Preface

The fourth European Conference of The Association for Consumer Research was held at the campus of Groupe HEC in Jouy-en-Josas, France, on June 24-26, 1999. The articles published in this volume represent the papers that were presented at that conference.

One of our primary objectives as co-chairs of this conference was to present a forum for North American and European scholars to exchange ideas on research related to consumer behavior. Although scholars on each side of the Atlantic are to some extent aware of the others’ efforts, we also realize that they have somewhat different views on the consumer and often come from different research traditions. We believe that both the similarities and differences provide ample opportunities for cross-fertilization and collaboration.

In keeping with this objective, the theme for this conference can best be described as “Bridging the Atlantic.” To reach this objective, we took specific steps, some new to ACR, to facilitate a true cross-continental exchange. First, we formed a new committee, called the Organizing Committee. This committee was comprised of five prominent consumer behavior scholars: two from France (Yves Evrard and Gilles Laurent) and three from the U.S. (Elizabeth Hirschman, Don Lehmann, and Itamar Simonson). The committee members had two charges: to participate with the four co-chairs in “brainstorming sessions” aimed at increasing cross-Atlantic exchange and to use their prominence in the field to encourage and provide incentive to both European and North American scholars to participate in the conference.

A second step we took to facilitate exchange involved the formation of the program committee and the choice of competitive paper reviewers. Specifically, we took special care to provide equal representation from Europe and North America, as well as equal representation across research philosophies. We also provided explicit encouragement for cross-Atