effect of global capitalism (Mishra 2007). We query respondents on their place of departure and imagined future consumption in London before they left India and how this geography and these imaginings impacted their consumer mobility.

Our sample shows informant associate sedentary living in the country of origin with weak object relations: “nothing that you think is yours is yours, do not be attached”. One respondent elaborates: “it is very common for your mother to feed you with her hand, that [laughs] continued on for me till very recently. Till I was 22.” (M25). Another notes: “in India there are people who think for you like, ironing your clothes, or cleaning the house for that matter, so we’ve never done it in India, never.” (F31). Systematic intervention in material processes inhibits generating solid relations to material culture prior to mobility. Another points out how, the idea of leaving India was therefore associated with “Growing, in the sense, in terms of the confidence that you have. Learning, say for example, doing your own things for yourself” (F21). This involved building solid relations to clothes, food, body, household chores, furniture, practices of shopping and other material staples of consumer society. The search for a consumer identity based in strong object relations therefore spurs mobility. Mobility is sought in order to become a particular kind of consumer individual (Miller 1987): “I had a thing planned out since the beginning before I came here [London].” (M21). We find that childhood and teenage geographical awareness of the world outside India constitutes a backdrop that reveals mobility as an option later in life. This can happen through tourism, which frames a geography of future possibility. Other respondents report on the impact of media for their awareness of the world. Socialization into a geographical awareness inspires respondents to form a discourse about the scale, territoriality and order of countries, and through that a hierarchy of important and hence desirable countries in the world that could warrant future mobility.

While Bardhi et al. e.g. maintain that: “The value of everything, including things, is dated as they become useless when the consumer moves to different identity projects and possessions no longer serve their anchoring purpose.” (Bardhi, et al. 2012), we find that mobility’s specific geographical context impact consumers’ by ‘sticking’ to narratives of identity formation. The ‘stickiness’ of geography connotes both “ability to attract as well as to keep, like fly tape” (Markusen 1996). We use ‘stickiness’ to describe how places cling to consumers over time. Rather than mobility spurring radically ‘different identity projects’ at each destination because material objects change, we find that mobility results in a temporalization of identity markers. On the one hand, places of departure in the past, such as India, ‘stick’ to the self and therefore contextualize the Idem aspect of identity, or that which Riceouarg argued remains constant over time (Ricoeur 1991). Bardhi et al’s contemporary nomads therefore employ serialized geographical reference points in the past to account for their identity, despite experiencing “lightness” in regard to possessions. For our respondents the geography of departures becomes an integral part of who the respondent is and frames who the respondent wants to become. However, the fire of desire will not burn in any given place, but depends upon an uneven distribution of kindling they travel to gather (Belk, Ger, and Askegaard 2003). In extension, potential places of arrival in the future become an integral part of identity’s Ipse, Riceouarg’s projects, aspirations and potentials for personal innovation (Ricoeur 1992). Consumers are motivated to seek out places of particular desirability but are both enabled and constrained by infrastructures, boundaries, imaginaries and institutions in doing so. Identity, time and geography are therefore inextricably entangled. Consumers want to go to specific places because they because they want to become a certain person framed against the context of where they came from. In sticky mobility, geography is therefore inscribed into the consumer process of culturally situated: ‘patterns of expectations’ for specific places, or what we term ‘anticipiplacement’ (Douglas and Isherwood 1996). As a consumer phenomenon anticipiplacement, is neither acculturation, solid, nor liquid, but constitutes a novel contribution to theorizing consumer mobility as engaged in an ongoing dialectic exchange between temporally situated places of departure and places of arrival, through which narrative identity appears.

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How Beginner Reviewers Systematically Benefit and Harm Service Providers: Biases in Rating Approaches on User-Generated Reputation Systems

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Using field data and an experiment, we show that beginner (vs. veteran) reviewers assign more polarizing ratings, which is accentuated on mobile devices (vs. desktop computers). Most importantly, we show that because of this difference in rating approach, beginners (vs. veterans) systematically benefit and harm certain service providers.

Over the past decade, online user-generated reputation systems have grown in popularity amongst consumers. However, recent research suggests that user-generated ratings, to varying extents, are not accurate when compared to those by expert professionals (de Langhe et al. 2015). This limits the utility of reputation systems for review-reading consumers. Therefore, in order for reputation systems to continue growing adoption and usage, it is critical that user-generated ratings become more accurate in terms of reflecting consumer experiences. In this research, we argue that inaccuracies in ratings are, in part, influenced by systematic differences in rating approaches by users on reputation systems. Specifically, we propose that a particular bias in rating approaches is driven by users’ lack of experience as contributors to the reputation system.

Research in social and cognitive psychology suggest that as humans, we have a tendency to simplify our understanding of the world in a categorical/dichotomous manner; we create dichotomous distinctions, such as right or wrong, us or them (Billig & Tajfel 1973). However, with greater experiences within a domain, our thinking within the domain tends to shift from dichotomous to gradient (Galinsky & Moskowitz 2000). Given the relationship between familiarity and gradient thinking, we predict that users who are beginners (veterans), by their nature of having less (more) domain-related evaluation experiences, adopt a more polarizing (gradient) rating approach; that is, they assign ratings that are more (less) distant from the midpoint of the rating scale. Further, if the more polarizing rating approach by beginning contributors is systematic (i.e., very high and very low ratings are more likely assigned under certain circumstances), beginners (vs. veterans) may be systematically benefiting and harming certain service providers.

Study 1 tests whether beginners (veterans) adopt a more polarizing (gradient) evaluation approach, in terms of both assigned star ratings and underlying sentiment of review text. Scraping and analyzing over 100,000 reviews on 60 hotels, spanning 4 cities, from Qunar.com, a Chinese-based reputation platform, we replicate the finding that lower contributors assign more polarizing ratings (beginner = 1.62 vs. veteran = 1.53; \( \beta = -0.040, p < .01 \)). Also, we find that reviews that are generated on mobile devices (vs. desktop computers) are significantly more polarizing in ratings (beginner = 1.62 vs. desktop = 1.51; \( \beta = 0.097, p < .01 \)), and that the main effect of the more polarizing ratings of lower contributors is greater on mobile devices (vs. desktop computers; \( \beta = 0.010, p < .05 \)).

We conducted a single paper meta-analysis (McShane & Böckenholt 2017) to combine the effects across our field and experiment data in Studies 1-3. Our findings show that the average number of units the assigned ratings are from the midpoint of 3 on the 5-star rating scale, by beginners is 1.54 (95% CI: 1.42-1.66) and by veterans is 1.39 (95% CI: 1.27-1.51). Difference in polarity of ratings between beginners and veterans is 0.15 (95% CI: 0.08-0.22), asserting that lower contributing users adopt a more polarizing rating approach.

The predominant focus of Studies 1-3 was from the perspectives of the user and the platform. In Study 4, we turn towards the service provider and look at how beginners (vs. veterans) adopting a more polarizing rating approach impacts service providers’ rating averages. We test whether, for certain service providers, beginners systematically assign higher and lower ratings than veterans. Analyzing reviews from TripAdvisor.com, we find that for service providers with moderately low rating averages (3.50-3.70), beginners systematically assigned lower ratings than veterans (beginner = 3.36 vs. veteran = 3.49; \( \beta = 0.037, p < .01 \)), and for service providers with moderately high rating averages (4.40-4.60), beginners systematically assigned higher ratings than veterans (beginner = 4.58 vs. veteran = 4.42; \( \beta = -0.03, p < .01 \)).

An important implication is for businesses entering the market with new types of products, or more generally, for instances where businesses engage with customers that have little to no experience with the product offering. Our findings suggest that providing a product offering that is moderately good (bad) can be sufficient (detrimental), as inexperienced (vs. experienced) users are more likely to perceive moderately good (moderately bad) as excellent (terrible). Interestingly, this impact is expected to be accentuated as consumers continue to shift away from desktop computers to mobile devices.
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**The Reviewer Halo Effect: When What You Write Becomes Who You Are**

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**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

We identify a “reviewer halo” effect, where review valence influences reviewer perceptions, and in turn product attitudes and intentions to follow the reviewer online. The underlying process differs for positive and negative halo effects: negative halos are robust, while positive halos depend on factors that facilitate affective information processing.

Consumers often generate word-of-mouth in order to enhance their social status and gain recognition from others (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004). To that end, individuals prefer to generate positive rather than negative WOM (e.g. De Angelis et al. 2012). But does the message valence affect the impression that the message receiver forms about the messenger? As a reviewer, will ‘what you say’ become ‘who you are’?

Research on halo effects suggests that feelings towards a review’s content should transfer to its author. Halo effects occur when evaluation of one trait spreads to evaluation of other behaviors and traits of the same person (Cooper 1981; Nisbett and Wilson 1977). The effect extends to brand and product perceptions (Boatwright, Kalra, and Zhang 2008; Han 1989). We suggest that halo effects can also emanate from the content that one writes; readers may attribute positive traits to authors of positive reviews, and negative traits to authors of negative reviews. We term this phenomenon the reviewer halo effect.

This effect has two important implications. First, halo effects could affect readers’ propensity to follow reviewers online. Positive halos may boost a reviewer’s charisma, enhancing relationships with followers; negative halos could turn-off followers, inhibiting a reviewer’s reach. Second, because consumers draw inferences about products based on their users (Naylor, Lambert, and Norton 2011; Berger and Heath 2008), reviewer halos may shape product attitudes. These implications underscore the importance of reviewer halo effects. Our research explores their robustness, boundary conditions and moderators.

Initially, we examine whether the reviewer halo effect applies equally to reviewer likeability and credibility. We expect review valence to transfer by affective association to reviewer likeability (Morewedge and Kahneman 2010). However, because trust involves both cognitive and affective components (Lewis and Weigert 1985), we do not expect review valence to extend to reviewer credibility in a straightforward associative manner.

Subsequently, we examine whether positive and negative reviewer halo effects are equally robust. Two mechanisms could make negative halos more robust than positive halos. First, people place more weight on negative than on positive information (Cacioppo and Berntson 1994; Smith et al. 2006). Second, the natural association between negative WOM and being unlikeable may be stronger than the association between positive WOM and being likeable. While being referred to as a “Debbie Downer” is universally negative, being seen as an eternal optimist like “Pollyanna” is not always positive, and can suggest naïveté.

We investigate the differential robustness of positive versus negative halo effects by manipulating factors that increase reliance on affective versus cognitive systems of decision-making (Kahneman 2003; Petty and Cacioppo 1986; Shiv and Federikhin 1999), i.e. positive mood (Batra and Stayman 1990; Bless and Fielder 2006; Bohner et al.1992) and haptic mobile interfaces (Brasel and Gips 2014; Shen, Zhang and Krishna 2016). We expect these factors to moderate positive, but not negative, reviewer halo effects.

Study 1 examined whether review valence affects reviewer perception. We randomly assigned 161 MTurkers to read a negative, neutral or a positive hotel review. Review valence had the expected effect on perceived reviewer likeability ($F(2,152) = 21.98, p < .01$; $M_{neg} = 5.44, M_{neutral} = 4.64, M_{pos} = 4.23$). Furthermore, reviewer likeability mediated the effect of review valence on intentions to follow the reviewer when comparing negative to neutral reviews ($B = -.25, SE = .11, 95% CI [-.52, -.07]) and positive to neutral reviews ($B = .28, SE = .03, 95% CI [0.3, 15]$).

In study 2, 288 MTurkers were randomly assigned to read a negative, neutral, or positive book review; participants also rated their current mood. When comparing the effect of negative and neutral reviews on reviewer likeability, there was a significant review valence effect ($B = -.45, SE = .13, 95% CI [-.69, -.20]$, but the effect was not moderated by mood ($B = .16, SE = .11, 95% CI [.06, .38]$). In contrast, when comparing the effect of positive and neutral reviewer, we obtained both a review valence main effect ($B = .38, SE = .13, 95% CI [.14, .63]$) and a mood by review valence interaction ($B = .24, SE = .11, 95% CI [.02, .47]$). Moderated mediation analyses for the latter revealed stronger indirect effects on product attitudes and following intentions when mood was more positive. Applying the same analysis to reviewer credibility did not yield similar main effects or interaction.

In study 3, 602 US MTurkers were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (user interface: computer vs. mobile) × 3 (review valence: negative, neutral, or positive) between-subjects design, with books as the reviewed product. A 2-way ANOVA revealed that the interface × valence interaction was significant for the neutral vs. positive review ($B = .35, SE = .14, 95% CI [.07, .62]) but not for the neutral vs. negative review ($B = .23, SE = .14, 95% CI [.05, .51]$). Following up on the significant interaction (neutral vs. positive review X user interface), the conditional effect was stronger on haptic mobile ($B = .73, SE = .10, 95% CI [.53, .94]) versus computer interfaces ($B = .39, SE = .10, 95% CI [.20, .58]$). Moderated mediation analyses for the neutral versus positive reviews revealed larger indirect effects on mobile versus computer interfaces for both product attitudes and following intentions. Simple mediation analyses for the negative versus neutral reviews showed significant indirect effects of reviewer perception for both product attitudes and following intentions. As in study 2, the results for reviewer credibility did not mirror those for likeability.

In sum, we show that review valence contributes to reviewer halos. A positively (negatively) valenced review heightens (lowers) evaluations of the reviewer compared to a neutral review. The reviewer halo effect radiates to product attitudes and to intentions to follow the reviewer on other platforms. Positive, but not negative, reviewer halos are amplified when the review is accessed on a mobile interface or encountered while in a good mood. Our findings are novel in demonstrating positive and negative reviewer halo effects and their downstream consequences, and highlight the role of information processing and interface mode.
REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

To test the effect of linguistic affective valence of online reviews on their perceived usefulness, we analyzed over one million consumer reviews from two online communities. We found that reviews with a higher proportion of negative words are perceived as more useful, especially when they give positive evaluation ratings.

INTRODUCTION

In an environment of increasing variety and complexity, where consumers can access to a practically unlimited volume of information, online communities that give their members the opportunity to rate and review products and services, like Trip Advisor, Yelp, Epinions, are a highly valuable source of information. More positive ratings and reviews of a product or a service mean that more consumers are happy with that product or service, which through the influence of the reviews translates into increased commercial performance (Archak, Ghose, & Ipeirotis, 2011; Ludwig et al., 2013; Sonnier, McAlister, & Rutz, 2011). Online reviews are also useful to inform commercial marketing research and competitive intelligence (Lee & BradLow, 2011; Netzer, Feldman, Goldenberg, & Fresko, 2012).

The reviews that have the greatest influence on consumer behavior are probably those that consumers themselves consider most useful. What then makes a review useful? Past studies have examined various features of the review texts (O’Mahony & Smyth, 2010), features of review authors (Liu & Park, 2015), and features of the reviewed objects (Bakhshi, Kanaparthy, & Shamma, 2015; Ghenai & Lizotte, 2015). In this research we investigate the effect of linguistic affective valence of online reviews on their perceived usefulness. On the one hand, we know that people naturally focus on positive, rather than negative things (Augustine, Mehl, & Larsen, 2011; Boucher & Osgood, 1969; Dodds et al., 2015). On the other hand, some studies suggest that negative words carry more information than positive ones (Garcia, Garas, & Schweitzer, 2012). Given these conflicting findings, whether and how linguistic affective valence influences the perceived usefulness of evaluative textual units is an open question.

DATA AND ANALYSES

Data collection. We developed several web-crawling and web-scraping computer programs to collect data from the websites of two online communities: epinions.com (product reviews) and yelp.com (service reviews). We collected 1,001,723 consumer reviews in total, written by more than 88,000 people.

Perceived review usefulness is determined by votes of community members that indicate how useful they perceive an online review to be. In epinions.com, each review was flagged as being ‘very helpful’, ‘helpful’, ‘somewhat helpful’, or none of these (an ordered categorical variable with 4 categories). In yelp.com, the number of community members who found each review helpful could be seen (a count variable).

Linguistic affective valence (sentiment, affective content) is the extent to which language used in an online review is positive or negative. Like other contributions in the field (Ludwig et al., 2013), we use Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) (Pennebaker, 2007; Pennebaker, Francis, & Booth, 2001), an established structured top-down word count approach for psychological language analysis, to assess linguistic affective valence for each online review. LIWC has reliable and valid dictionaries of positive (e.g. love, happy, nice) and negative words (hate, annoyed, sad). We define linguistic affective valence of a review as the difference between the number of positive and negative words, divided by the total number of words in the review.

Analyses. In each of the two settings, we run regression models to estimate the effect of linguistic affective content, controlling for star rating and total word count of the review, on perceived review usefulness. For data from epinions.com, we estimate an ordinal logistic regression model, using the appropriate categorical form of the variable, a simple linear regression, assigning monotonically increasing numerical values to the categories, and a linear regression using the logarithm of these numerical values (plus 1). For data from yelp.com, we estimate a Poisson regression, a negative binomial regression, a simple linear regression, and a linear regression using the logarithm of the count (plus 1). Thus, we estimate 3 different models for epinions.com and 4 different models for yelp.com. Furthermore, for each of these models, we test one specification where we include only the main effects of the aforementioned variables, and another where we include an interaction term between linguistic affective content and review star rating.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Table 1 shows correlations between linguistic affective valence and online review usefulness and the coefficient from each regression model for online review usefulness. Overall we find that more negative linguistic affective valence causes online reviews to be perceived as more useful. This holds with and without controlling for word count (all p < .001), with and without controlling for star rating (all p < .001), and with and without including an interaction term between linguistic affective valence and star rating (all p < .001). Note that the directions of the effects of star ratings on perceived review usefulness is different in the two communities: positive in epinions.com and negative in yelp.com. Lastly, the effect holds under all models we estimate, in both settings. When we estimate the models within star rating data subsets, the same effect holds under all models in the five star and four star subsets for both settings (all p < .0001). Hence, negative linguistic affective valence leads to higher perceived usefulness of online reviews, and of online reviews giving maximally and moderately positive ratings, in particular.

DISCUSSION

Positivity bias – consumers’ propensity to rate products and services overly positively, most often with the highest positive grade possible – seriously devalues the usefulness of online ratings. Even though negative words are almost always vastly outnumbered by positive words (Augustine et al., 2011; Boucher & Osgood, 1969; Dodds et al., 2015), single negative words may provide more information than single positive words (Garcia et al., 2012).

Moreover, if a consumer is reading a product or a service review, that means that she/ he is already interested in the product or service in question. Very often consumers are considering and comparing only a few products or services in their consideration set (Roberts & Nedungadi, 1995). Negative information is especially useful in such situations and particularly when the consideration set consists of very highly rated products or services.

Our findings suggest that linguistic affective valence provides valuable evaluative information to consumers that could be particularly useful to abstract subtle nuances between reviews with equally positive ratings.
Table 1. Correlation and Regression Coefficients from the Two Datasets, Multiple Models, Model Specifications, and Data Subsets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>epinions.com</th>
<th>yelp.com</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total N = 405,250 product reviews</td>
<td>Total N = 596,473 service reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Average rating of review by users as helpful</td>
<td>Number of users who find the review useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coefficients from regression models</td>
<td>Coefficients from regression models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation between LAV and usefulness</td>
<td>Linear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All reviews</td>
<td>w_count + LAV + star_r</td>
<td>-0.067 ***</td>
<td>-0.011 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>w_count + LAV + star_r + LAV * star_r</td>
<td>-0.064 ***</td>
<td>-0.012 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 star reviews only</td>
<td>w_count + LAV</td>
<td>-0.086 ***</td>
<td>-0.011 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 star reviews only</td>
<td>w_count + LAV</td>
<td>-0.091 ***</td>
<td>-0.013 ***</td>
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<td>-0.071 ***</td>
<td>-0.008 †</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 star reviews only</td>
<td>w_count + LAV</td>
<td>-0.064 ***</td>
<td>-0.030 †</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reviews with missing rating

w_count + LAV | -0.087 *** | -0.010 *** | -0.003 ** | 0.008 | - | - | - | - | - |

**p < .0001, * p < .001, † p < .01, ‡ p < .05, . p < .1
LAV: linguistic affective valence; w_count : word count; star_r: star rating.
Correlation: Pearson correlation coefficient

REFERENCES


“I Was Told I Would Look Stupid”: The Effect of Negative Product Reviews on Image Concerns and the Product Usage of Existing Owners
Matthew Philip, HEC Montréal, Canada
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Three experiments provide evidence that negative product reviews reduce future usage intentions for the current owners of that product. This effect is driven by the image concerns of appearing as an incompetent consumer for purchasing and owning products that are believed to be a bad choice from reviews.

Negative product reviews can be very harmful for firms. It can result in decreasing sales (Basuroy et al. 2003; Reinstein and Snyder 2005), poor product evaluations (Wyatt and Badger 1984), and even negatively impact a firm’s net present value (Goldenberg et al. 2007). However, what is less explored, is how negative reviews can impact consumers who already own those products. This work addresses this gap and examines how consumers feel and respond to negative reviews about the products they already own.

Theories of dissonance (e.g., Festinger 1957) and confirmation bias (e.g., Cherny 2001) would argue that consumers actively look for information to confirm they made a good choice and ignore information that suggests they made a bad choice. In addition, satisfaction with product performance increases loyalty (Luo and Homburg 2007; Oliver 1989), positive word-of-mouth (Anderson and Sullivan 1993), and brand advocacy (Fullerton 2011; Javed, Roy, and Mansoor 2015). From this, firms experiencing negative reviews should not expect their current customers will be affected. However, despite personally liking the product, by purchasing a product that received negative reviews informs current owners that they may have made a poor and incompetent purchase decision. Because of this, consumers may believe that their ownership and usage of that product may signal this incompetence to others.

There is a fair amount of evidence that suggests the possibility of appearing incompetent is undesirable. Competence, in general, is an important component of self-esteem (Tafarodi and Swann 1995; 2001). Appearing incompetent has also been shown to have negative social effects. Those perceived to be incompetent are more likely to be excluded (Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick 2008), and possibly more likely to be taken advantage of (Voeh, Baumeister, and Chin 2007). In short, there is good reason to believe that consumers are motivated to avoid portraying an impression of incompetence.

Overall negative reviews can not only inform potential consumers about poor products, but also label current owners of those products as consumers who make incompetent purchase decisions. Because of this, we predict that consumers will anticipate that owning and using negatively reviewed products will portray this undesirable image. Therefore, driven by the fear of appearing as an incompetent consumer, we predict that following negative reviews, current owners will be less willing to use the product in the future.

OVERVIEW OF STUDIES
We tested these predictions across a series of experiments. Each experiment involved participants reading either positive or negative reviews for products they have recently purchased and were subsequently asked their intentions to continue using the product and their image concerns about appearing as an incompetent consumer.

Experiment 1 demonstrated that reading negative reviews significantly decreased usage intentions and increased image concerns for current product owners than compared to reading a positive review or no review (Usage Intentions: $M_s = 6.17$ vs. $6.70$ vs. $6.51$; $F(2,147) = 11.38$, $p < .001$; Image Concerns: $M_s = 3.83$ vs. $2.69$ vs. $2.97$; $F(2,147) = 8.87$, $p < .001$). Mediation analysis supports that the effect of negative reviews on usage intentions is mediated through image concerns while also accounting for the effect of regret, fairness, and dissatisfaction as simultaneous mediators, each of which did not have a significant effect on usage intentions.

Experiment 2 found the same effect of negative reviews increasing image concerns and subsequently decreasing usage intentions for the current owners. However, Experiment 2 demonstrates that this effect only holds for those who are initially satisfied with the performance of the product (Interactions: $F(1,106) = 5.09$, $p < .05$; $F(1,106) = 5.48$, $p < .05$). Usage intentions and image concerns were not influenced by the valence of product reviews when participants were initially dissatisfied with the product performance. Therefore, positive reviews do not increase the desire to use a satisfying product, and therefore results do not support the opposite effect (a desire to appear competent for owning positively reviewed products). This is surprisingly contradictory to existing research and warrants further investigation.

Experiment 3 experimentally examined the mediator of image concerns by manipulating the conspicuousness of the target product. Results find evidence that the effect of negative reviews on usage intentions is stronger for products that are more, compared to less, conspicuous (Interaction: $F(1,142) = 5.03$, $p < .05$). This provides support for the mediation effect of image concerns, where negative reviews increase image concerns, but when the product is less (vs. more) conspicuous the negative effect on usage intentions is weakened because the possibility of appearing incompetent is lessened.

CONCLUSION
Overall, evidence from three studies demonstrate that when consumers read negative reviews about a product that they own and are satisfied with, they are concerned about appearing as an incompetent consumer and decrease their intentions to continue using the product. Where dissonance and consumer loyalty theorists would argue that satisfied consumers should stand by their choice and defend the brand, our current results suggest that the possibility of appearing as an incompetent consumer is a powerful deterrent that robs satisfied consumers from the value they can still obtain from the possessions they personally enjoy.

REFERENCES


“I Don’t Care when I’ll Give, but I’ll Give More Later.”
Adding Time Delays Increases Donation Amounts, but Not Willingness to Donate
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Joachim Vosgerau, Bocconi University, Italy

EXTENDED ABSTRACT
We show, in five studies (N>2500), how and why adding a delay period between pledging to donate and paying for the donation can increase the amounts of money donated, but, contrary to previous studies, why it does not impact the share of people willing to donate.
Charitable giving makes people feel better (Dunn, Aknin, and Norton 2008; Andreoni 1989, 1990), but it also comes, quite literally, at a cost. While most previous research has focused on how to increase the benefits and warm glow of giving (e.g., through increased empathy, Small, Loewenstein, & Slovic, 2007), charitable giving could, theoretically, also be increased by reducing the cost of donating. Previous research has suggested that people are more willing to donate when a time-delay is added. Breman (2011) showed that people already enrolled in a monthly repeated donation plan can be made to increase their monthly donation if that increase is pledged to occur for future, and not the very next, monthly donations. This suggests that if people are already willing to donate, time delays can increase the amounts they would donate, but it does not say what would be the effect of time delays on prospective donors. Andreoni and Serra-Garcia (2016), on the other hand, showed that when the amount of donation is fixed ($5) more people would be willing to donate it if it is in the future (in one week) than today, and although some renge on their pledge, they could be made to honor it using a mix of the donation decision simultaneously and examine how adding a time delay to the donation decision impacts both willingness to donate and the amount donated (conditional on whether a person is willing to donate). We suggest and show that the amounts of donations are larger when a time-delay is added, but that this effect of time delay does not turn non-donors into donors as people’s mere willingness to donate is unchanged by the time delay.
In Study 1a (N=504), participants pledging to donate in one year ($M=$33.93, SD=$37.36) were willing to donate significantly more than those donating today ($M=$17.04, SD=$23.67) in or one month ($M=$19.68, SD=$23.63), F(2,485)=17.71, p<.001. However, only slightly more participants were willing to donate when pledging to donate in one year (91.2%) vs. in one month (83.7%) or today (82.7%, $\chi^2(2)=5.94, p=0.054$). Study 1b (N=601) replicated these results showing that participants who were asked to pay today donated substantially less ($M=$26.80) than those pledging to donate in three months ($M=$47.14, SD=$41.04), six months ($M=$52.23, SD=$43.22), or in one year ($M=$76.26, SD=$73.56), F(3, 379)=6.99, p<.001. However, no differences were found in the proportion of participants willing to today (62.7%), in three months (69.8%), in six months (60.9%) or in one year (62.3%, $\chi^2(3)=3.1, p=0.37$). To summarize, it appears that offering a time-delay in hypothetical donations increases donation amounts by magnitudes of order, but the proportion of people willing to donate remains constant across time-delays.
To determine if the delay effect is specific to monetary donations, Study 2 (N=621) compared donations of money versus time at different time-delays. Replicating the results from studies 1a and 1b, participants were willing to donate more money in six months ($M=$61.47, SD=$54.57) than today ($M=$38.62, SD=$37.22), t(199)=3.49, p=.001. Likewise, they were willing to donate more hours in six months ($M=7.06, SD=2.93$) than today ($M=5.88, SD=3.18$), t(247)=3.05, p=.003. Again, no differences in the proportion of participants willing to donate were found, when donating money, 65.6% were willing to donate today vs. 66.7% in six months, $\chi^2(1)=0.40, p=0.85$; when donating time, 80.4% were willing to donate today and in six months, $\chi^2(1)=0.00$.
Study 3 (N=201) tested whether time-delays would increase donation amounts also in a within-subjects design. After indicating the amount they would be willing to donate today or in one year (between-subjects), participants were asked how much they would donate at each of six time periods in increasing (decreasing) increments of 2 months (within-subjects). As we expected, a mixed-design ANOVA revealed a significant effect of time period on donation amounts, $F(2.28, 452.81)=21.89, p<.001$. But, as in the previous studies, time-delays did not influence the proportion of participants willing to donate: 89.4% of participants in the ascending condition (who started with donations for today) agreed to donate any amount larger than zero, compared to 88% of participants in the descending condition (who started with donating in 12 months); $\chi^2(1)=0.1, p=0.75$.
Study 4 (N=601) tested the effect with actual donations. Participants were recruited to a two-stage study taking place three weeks apart. In both stages, participants were paid a base rate of 15 cents for completing an unrelated study and an additional 45 cent bonus. At the end of the study, participants were asked whether they would be willing to donate a portion of one of their bonus payments to charity. We randomly assigned participants to donate from the bonus they would receive today (for completing stage 1) or from their bonus they would receive in three weeks (for completing stage 2). In other words, participants were randomly assigned to commit and donate today or to commit today but pay in the future (in two question formats). We found a main effect of time period such that those donating in three weeks ($M=9.01$ cents $SD=13.63$ cents) donated more than those donating today ($M=6.45$ cents $SD=12.33$ cents), $F(1,196)=5.38, p=0.021$. There was no effect of question format or timing by question format interaction ($p>0.91$) nor were their significant differences in percentage of people donating or attrition rates across conditions ($p’s<0.1$).
Thus, across five studies with over 2500 participants, we show that offering a time delay between pledging a donation and actual payment can increase donation amounts. Apart from increasing donations, pledged donations with delayed payments could also make it easier for charities to engage in long-term planning and financing of projects. Future studies should examine why people appear to be, on one hand, indifferent towards the time of payment but, at the same time, willing to donate dramatically larger amounts in the future.

REFERENCES


Reminders of Money Lead American Patients to Desire Greater Autonomy
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Miranda R. Goode, Western University, Canada

EXTENDED ABSTRACT
The rise of price transparency systems and point-of-sale payment options in the United States is increasing the frequency with which people encounter reminders of money in healthcare environments. Across four experiments, this research demonstrates that such cues may significantly impact the patient-doctor relationship by increasing patient’s desire for decision autonomy.

The recent passage of comprehensive health insurance legislation in the United States is expected to bring about major changes in how people manage and pay for their healthcare (LeCuyer & Singhal, 2007; Pellathy & Singhal, 2010). Chief among these is the rise of price transparency systems. For example, the California Department of Insurance has partnered with Consumer Reports to create a website (cahealthcompare.org) where consumers can look up the average prices for common medical procedures. Healthcare providers are also implementing online bill-paying and point-of-sale payment options—a significant shift from awaiting bills in the mail (Pellathy & Singhal, 2010).

In addition to changing how people manage their healthcare costs, these changes will also alter healthcare environments. In particular, people will more frequently encounter reminders of money when thinking about and making healthcare decisions. This is important because prior work has consistently demonstrated that merely activating the concept of money changes cognition and behavior (Gasiorowska, Chaplin, Zaleskiewicz, Wygrab, & Vohs, 2016; Vohs, 2015; Vohs, Mead, & Goode, 2006, 2008; Zhou, Vohs, & Baumeister, 2009)—suggesting that the increased prevalence of monetary cues in healthcare environments may affect how people think about and make healthcare decisions.

Generally speaking, the self-sufficiency theory of money argues that because money is a symbol of power, status, and control, encountering even subtle reminders of money can activate a self-sufficient state, wherein people seek freedom to pursue their personal goals (Vohs et al., 2006, 2008). Importantly, while it has been suggested that many of these outcomes are driven by a heightened need for autonomy (Shi, Xianglong, Wang, Chen, & Xiangping, 2013; Vohs et al., 2006), researchers have yet to explicitly test the effects of reminders of money on people’s desire for autonomy.

To address these gaps, four experiments were conducted. Experiment 1 was conducted with undergraduate students (N = 58). Participants were randomly assigned to either the money prime or control condition. The prime was delivered via a sentence-unscrambling task. In the money prime condition, half of these sentences contained costs of the procedures (the money prime condition) or not (the control condition). The experiment concluded with the same measure of empowerment used in experiment 1. Analysis revealed the money prime significantly increased participants’ sense of empowerment.

Experiment 3 explored the implications of this effect for the patient-doctor relationship. American adults (N = 74) were randomly assigned to either the money prime or control condition. The money prime manipulation was the same manipulation used in experiment 2. Desire for autonomy was measured by asking participants to indicate who should be responsible for various health-related decisions, with the endpoints of the scale ranging from the doctor alone to you alone (Ende, Kazis, Ash, & Moskowitz, 1989). Analysis revealed the money prime significantly increased participants’ desire for patient decision autonomy.

Experiment 4 was designed to test whether issue severity moderates the effect of reminders of money on desire for autonomy. American adults (N = 139) were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a 2 (prime: money vs. control) x 2 (severity: minor vs. serious) between-subjects design. The prime involved asking participants to view a new patient registration form that either requested payment information (the money prime condition) or not (the control condition). The severity manipulation was embedded in the measure of desire for autonomy. Specifically, participants were told to imagine they asked their doctor for a prescription they saw advertised on TV for a “minor” (or “severe”) health condition, but their doctor refused to provide the prescription (Bell, Wilkes, & Kravitz, 1999). We then measured state reactance (Dillard & Shen, 2005; Erceg-Hurn & Steed, 2011; Quick, Scott, & Ledbetter, 2011) and anticipated responses to the doctor’s refusal (Bell et al., 1999). Analysis revealed the money prime significantly increased participants’ reactance, which subsequently increased the likelihood that participants would react negatively. Importantly, this effect was moderated by the severity of the condition; when the condition was severe, the effect of the money prime was not significant.

Taken as a whole, these experiments demonstrate that when people are primed with reminders of money, it increases their desire for autonomy, which can significantly impact health-related outcomes. In doing so, the current research uses psychological theory and methods to inform a highly debated, but experimentally untested, phenomenon (Folkes, 2002; Goldstein & Bowers, 2015; Krugman, 2011; Reeder, 1972). It is also the first to provide direct evidence that reminders of money can influence people’s desire for autonomy.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We define pickiness and develop a scale to measure this trait. We find that pickier shoppers form smaller consideration set, exhibit less product-switching behavior, and are more likely to spread negative word of mouth. In addition, pickier shoppers care about a wider range of horizontal attributes than maximizers.

Shoppers are “picky” across a range of contexts. From deciding which groceries to buy (Catalina Marketing 2013), to which person to date (Gottlieb 2011), to which funds to invest in (Hauserman 1998), where there is selection, there are picky shoppers. Firms have attributed several business challenges to shopper pickiness. McKinsey reports that an important challenge over the next 30 years will be to satisfy picky consumers (Benson-Armer, Noble, and Thiel 2015).

The word “picky” originated in 1867 (Oxford English Dictionary 2017) and at its root is “to pick,” which suggests that being picky is inextricably linked with selection and entails a degree of excessiveness in the act of picking (Etymology Dictionary 2017). Yet despite how this construct is colloquially understood, important to marketers, and highly related to making choices, no research in consumer psychology has defined pickiness and discussed how it impacts decision making. In ten studies, we define the construct and a method to measure it, and explore how this individual difference relates to various other consumer behaviors.

We theorize that there are two underlying factors associated with the picky shopper (e.g., PP and FS), these factors drawn from literature fields outside of consumer psychology, such as clinical and food psychology (e.g., Mallinger 2009; Dovey et al. 2008). The first factor, “precise preferences” (PP), suggests that picky shoppers tend to articulate exactly what they want in great detail. This precision implies that for these individuals, there is little tolerance for error or compromise. As an example of someone who fits the PP factor is a shopper who goes into a store seeking for a predetermined set of attributes. This shopper is rigid in his desire to choose a product that perfectly matches the ideal product in his head. The second factor, “flaw sensitivity” (FS), suggests having a heightened awareness of negative attributes in available options. High FS individuals tend to dwell on the attributes that they subjectively do not like in existing alternatives. An example of someone who is high on the FS factor is a shopper who goes into a store to examine a large range of products, but ultimately has a difficult time committing to anything because he sees an intolerable attribute in each alternative. We believe that both PP and FS contribute to being a picky shopper.

In studies 1a-1d, we use this 2-factor structure to develop a scale designed to assess shopper pickiness. This included item generation, EFA, and CFA to develop and purify a 10 item scale (5 items each for PP and FS). In the EFA stage, we find both factors (PP and FS) emerge (Scree) to explain 50% of the total variance. In the CFA stage, the statistics (CFI = .97, NNFI = .96, RMSEA = .07, RMR = .05) suggest the scale has good fit. Additionally, each factor has a reliability of α>.85 across studies and a composite reliability of ρ ≈ .90. Individuals scoring high on PP who had formed preferences but had not yet made a choice were less likely to be swayed by information signaling the popularity of a foregone option (t=-.48, p<.01). Individuals who scored high on FS were more irritated by a superficial blemish on a purchased product (t=3.84, p<.01) and were more likely to return the product (t=3.38, p<.01). Finally, pickier shoppers (based on both factors of the scale) form smaller consideration sets (t=-1.98, p<.05).

In study 3, we directly compare the pickier shopper against those categorized as maximizers (Schwartz et al. 2002). We view maximizers, people who desire to get the very best, as a group of individuals that is distinct from picky shoppers, despite how both groups may exhibit choice selectivity. We found in this study that the Picky Shopper scale predicts how much individuals care about horizontally-distinguished product attributes, attributes whose levels are unrankable (t=3.84, p<.01) while the maximizer scale does not (t=-.03, p=.98). The findings highlight differences between being picky versus being a maximizer, and illustrate a unique predictive ability of the Picky Shopper scale.

In study 4, we investigate whether shoppers who are high on factors of pickiness in one domain tended to be high on those factors in other domains as well, questioning whether pickiness is a general trait that transcends shopping domains. Participants first completed four domain-specific versions of the picky shopper scale where they rated their pickiness on home goods, fashion products, entertainment products, and food. We conducted a CFA model, setting each domain’s PP and FS measures as indicators (8 total indicators), and PP and FS as latent variables. Our CFA model was a good fit χ²(15)=21.87, p>10; RMSEA=.06, CFI=.99, NNFI=.98. Results suggests that the domain-specific PP measures are closely related and measure the same latent factor; similarly the domain-specific FS measures hang together as well to measure a different latent factor.

The proliferation of product choice in global marketplaces opens many doors for modern consumers to be pickier than ever before. Identifying which shoppers are more likely to exhibit choice selectivity as well as deviate from shopping norms (e.g., shop only for a precise item in mind; reject all alternatives because of perceived flaws) is of interest to marketers who interact with this segment. Our research states that pickiness exists as an individual difference, and this individual difference is directly related to several ways people form perceptions and make decisions.

REFERENCES


Product Search in Retail Environments: Influence of Vertical Product Location on Search Performance

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We explore product search on shelves with large assortments. Specifically, we investigate how the vertical shelf location of a product influences search performance. We provide initial evidence that the middle shelf is a location of disadvantage when compared to top and bottom shelves, while the bottom shelf has an advantage.

In the current paper, we focus on the task of visual search of a target product on a shelf with a large assortment. We investigate how the vertical location (VL) of a product on a crowded shelf (i.e., shelf with a large assortment) influences consumers’ product search performance. We provide initial evidence that, when the task is to find a target product, the middle shelf (MS) is a position of disadvantage, when compared to both the top shelf (TS) and the bottom shelf (BS).

In a product choice context, products on MS and TS have been shown to get more attention and more positive evaluation (Chandon et al. 2009; Valenzuela and Raghubir 2009; Atalay et al. 2012). The influence of shelf location on product search remains underexplored. We explore location based effects on product search.

As the number of objects in any scene increases, individuals’ ability to distinguish the objects in that scene, from one another, is reduced (Levi 2008). Crowding effect refers to the impaired ability to differentiate objects in a scene from one another by way of two mechanisms: anisotropy and asymmetry (Levi 2008; Whitney and Levi 2010). Anisotropy is the difference in the strength of the crowding effect based on object location, and suggests that the crowding effect is stronger in the upper than in the lower visual field (He et al. 1996). Hence, the ability to identify an object is improved when the object is in the lower visual field. Asymmetry refers to the role of surrounding (flanker) objects: a target is more difficult to identify when it is presented with two flankers, positioned one on each side of the target, than when it is presented with only one flanker on one side (Bouma 1970). For instance, letter recognition tasks have shown that the outer letters in a list of letters are easier to recognize than the inner letters, thus pointing to an “inner-outer asymmetry” and the “inward-outward anisotropy” of crowding (Bouma 1973).

We explore the crowding effect in a retail context, and predict that: When the task is to find a target product on a crowded shelf, products on MS will have a disadvantage, when compared to both TS and BS (H1); When the task is to find a target product on a crowded shelf, products on BS will have an advantage, when compared to both TS and MS (H2).

Note that we focus only on the vertical dimension, as there are no established differences when comparing the left and right visual field in crowding studies (Bouma 1973).

In the first study, 668 MTURK participants were asked to find a target (i.e., “sugar free” jam) among 25 different jams. The location of the target was manipulated in a between-participant design. On a 5x5 planogram, we rotated the target across the jams on TS, on MS, and on BS. Search difficulty was measured by search task duration, the perceived duration of the task, the perceived task difficulty, and the satisfaction with task duration. Results showed a main effect of VL on task duration, perceived duration of the task, perceived task difficulty, and satisfaction with task duration. Planned comparisons suggested that the MS is a position of disadvantage for product search.

In the second study, 127 participants completed the study on a lab computer, and were asked to find the toothpaste for smokers on a shelf of 15 toothpastes arranged on a 3(columns) x 5(shaelves) planogram. The VL of the target was manipulated in a between-participant design. Results of a two-way MANOVA showed a significant effect of VL on task duration, perceived task difficulty, and satisfaction with task duration. Planned comparisons again suggested that the MS is a position of disadvantage in product search.

Eye-movement data showed that, when the target is on MS, the total number of fixations needed to explore the planogram is the highest, the total duration of all fixations is longest, and the total duration of fixations that land on the target (i.e., total time needed to look at the target before recognizing it and completing the task) is the longest. Furthermore, although the time to first fixation on the target did not differ significantly when the target was on MS or BS, the time elapsed since the first fixation on the target until the end of the task was shorter when the target was on BS than when it was on MS. This suggests that, when the product is on MS or BS, even though it takes the same time to see the target product for the first time, the time necessary to recognize the target and complete the task is longer when the target is on MS. These results provide further evidence that when the target product is on MS, as opposed to TS or BS, search is harder.

A follow-up study, with a more pictorially depicted target that didn’t necessarily require reading to be found, provided additional evidence. Forty-nine participants searched for a box of almond-flavored cookies on a 5x5 planogram of cookies. Results confirmed that, when the target was on MS, rather than on TS or BS, the search task takes longest to complete.

Taken together, the studies provide support for H1 and partial support for H2, and provide evidence for location effects on product search. While in a choice context the lower visual field is regarded as a position of disadvantage and the middle as a position of advantage, our results suggest that when the task is to search for a target, MS may not be the best location for a product, while BS gains value.

We believe the question of product search is relevant for consumers, retailers, and brand managers: consider the possible consequences of difficult and frustrating search experiences, such as product-switching or retailer-switching. Furthermore, considering the ever-growing number of products offered, while the store’s physical space remains constant, retailers are forced to expand their shelf space by moving in the vertical direction. This invites for further research on VL effects.

REFERENCES


Building Corporate Social Responsibility Reputations – a Buffer or a Liability when Facing Corporate Ethical Transgressions?

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This research contributes to the inconclusive debate in the field of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on whether a favorable CSR reputation helps or hurts companies when facing later accusations of corporate ethical transgressions. For instance, car manufacturer Volkswagen had trumpeted low emissions of their diesel cars in marketing campaigns, followed by the well-known emissions scandal in 2015 (Federal Trade Commission, 2016). In this research, we explore the influence of mixed (i.e. positive and negative) CSR information on consumer attitudes towards firms by investigating how a firm’s prior CSR reputation affects consumer responses to evidence of corporate ethical transgressions. We find that a positive CSR reputation can act as a buffer against negative reactions to unethical behavior— but it can also backfire, causing a precipitous fall from grace when a firm’s transgression directly contradicts its reputation.

Our research reconciles contradictory theories and findings on this topic from past studies within a theoretical framework based on the principles of expectancy-disconfirmation in comparative judgments (e.g., Oliver, 1977, 1980) and the weighting of extreme values in information integration models (e.g., Anderson, 1974; Fiske, 1980). We propose two causes for the mixed evidence regarding the effect of prior CSR reputation on consumer responses to corporate transgressions: (1) illusory differences caused by varying cross-study operationalizations of the consequences of transgressions (i.e. outcome variables used), and (2) true differences explained by a previously unexamined moderator—the relatedness of the firm’s transgression domain to its domain of CSR reputation. First, we note that extant studies supporting a buffering effect of a positive (CSR) reputation largely focus on differences between firms in final outcomes, comparing post-transgression attitudes towards firms with positive (prior) reputations versus those with no or negative (prior) reputations (cf. Coombs & Holladay, 2006; Eisengierich et al., 2010). However, studies suggesting that a positive CSR reputation can turn into a liability largely focus on change in attitude or behavior after a transgression, relative to a firm’s pre-transgression state (cf. Helm & Tolsdorf, 2014; Vanhamme et al., 2015). In our research, we measure both pre- and post-transgression attitudes for firms with positive, negative, and no CSR reputations. We hypothesize that a positive CSR reputation can provide a buffer in terms of final (post-transgression) outcomes, while backfiring in terms of pre- versus post-transgression attitude change. These effects will depend, however, on whether the transgression domain is similar to the domain of the CSR reputation.

Second, because expectations set a reference point for evaluating outcomes (e.g., Oliver, 1977, 1980; Skowronski & Carlston, 1989), and more unexpected or extreme information is weighted more heavily in information integration processes (e.g., Anderson 1971, 1974; Feldman & Lynch 1988; Fiske 1980), we expect that the ‘relatedness’ of an ethical transgression to a firm’s domain of CSR reputation will interact with the valence of this reputation to influence consumer attitudes. Evidence of transgressions in the same domain as the firm’s positive CSR reputation directly contradicts the firm’s reputation, thereby violating expectations (Afifi & Metts, 1998), and hence gaining in diagnosticity. Unrelated transgressions are likely to be less surprising because they do not contradict consumers’ existing beliefs and, additionally, consumers may expect that firms cannot perform well in all domains simultaneously. For firms with positive CSR reputations in a given domain (e.g., voluntarily paying a “living wage”), we expect stronger negative responses to transgressions in a related domain (i.e. sweatshop labor), relative to an unrelated domain (e.g. pollution). We used a 3 (CSR reputation: positive, negative, no) × 3 (transgression domain: no transgression, same domain, unrelated domain) between-subjects design. 443 U.S. participants (56.7% male) were randomly assigned to one of the three CSR reputation conditions in the domain of ‘paying (un)fair wages’, and to one of three ethical transgressions (sweatshop scandal – related domain; pollution scandal – unrelated domain; no transgression). Our dependent variable was attitude towards the firm (Wagner et al., 2009).

A 3 × 3 omnibus ANOVA revealed significant main effects of CSR reputation (F(2,434) = 111.38, p < .001) and transgression condition (F(2,434) = 275.54, p < .001) on consumer attitudes, as well as a significant interaction (F(4,434) = 42.58, p < .001). See table for means and standard deviations. We conducted pairwise comparisons of final, post-transgression attitudes across the three CSR reputation conditions (positive, negative, no CSR): for unrelated transgressions, attitudes were significantly higher for a firm with positive CSR reputation, compared to a firm without CSR reputation (p < .001), suggesting a buffer effect. No significant difference (p=.43) between positive and no CSR was found for related transgressions. Moreover, post-transgression attitudes towards firms with positive CSR reputations were significantly lower following transgressions in a related domain relative to an unrelated domain (p < .001).

To test the second operationalization of transgression consequences, we conducted a series of interaction contrasts. Although the drop from pre- to post-transgression attitude was significant for unrelated transgressions for both, positive and no CSR reputations, the mean differences for attitude change were similar, hence non-significant, across positive and no CSR reputation conditions (F(1,434) = 0.10, p = .76). However, for related transgressions, the mean difference was significantly higher for a firm with positive CSR reputation compared to a firm without CSR reputation (F(1,434) = 6.44, p = .003), indicating a backfire effect.

Concluding, when comparing firms with positive and no CSR reputations in terms of final, post-transgression outcomes, a positive CSR reputation can buffer firms from negative responses, but only if transgressions are unrelated from the domain of the reputation. This buffer effect is in line with expectancy confirmation perspectives, which suggest that individuals resist negative information when they

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transgression</th>
<th>Reputations</th>
<th>positive</th>
<th>negative</th>
<th>no CSR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweatshop (related)</td>
<td>2.04 (1.40)</td>
<td>1.77 (1.07)</td>
<td>1.85 (1.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollution (unrelated)</td>
<td>2.80 (1.34)</td>
<td>1.28 (0.56)</td>
<td>1.76 (1.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No transgression</td>
<td>6.36 (1.01)</td>
<td>2.23 (1.42)</td>
<td>5.22 (1.22)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Means & standard deviations of planned contrast for attitude
have learned favorable information about a person or entity before (Coombs & Holladay, 2006; Darley & Fazio, 1980). On the downside, however, we show that the buffer effect disappears—and even backfires—after a transgression when considering the change in attitude, and when the transgression domain is in the same domain as the CSR reputation.

REFERENCES


Four studies demonstrate that product-linked cause marketing is more effective in engaging materialists than is donation-linked cause marketing, but not for value brands, and regardless of the product value. Higher altruistic possessiveness of the product-linked cause marketing is effective in satisfying status-seeking needs of materialists. 

Luxury brands have started to conduct cause-related marketing, which is a marketing activity that links product sales to supporting a charity or charitable cause (Andrews et al. 2014). To maximize the effectiveness of cause marketing (CM), luxury brands must consider the traits of their consumers. Materialists are the primary target customers of luxury brands (Richins 2004), but are reluctant to help others (Belk 1985). 

We propose that launching an exclusive cause-related product for the cause (product-linked CM) is more effective than linking donation campaigns to the brands’ existing conventional products (donation-linked CM) in engaging materialistic consumers. Materialists attempt to construct their self-identity through possessions (Shrum et al. 2013), so they should prefer to help others through prosocial behaviors that involve altruistic possession. Charity logos on cause-related products increase altruistic possessiveness of product-linked CM. We also propose that purchasing luxury cause-related products can be an effective way for materialists to satisfy their need for status, because both luxury consumption and prosocial behavior are status-related behaviors (Mandel et al. 2006). 

In four studies, we show that materialists prefer product-linked CM over donation-linked CM, but non-materialists do not. This preference is observed only when the CM involves a luxury (vs. value) brand, and regardless of the monetary value of the product. We further show that materialists prefer product-linked CM because it is more effective in satisfying their status-seeking need than is donation-linked CM.

STUDY 1

In study 1, we test the hypothesis that materialists prefer product-linked CM to donation-linked CM for a luxury brand. Participants were given a description of a CM campaign (supporting Haiti children) in a premium take-away coffee shop that manipulated whether the campaign was product-linked or donation-linked (random assignment). In the product-linked CM condition, participants were told that they help the cause by purchasing cause-related coffee ($6) instead of conventional coffee ($4). In the donation-linked CM condition, participants were told that they can be engaged by donating $2 when purchasing a $4 coffee. Participants then indicated their willingness to engage in the campaign and their level of materialism (Richins 2004) on a 9-point scale.

As predicted, highly materialistic participants (i.e., +1 SD) showed a higher level of willingness to purchase the cause-related coffee than to donate, but less materialistic participants (i.e., −1 SD) revealed an opposite pattern.

STUDY 2

In study 2, we examine boundary conditions for the effect observed in study 1, and manipulated rather than measured materialism. We predict that the preference for product-linked CM to donation-linked CM of materialists will be observed when the campaign is conducted by a luxury brand but not a value brand. Participants were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (prime: materialism vs. religion) × 2 (CM type: product-linked vs. donation-linked) × 2 (brand type: luxury vs. value) design. Participants in the materialism-primed condition were asked to imagine a situation in which they won a lottery (Kim 2013), whereas participants in the religion-primed condition were told to imagine a situation in which they stayed at a temple to experience Buddhist culture. Then participants were given the coffee CM campaign description (study 1) and the luxury versus value brand manipulation, which manipulated whether the coffee was premium priced ($4) or value priced ($2). Participants then indicated their willingness to engage in each campaign.

As predicted, for the luxury brand condition, participants in the materialism-primed condition showed a higher level of willingness to engage in the purchase of the cause-related coffee, whereas the reverse was found in the religion-primed condition. However, for the value brand condition, participants in the materialism-primed condition had a higher level of willingness to engage in donation but participants in the religion-primed condition showed no differences.

STUDY 3

In the previous studies, the cause-related products were described as more expensive than the conventional products. In study 3, we held the monetary value of the products constant. To do so, we told participants in the donation-linked condition that donors would receive a small gift (i.e., cap with a charity logo) that was monetarily equivalent to the amount they donated. Luxury sneakers ($250) were the product. Participants were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (prime: materialism vs. religion) × 2 (CM type: product-linked vs. donation-linked) design. Participants were given the priming manipulation (study 2) and a luxury sneakers CM campaign description. Participants then indicated their willingness to engage in each campaign.

As predicted, materialism-primed participants preferred to purchase cause-related sneakers than to donate. However, there was no significant difference for the religion-primed participants.

STUDY 4

The objective of study 4 is to test the process hypothesis (via moderation-of-process method), that materialists’ preference for product-linked CM is due to its higher altruistic possessiveness that satisfies the materialists’ status-seeking needs. Thus, we manipulated participants’ self-status perception (boost vs. no boost), and expected that when materialists’ self-status perception is boosted, their preference for product-linked CM should be reduced or eliminated. Participants were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (prime: status-boost vs. no prime) × 2 (CM type: product-linked vs. donation-linked) design. Participants were given a description of a CM campaign (supporting Greenpeace) in a luxury writing instrument store that manipulated whether the campaign was product-linked or donation-linked. Participants then indicated their willingness to engage in each campaign and their level of materialism (Richins 2004).
As predicted, the result of the no-prime condition replicated study 1. However, for the status-boost prime condition, there was no significant difference between the highly materialistic (i.e., +1 SD) and less materialistic (i.e., −1 SD) participants. These results suggest that product-linked CM serves as an effective way to increase self-status perception for materialists, but not for non-materialists.

**CONCLUSION**

Our research shows that the product-linked CM is more effective than the donation-linked CM as a form of luxury brand CM to engage materialistic consumers. It further demonstrates that materialists link the altruistic possessiveness to their self-status perception.

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An Empirical Analysis of Consumers’ Perceptions of Luxury Brands’ CSR initiatives

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the effect of luxury companies’ CSR initiatives on consumers’ willingness to buy luxury products. External CSR initiatives, related to legal and philanthropic dimensions, are more effective than internal ones, related to economic and ethical dimensions. This effect is particularly strong for consumers with a status-oriented luxury approach.

INTRODUCTION

The pressure for luxury firms to devote more attention to sustainability initiatives has increased in the last decade (Davies, Lee, and Ahonkhai 2012; Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau 2014; Janssen et al. 2014). Many luxury companies have made Corporate Social Responsibility (hereafter, CSR) a prominent component of their marketing strategies. Perhaps surprisingly, corporate behavior is somewhat at odds with findings in the academic literature, which suggests that CSR might decrease luxury brand image (Torelli, Monga, and Kaikati 2012). Indeed, luxury and sustainability may be perceived as conflicting concepts (Achabou and Dekhili 2013; Griskevicius, Tybur, and Van den Bergh 2010).

The present research seeks to reconcile this conceptual conflict by examining whether and under what conditions consumers might react positively to CSR initiatives undertaken by luxury companies. Extending the well-established multidimensional model of CSR proposed by Carroll (1979, 1991), we categorize the four CSR dimensions (i.e., economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic) as internal versus external. Initiatives in the realm of the economic and ethical dimensions typically regard objectives that influence the company internally, thus are less visible to consumers. Initiatives in the realm of the legal and philanthropic dimensions typically concern objectives that regard external stakeholders, thus are more visible to consumers. Thus legal and philanthropic (external) initiatives are inherently more noticeable and visible to consumers than economic and ethical (internal) initiatives (e.g., Pino et al. 2016).

In three studies, conducted in multiple settings (lab, field, and online), we find evidence that, since luxury products are mainly instrumental to signal one’s status in social contexts (Han, Nunes, and Dréze 2010; Wang and Griskevicius 2014), external CSR initiatives, developed by luxury brands, are more likely to increase consumers’ willingness to buy (WTB) luxury products than internal ones.

Moreover, we contribute to the literature by showing that the effectiveness of external versus internal CSR initiatives in driving consumers’ WTB luxury products depends upon consumers’ approach to luxury. Indeed, consumers may buy luxury goods either to make it visible to others that they have status and prestige, or to fulfill their personal taste and style (e.g., Amatulli, Guido, and Nataraajan 2015; Han et al. 2010). We hypothesize that luxury brands’ actions related to external CSR dimensions may be particularly appealing to consumers who buy luxury products mainly to elevate their social position (i.e., “status consumption”) and those who like consuming visible products (i.e., “conspicuous consumption”). Status and conspicuous consumption differ because the former is affected by self-monitoring while the latter by interpersonal influences (O’cass and McEwen 2004). To test our predictions, we conducted three experiments.

METHOD AND FINDINGS

Study 1 was conducted in a laboratory setting and explored the effect of external (vs. internal) CSR dimensions communicated by a luxury brand on consumers’ WTB a product of that brand. The study utilized a two-cell (CSR dimensions: internal vs. external) between-subjects design. Participants were randomly assigned to read one of two scenarios describing CSR initiatives of a fictitious luxury brand. In the internal condition, they read about two initiatives regarding the economic and the ethical CSR dimensions. In the external CSR condition, participants read a scenario describing two initiatives regarding the legal and the philanthropic CSR dimensions. Participants were then asked to assess the “luxuriousness” of the brand using the Brand Luxury Index (BLI) scale (Vigneron and Johnson 2004). Finally, participants reported their WTB from the brand (Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal 1991). We employed the PROCESS SPSS Macro (Hayes 2013) to estimate a mediation model. The BLI served as a mediator in the relationship between the CSR dimensions and WTB. The results showed a significant effect (b = .32, t(116) = 2.15, p = .03) of CSR dimensions (-1 = internal; 1 = external) on the BLI and of the BLI on the WTB (b = .52, t(116) = 3.87, p < .001). Importantly, the results revealed a non-significant (p = .76) direct effect of CSR dimensions on the WTB, but a significant and positive indirect effect of CSR dimensions on the WTB via the BLI (b = .06, 95% confidence interval: .02, .42).

Study 2 explored the moderating role of consumers’ tendency to buy products for status-signaling reasons, testing if there is a significant interaction effect between CSR dimensions (internal vs. external) and such a consumers’ dispositional trait on consumers’ WTB. In this field study, participants were intercepted in a luxury mall. They were first asked to complete a status consumption measure (Eastman, Goldsmith, and Flynn 1999) and then randomly assigned to one of the two CSR dimensions scenarios, as in Study 1. Finally, WTB was measured. Results showed a significant interaction between CSR dimensions and consumers’ status consumption (b = .23, t(118) = 3.62, p < .001). The effect of CSR dimensions was stronger for high levels of status consumption (b = 1.11, t(118) = 8.90, p < .001) compared to medium (b = .79, t(118) = 9.03, p < .001) and low levels (b = .47, t(118) = 3.83, p < .001). This result suggests that status consumption acts as a catalyst of the effect of CSR dimensions on WTB, as the magnitude is greater for high status consumption consumers.

Study 3 explores the moderating role of consumers’ conspicuous consumption. Participants completed an online questionnaire with the same experimental design and manipulations of Study 1 and 2. They were first asked to complete a measure of conspicuous consumption (Roy Chaudhuri, Mazumdar, and Ghoshal 2011) and then to read the scenario. Finally, their WTB was measured. Results showed a significant interaction between type of CSR dimensions and consumers’ conspicuous consumption (b = .25, t(218) = 2.40, p = .01). Conditional effects of CSR dimensions on WTB at different levels of conspicuous consumption revealed that the effect of external CSR dimensions on WTB is significant (b = .51, t(218) = 2.17, p = .03) only for consumers that are high in conspicuous consumption.

Findings suggest that external CSR initiatives may enhance consumers’ WTB from a luxury brand. This effect is mediated by...
consumers’ perceptions of brands’ luxuriousness, and moderated by consumers’ dispositional status and conspicuous consumption.

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When the Face of Need Backfires: The Impact of Facial Emotional Expression on the Effectiveness of Cause-Related Marketing Advertisements

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We demonstrate that, in cause-related marketing (CRM) advertisements, displaying the image of a person in need with sad (vs. happy and neutral) expressions leads consumers to infer stronger manipulative intent of the advertisement, which lowers its effectiveness. The effect is moderated by consumers’ skepticism towards CRM and cause-centrality.

In cause-related advertisements that encourage consumer support for charitable causes either by donation or by CRM purchase (i.e., the purchase of a product is linked to support for charitable causes), organizations often display the image of a victim, whose facial expression may vary. Small and Verrochi (2009) showed that an image of a sad-faced (vs. happy-faced or neutral-faced) victim increased sympathy towards the victim, increasing donations. Thus, there appears to be a benefit of displaying a sad-faced image.

However, little research examines the potential negative effects of sad facial expression. We address this gap by demonstrating that a sad-faced (vs. happy-faced or neutral-faced) image evokes consumer inference of the organization’s manipulative intent, defined as “consumer inferences that the advertiser is using inappropriate or manipulative tactics” (Campbell 1995). We build on several research streams to make this proposition. First, consumers have a chronic goal to maintain positive feelings and to improve negative feelings (e.g., sadness; Lazarus and Folkman 1984). When consumers encounter a sad-faced image, they may perceive that the organization is forcing them to experience a negative, aversive emotion to achieve its self-interested goal (increasing fundraising/purchase). Second, research in anthropology suggests that organizations’ practice of displaying images of others’ suffering (e.g., sadness) is viewed as trivializing that suffering as an attention-grabbing hook (Kleinman and Kleinman 1996). Hence consumers will infer more manipulative intent from the sad-faced image.

We propose that the inference of manipulative intent, along with sympathy (Small and Verrochi 2009), mediate the effect of facial expression on ad effectiveness, measured by ad evaluation, organization evaluation, and helping intention (CRM purchase and donation). Reflecting different characteristics of the effectiveness measures and mediators, we draw different predictions for ad/organization evaluations than for helping intentions. One relevant difference is that helping behavior (vs. ad/organization evaluations) is more directly related to the motivation to enhance the welfare of victims (Bagozzi and Moore 1994). However, all three effectiveness measures are related to how consumers perceive the organization. For example, consumers’ inferences that an organization is manipulative reduces their ad/organization evaluation, and their willingness to support the organization by purchasing a product (Campbell 1995). Because inference of manipulative intent is the consumer’s response towards the organization, while sympathy is the consumer’s response to the victim, we expect that inference of manipulative intent will impact ad/organization evaluations and helping intentions, while sympathy will only affect helping intentions. Importantly, the effects of sympathy and manipulative intent on helping intentions operate in opposing directions with sympathy increasing helping intentions and manipulative intent reducing helping intentions.

We hypothesize that a sad-faced (vs. happy-faced or neutral-faced) image will lower ad/organization evaluations (H1) due to mediation by manipulative intent (H2). Inference of manipulative intent and sympathy will mediate the effect of facial expression on helping intentions, but in opposing directions, which may produce no effect of facial expression on helping (H3). We expect the proposed effects to be the same for advertisements by for-profit and nonprofit organizations because consumers perceive both organizations as persuasion agents, who can be manipulative to achieve their goals (Cotte et al. 2005; Seu and Orgard 2014).

Three studies tested H1-H3 using cause-related advertisements by for-profit and nonprofit organizations, using images of different children. In these studies, participants viewed a one-page advertisement with the image of a child with specific facial expression. Study 1 used a CRM advertisement by for-profit organization, which stated that proceeds from the purchase of a granola bar would be donated to hungry kids. The image of a child with either a happy, neutral, or sad expression was displayed. Study 2 generalized the findings to a non-profit CRM context using a 2 (facial expression: neutral, sad) x 2 (organization type: for-profit, nonprofit) between-subjects design. Study 3 further generalized the findings by including a condition where the non-profit organization solicited a donation.

In all studies, ad/organization evaluations were significantly lower in the sad (vs. neutral and happy) conditions (H1). There was no difference between neutral and happy conditions. For ad/organization evaluations, only the inference of manipulative intent significantly mediated (H2). For helping intentions, the effect of facial expression was not significant. This was because the indirect effects of inference of manipulative intent and distress were both significant but in opposite directions (H3). Moreover, in studies 2-3, the interaction between facial expression and organization/ad type was not significant, suggesting that the facial expression effects hold in advertising by for-profit and nonprofit organizations. We ruled out several alternative explanations (warmth and competence of the organization, outcome efficacy, and attractiveness of a child).

In studies 4-5, we provide more support for the manipulativeness mechanism by examining two theoretically relevant moderators. Skepticism towards CRM reflects consumers’ tendency towards disbelief of CRM claims. More skeptical consumers are more likely to perceive a potentially suspicious tactic (e.g., sad-faced image) as manipulative (Kirmani and Zhu 2007). Thus, the negative effect of sad facial expression should be larger for consumers with higher skepticism towards CRM. As expected, study 4 revealed a significant interaction between facial expression (sad vs. happy) and skepticism towards CRM on ad/organization evaluation and helping intentions. Cause centrality captures whether the advertisement is cause-focused or product-focused. Cause-focused ads feature the cause (e.g., victim’s image) at the focal point of the advertisement and the promoted product at the secondary point, while product-focused ads feature the product at the focal point and the cause at the secondary point (Chang 2012). When the organization positions the cause element as the focal point, consumers will infer that the organization intentionally focused consumers on the sad-faced image, and infer high manipulative intent. Thus, the negative effect of sad facial expression should be stronger in the cause-focused (vs. product-focused) ad. As
expected, study 5 revealed a significant interaction between facial expression and cause-centrality on ad/organization evaluations.

Overall, we provide a comprehensive framework of the effect of facial expression by considering the effects of two mediators and by identifying two moderators. By doing so, we uncover a nuanced effect that sad facial expression produces negative effects on ad/organization evaluations but weaker effects on helping intention.

REFERENCES
Working Papers

The Negative Effect of Sharing Hedonic Customization Experiences on Satisfaction

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Salvador Ruiz-de-Maya, School of Business and Economics, University of Murcia, Spain
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Companies frequently allow consumers to customize products. We explore the effect of sharing one’s customization experience (with a friend) on satisfaction. Notably, the effect depends on the type of customization. Whereas sharing one’s experience (versus not sharing) decreases satisfaction for hedonic customization, it has no impact for utilitarian customization.

The Consumer-Crowd Dynamic: How Individuals Navigate Crowd Consumption Activities

Robert Arias, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA
Cele Otnes, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA
Linda Tuncay, Loyola University Chicago, USA
Eileen Fischer, York University, Canada

Consumer experiences often involve crowds, but such contexts are overlooked in the discipline. We study crowd participation in an ideologically-based context, namely, the Women’s March movement. Analyzing data from focus groups, we leverage practice theory to understand how consumers navigate, interpret, and participate in crowd practices.

Managing Multiple Consumer Credits: Effects of Cognitive Load and Goal Representation on Repayment Strategies

Michael Blens, University of Cologne, Germany
Erik Hoelzl, University of Cologne, Germany

The number of purchases financed by consumer credit as well as the number of open credit accounts consumers hold simultaneously is rising. Literature indicates that people do not repay multiple credits rationally, but show debt-account-aversion. We confirm suboptimal repayment behavior and document influence of cognitive load on repayment strategies.

The Effect of Speed on Satisfaction: Expectation-based and Salience-based Counterfactuals

João Niza Braga, Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics, Portugal
Sofia Jacinto, ISCTE-IUL/CIS-IUL, Portugal

Counterfactuals thoughts can guide consumers emotional judgments and may be based on previous expectations regarding the event (McGraw, Mellers & Tetlock, 2005) or on cognitively salient alternatives (Medvec, Madey, & Gilovich, 1995). The present study suggests that salience-based counterfactuals are faster to compute than expectation-based counterfactuals.

Effects of Awe on Consumer Healthy Food Choices

Fei Cao, Renmin University of China, China
Xia Wang, Renmin University of China, China
Ze Wang, University of Central Florida, USA

This research investigates when, how, and why consumers’ feelings of awe impact their food preferences. Findings in three empirical studies indicate that awe enhances preferences for healthy products versus unhealthy counterparts. This effect is mediated by the analytical processing associated with awe and moderated by consumers’ chronic information processing style.
When Prominent Logos Can Create Value

Sara Caprioli, TU Munich, Germany
Christoph Fuchs, TU Munich, Germany
Nailya Ordabayeva, Boston College, USA

Past research has shown instances when the use of prominent logos can lead to negative consumer reactions. In this research, we show instances when this effect reverses. Seven studies demonstrate that in case products have a performance-related component, consumers have a stronger preference for products with big versus small logos.

Embarrassed While Ordering Food? Role of Calorie Posting and Social Context

Melis Ceylan, Koc University, Turkey
Nilufer Aydinoglu, Koc University, Turkey
Vicki Morwitz, New York University, USA

We demonstrate that whether or not calorie information lowers the total calorie of food orders depends on the social (public-private) nature of the situation. We further show that this joint effect of calorie information and social context occurs through motivations of impression management as ordering excessive calories might increase embarrassment.

Carpe Diem! Hedonic Experiences Facilitate the Disregard of Sunk Costs

Daniela Cristian, BI Norwegian Business School, Norway
Bob Fennis, University of Groningen, The Netherlands
Luk Warlop, BI Norwegian Business School, Norway

Besides enjoyment, hedonic consumption leads to myopic behaviors and enhances a present-moment orientation. This seemingly “myopic” focus reduces the consideration of past and leads to positive outcomes. We show that following hedonic consumption consumers display lower sensitivity to sunk costs. Thus, under particular conditions, embracing hedonics is beneficial.

How Consumers React to Tattooed Brand Displays: An Optimal Assimilation/Distinctiveness Perspective

Sandor Czellar, University of Lausanne, Switzerland
David E. Sprott, Washington State University, USA
Bill Ding, Washington State University, USA
Eric R. Spangenberg, University of California at Irvine, USA

While consumers often display tattooed brand elements on their bodies, little is known about how others react to such displays. We propose a conceptual model based on optimal distinctiveness theory that explains consumer reactions to such brand displays in terms of perceptions of the other person and the focal brand.

Media-Specific Persuasion Knowledge of Social Network Sites Users: An Exploratory Study

Jonas Foehr, University of Bayreuth, Germany
Claas Christian Germelmann, University of Bayreuth, Germany

We investigate whether consumers possess media-specific persuasion knowledge and how it is structured. In an exploratory qualitative study, we identified endemic knowledge structures related to persuasion attempts in social network sites: Our findings suggest that perceived media mechanisms, agent and tactic knowledge interrelate to form media-specific knowledge structures.
Increasing Public Transport Use by Labeling Consumers as Green – A Field Experiment

Samuel Franssens, KU Leuven, Belgium
Siegfried Dewitte, KU Leuven, Belgium
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Passengers on six bus lines in a European city received free travel card holders that labelled them as environmentally friendly versus not. Bus payment data indicated that the difference in post vs. pre-intervention bus use was approximately 0.89% higher on experimental versus control bus lines for one month post intervention.

Crossmodal Synesthesia:
Sensory Discomfort Affects Product Preferences Across Modalities

Rhonda Hadi, Said Business School, University of Oxford, UK
O.H. Groth, Baruch College, New York, USA
Lauren Block, Baruch College, New York, USA

We develop a crossmodal framework to explain when and how consumers faced with uncomfortable sensory exposure in one modality (e.g., audition) may alter their product preferences across other modalities (e.g., vision, olfaction, haptics, gustation). This research has important implications for marketers targeting consumers within contextual and dynamic environments.

How Consumers React to Anthropomorphized Brand Alliance?
Applying Interpersonal Expectancies to Business-to-Business Relationships

Dongjin He, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
Fangyuan Chen, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
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This paper explores the impact of brand anthropomorphism on consumers’ perceptions and reactions toward brand alliance. In three studies, we demonstrate that when brands are anthropomorphized, consumers felt more negatively about the termination of a brand alliance, due to the relationship norm associated with humanlike alliance relationship.

Is Stolen Water Really Sweeter?
The Impact of Unethical Consumption on Satisfaction and Recommendations

Nurit Hod, Bar-Ilan University, Israel
Eyal Peer, Bar-Ilan University, Israel
Shai Danziger, Tel-Aviv University, Israel

We explore how consuming a product unethically influences consumers’ post-experience satisfaction and recommendation intentions. We find that participants who played with an app that allowed cheating, and exploited it for higher earnings, rated it less favorably than participants who earned similar amounts, but were not rewarded for cheating.

Seducing Customers with Fond Memories:
The Effect of Nostalgia on Consumer Switching Behavior

Zhongqiang (Tak) Huang, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
Xun (Irene) Huang, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
Yuwei Jiang, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

This research shows that nostalgia can trigger a motivation to revive the past, enhance a general action orientation, and subsequently lead to more consumer switching behavior. This effect of nostalgia is less evident when people are satisfied with their current lives or feel closely connected to their past selves.
Choosing Variety to Fight Sleepiness
Zhongqiang (Tak) Huang, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
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Charles Weinberg, University of British Columbia, Canada
Gerald J. Gorn, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

Previous research has revealed the negative impact of sleepiness on health, but no research to date has investigated its effects on consumer behavior. This investigation fills this void by showing that sleepier consumers tend to seek more variety, which is driven by a need for arousal to maintain wakefulness.

Does Your Brand Name Sound Heavy or Light? The Congruency Effect of Sound and Visual Position of Brand Name on Product Evaluation
Hiroaki Ishii, Seikei University, Japan
Taku Togawa, Chiba University of Commerce, Japan
Jaewoo Park, Musashi University, Japan

Previous studies of sound symbolism confirmed that the sound of a brand name is associated with a concept and conveys congruence with other stimuli (e.g., shape). In this research, we explore the effect of semantic congruity of the sound of a brand name and its layout on packaging.

Ethical Consumer Behavior in (Un-)fair Markets: Fair Market Ideology as Moderator of the Effect of Ethical Cues on Ethical Consumer Behavior
Anna Jasinenko, HHL - Leipzig Graduate School of Management, Germany
Fabian Christandl, Fresenius University of Applied Sciences, Germany
Timo Meynhardt, HHL - Leipzig Graduate School of Management, Germany

Two studies show that the effect of ethical cues on ethical consumer behavior is moderated by the perception of market fairness. If consumers perceive markets to be fair (versus unfair), ethical cues about companies (e.g., if a company acts socially responsible) are more (less) strongly reflected in their consumer behavior.

The Effects of Self-Construal on Evaluations of Brand Logo Colors
Eunmi Jeon, Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea
Myungwoo Nam, Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea

The present research investigates the effectiveness of different types of color combinations on brand evaluations. Broadly, there are two different types of color combinations: analogous colors and complementary colors. Moreover, we propose that consumers' self-construal influences the effectiveness of analogous versus complementary color combinations.

Warm or Cold? The Effect of Color Temperature of Logo on Evaluation of For-Profits and Nonprofits
Eunmi Jeon, Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea
Myungwoo Nam, Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea

The current research examines the fit effect between color temperature and organization type and how it influences product evaluations. Thus, we demonstrate that the color temperature influences the effectiveness of logo on nonprofits versus for-profits.
Food Dilemma on the Road: What Matters the Most?

Jiaying Ji, ShanghaiTech University, China
Lifeng Yang, ShanghaiTech University, China

This research develops the conceptual understanding of how tourists consciously or unconsciously make food choices for self-restoration purposes. We argue that tourists’ need for novelty often conflicts with need for self-restoration in food consumption. Satiation of the restoration of one’s actual self affects the extent to which one seeks for novelty.

Color Temperature of Environmental Lighting and Conformity

Seo Yoon Kang, Hongik University, South Korea
Nara Youn, Hongik University, South Korea

This research investigates the effect of color temperature on preferences for conformity. Through three studies, we show that exposures to cool (vs. warm) color temperature of environmental lighting increase perceived environmental threat and feelings of powerlessness, which in turn elevated preferences for conformity.

Consumer Responses to the Susceptibility-Induced Threat in the Preventative Communication

Moon-Yong Kim, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, South Korea

This research investigates gender differences in responding to the preventative communication by varying the level of susceptibility-induced threat. Specifically, it is predicted that higher level of susceptibility is more likely to have a negative effect on persuasion for females (vs. males) due to their maladaptive responses to the threatening message.

Understanding the Motivation to Help Others under Mortality Salience: Self-Worth Enhancement versus Cultural Standards Reinforcement

Sara Kim, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
Youngsoo Kim, LSR/UX Lab, LG Electronics, South Korea
Soraya Lambotte, AbbVie, USA
Minhi Hahn, Korean Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, South Korea

Our research examines two accounts underlying the effect of mortality salience on prosocial behavior: self-worth enhancement and cultural standards reinforcement. We disentangle the two accounts by comparing the effectiveness of different charitable appeals, and show the self-worth account dominates the cultural standards account unless cultural norms are explicitly made salient.

When Being Good is Bad: The Effect of CSR Reputation and Crisis-type on Consumer Responses

Argiro Kliamenakis, Concordia University, John Molson School of Business, Canada
H. Onur Bodur, Concordia University, John Molson School of Business, Canada

The current research examines the interactive effect of CSR reputation and firm crisis-type on consumer responses. We find that a positive CSR reputation shields firms from negative consumer responses only in the case of performance-related crises. For values-related crises, a positive CSR reputation is shown to amplify negative responses.
How You Found it Matters: 
Autonomous Discovery of Hospitality Venues Fosters Customer Bonds

Michail Kokkoris, WU Vienna University of Economics and Business, Vienna
Hoelzl Erik, University of Cologne, Germany
Bernadette Kamleitner, WU Vienna University of Economics and Business, Vienna

Does the way customers discover hospitality venues (e.g., cafés, bars) affect how strongly they later bond with these venues? We show that customers who find a venue autonomously (i.e. entirely on their own) bond with it more strongly than customers finding it heteronomously (i.e. guided by some information or recommendation).

Tight and Loose Cultural Perspectives: 
Perceived Autonomy on Inferred Status and Liking

Fangju Lee, Hongik University, South Korea
Nara Youn, Hongik University, South Korea

The current research documents that when they observe others dressed differently from the norm, people from tight and loose cultures report different inference of wearers’ status. We conducted experiments in countries of a mixed culture (Taiwan); a tight culture (South Korea); and a loose culture (the United States).

Talented (vs. Hard-working) Is Machine-like: 
Impact of Service Employee Performance Attribution on Relationship Expectation

Fine F. Leung, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
Sara Kim, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
Caleb H. Tse, Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea

The current research shows that consumers are more likely to expect a communal-oriented (vs. exchange-oriented) relationship when a service employee’s positive performance is attributed to effort rather than talent. We posit a mechanism whereby effort (vs. talent) attribution makes consumers less likely to mechanistically dehumanize a service employee.

The Magic of Human Touch: 
Impact of Interpersonal Touch on Ad Perceptions and Attitudes

Meng-Hsien (Jenny) Lin, California State University Monterey Bay, USA
Akshaya Vijayalakshmi, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, India
Melika Kordrostami, California State University San Bernadino, USA

The current paper finds that the positive feelings of interpersonal touch (directly or triggered through visual imagery) can regulate the negative feelings experienced after viewing public service announcement (PSA) message. Further, results reveal that comfort with interpersonal touch moderates viewers’ response to the message.

Exploring the Effect of Private Self-Conscious Empathic Concern on 
Socially Responsible Consumption

Chi-Cheng Luan, National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan

Research has shown that empathy can influence socially responsible consumption. This research further hypothesized that consumers generate empathic concern driven by private self-consciousness during the shopping time. A shopping scenario was conducted to find the significant effect of private self-conscious empathic concern on more payment for socially responsible products.
Green Crowdfunding: New Consumer Roles in Sustainable Economy

Natalia Maehle, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway
Ingeborg A. Kleppe, Norwegian School of Economics, Norway
Natalia Drozdova, Norwegian School of Economics, Norway

The current study focuses on green crowdfunding, i.e. crowdfunding for sustainable initiatives. We address the green crowdfunding phenomenon from three perspectives (i.e. funders, founders and platform) and explore how green crowdfunding extends consumers’ roles in sustainable economy. Our findings indicate the critical importance of consumers’ involvement in funding sustainable projects.

The Incidental Effect of Promotional Merchandise on Consumer Reactions to a Brand

Eva Marckhgott, WU Vienna, Vienna
Bernadette Kamleitner, WU Vienna, Vienna

Even if they use it, consumers devote limited attention to promotional merchandise. In two experiments we show that even incidental encounters with promotional merchandise can affect reactions to unfamiliar brands. Moreover, we find that at similar level of exposure promotional merchandise outperforms billboards.

The Citizenist-Consumer: When the Literate Citizen Rescue the Deemed Irresponsible Consumer

David F. Martin, Novancia Business School Paris, France

Mainstream discourses frame the bankrupted consumer as “financially illiterate” and “irresponsible”. An ethnographic insight of Spanish post-housing crisis social movements reveals the emergence of an alternative construct of a citizen-consumer, as a collective identity and agency able to reverse the frame and cope with their vulnerability to abusive predatory lending.

This Product Fits So Well on You! The Impact of Sources when Receiving Online Positive Feedback on Confidence in Fit For Appearance-Related Products

Merle Aurelie, Grenoble Ecole de Management, France
Anik St-Onge, ESG-UQAM, Canada
Sylvain Senecal, HEC Montreal, Canada

In the virtual retail context, consumers can be exposed to positive feedback from different sources (agents or friends). This research demonstrates how a positive feedback from different sources can affect the confidence in product fit. This study also measures the impact of the source on the relevance of the message.

Customer Value within a Broader Perspective: Development and Validation of a Public Value Scale

Timo Meynhardt, HHL - Leipzig Graduate School of Management, Germany
Anna Jasinenko, HHL - Leipzig Graduate School of Management, Germany

We developed and validated a Public Value Scale that should help to understand customer value creation from a broader perspective. The developed scale measures the basic need fulfillment of the public by organizations. Beside a very high reliability and construct validity, it showed high predictability of various consumer variables.

Early Adopters and the Attraction Effect

Sarit Moldovan, The Open University of Israel, Israel
Ruth Zwick, Tel Aviv University, Israel

Our research calls into question the strength of the attraction effect on early adopters. We show that early adopters are significantly less likely to be influenced by the attraction effect compared with non-early adopters. This is true only for innovative but not for non-innovative products.
Life Has No Control Condition: Counterfactual Neglect in Causal Attributions

Hannah Perfecto, Washington University in St. Louis, USA

Most research on counterfactual thinking describes its effects on thinkers’ subsequent emotions or behaviors. However, little work examines when people fail to consider counterfactuals. Across several domains (N=1030), I demonstrate that receiving counterfactual information reduces one’s casual attributions and confidence in them, suggesting they would not have been otherwise considered.

Better Uncertain in the Woods than Certain in the Backyard: How Does Emotional Uncertainty Affect Predicted Utility and Forecasting Error?

Athanasios Polyportis, Athens University of Economics and Business, Greece
Flora Kokkinaki, Athens University of Economics and Business, Greece

The present research explores the effects of uncertainty, as an emotion appraisal dimension, on predicted utility and forecasting error. To this end, the results of two experiments are described. Findings suggest that low certainty emotions lead to judgment with higher accuracy, as well as to a utility overprediction.

Consumer Responses to Similar Others’ Unethical Behavior: The Moderating Role of Norm Violation Type

Chloe Y. Qiu, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
Lisa C. Wan, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

We discovered that when the norm violated by in-group (vs. out-group) members is implicit, customers would vicariously justify for others’ misbehavior and judge it to be less unethical. Conversely, if in-group (vs. out-group) offenders violate an explicit norm, customers feel vicariously guilty and thus judge offenders’ behavior more harshly.

Energy/Technology: ‘En-gauging’ Consumer Culture

Thomas Robinson, Cass Business School, University of London, UK
Eric Arnould, Aalto University, Finland

We explore how energy gauges (e.g. battery icons) create a prospective dual awareness of technology and infrastructure we term ‘en-gaugement’. This allows us to contribute a novel definition of technology in CCT, a theory of energetic discipline in the panoptic field of energy consumption, and insights on the structure-agency problem.

Influence of Visual Crowding and Product Distance on Consumer Choice

Ana Scekic, HEC Paris, France
A. Selin Atalay, Frankfurt School of Finance and Management, Germany
Cathy Liu Yang, HEC Paris, France
Peter Ebbes, HEC Paris, France

We explore the effects of assortment size and of product distance on consumer choice. We provide initial evidence that, in large (i.e., crowded) assortments, distancing the products on the shelf from each other leads to greater perceived variety in the assortment and to a choice experience that feels easier.

Choice Overload Among Children

Hilla Schupak, Bar Ilan University, Israel
Eyal Peer, Bar Ilan University, Israel

We demonstrate a choice overload effect for preschool children (ages 4-5) and first graders (ages 6-7), in which children’s satisfaction from their chosen item was diminished if chosen from a large vs. a smaller set of choices. In contrast, fourth-grade children’s satisfaction was higher as set size increased.
How Does Donation Box Transparency Affect Charitable Giving?
A Money Priming Perspective

Aminreza Shiri, Bilkent University, Turkey
Carter Mandrik, Middle East Technical University, Northern Cyprus Campus, Cyprus
Ahmet Ekici, Bilkent University, Turkey

This research explores whether donation box transparency influences potential donors’ charitable behavior. Participants in a transparent box treatment were less willing to donate money and to volunteer for charity, and they experienced higher self-sufficiency compared to those in an opaque box treatment. We attribute these effects to money priming.

The Antecedents and Consequences of Brand Betrayal

Teck Ming Tan, University of Oulu, Finland

The current paper suggests that consumers’ anthropomorphize tendency, high-arousal positive states that they have experienced over the course of their past typical weeks, and types of apology—unrelated to a brand experience and brand evaluation—would influence the feeling of brand betrayal and behavioral outcomes during a brand transgression.

Choice Architecture Engages Moral and Not Social Norms to Influence Pro-Environmental Consumer Choice Through Negative and Positive Emotions

Carlos Andrés Trujillo, Universidad de los Andes, Colombia
Catalina Estrada-Mejia, Universidad de los Andes, Colombia
Jose Antonio Rosa, Iowa State University, USA

In four experiments we test the ability to influence the consumption of eco-friendly products through choice architectures that make social or moral norms salient without attempting to change attitudes or predispositions. We find that choice architecture activates moral but not social norms, and that emotions exert influence on choices.

Effects of Facial Asymmetry on Emoji Evaluation and Product Preference

Ganga Urumutta Hewage, University of Central Florida, USA
Ze Wang, University of Central Florida, USA
Yue Liu, Southern Connecticut State University, USA

This research demonstrates that facial asymmetry influences consumers’ perceptions of emojis and their preferences for products featuring emojis in product design. Unlike symmetric human faces which are liked more, asymmetric emojis are preferred. This effect is sequentially mediated by anthropomorphic inferences and perceived emotional intensity.

The Compromise Effect in Post-Purchase Consumption Behavior

Veronica Valli, University of Mannheim, Germany
Florian Stahl, University of Mannheim, Germany
Elisa Montaguti, University of Bologna, Italy
Itamar Simonson, Stanford University, USA

We investigate the compromise effect on post-purchase consumption. Field and lab experiments suggest the selection of an intermediate option in a choice set leads to an increase in number and value of (complementary) items purchased after the first. The higher difficulty related to such compromise decision seems mediating this effect.
How 5-Colour Nutritional Labels Influence Foods’ Purchases and Evaluations: The Role of Consumers’ Previous Expectations

Carolina O.C. Werle, Grenoble École de Management, France
Amanda Pruski Yamim, Grenoble École de Management, France
Olivier Trendel, Grenoble École de Management, France

This research assesses if a 5-color nutritional label impacts consumers’ food decisions. A field study shows that continuous (but not immediate) exposition to 5-CNL decreased the average caloric content of purchases. However, consumers’ reactions to 5-CNL depended on the gap between one’s expectation of product grade and the grade displayed.

The Different Roles of the Two Dimensions of Brand Perception - Warmth and Competence After Service Failures

Shannon X. Yi, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
Chloe Y. Qiu, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
Lisa C. Wan, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

After service failure customers not complaining are likely to switch to a competitor. Yet, in our pilot study, we found that sometimes non-complaining customers may still return. We identified that brand perception along warmth and competence dimensions influences differently on customers’ intentions to provide constructive suggestions and to return.

Algorithm Attraction versus Aversion: Perceived Expertise Influences Consumers’ Reactions to Recommendations Generated by an Algorithm (vs. Expert)

Gizem Yalcin, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Anne-Kathrin Klesse, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Darren W. Dahl, University of British Columbia, Canada

Nowadays algorithms are used to generate recommendations in numerous areas, including ones that are pure matter of taste. Across four studies, we demonstrate that consumers value the same recommendation differently depending on the framing of its source—an algorithm versus human expert—and their own perceived level of expertise.

Do Customers Like to be Abused? A Study on Customer Loyalty Among Chinese Millennial Generation from a Stockholm Syndrome Perspective

Yan Zhang, Warwick Business School, UK
Jun Luo, Nottingham University Business School China, China
Martin Liu, Nottingham University Business School China, China

By utilizing 25 semi-structured interviews, this study explores why dissatisfied customers –‘victims’ still stay with disappointed brands –‘abusers’, contributing to brand relationship literature by adopting Stockholm Syndrome (SS) perspective. It further contributes to SS theory by introducing a new dimension to SS indicators based on characteristics of Chinese millennial consumers.

A Power Man Rarely Stoops to Pettiness?
The Role of (In)Congruence Between Explicit and Implicit Power on Forgiveness

Yishi Zhang, Jinan University, China
Yaxuan Ran, Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, China

The present research examined the associations of power, defined as explicit and implicit power, and interpersonal forgiveness. Results showed that congruently high implicit and explicit power motives was associated with the highest level of forgiveness, whereas low implicit and high explicit was associated with the lowest level of forgiveness.
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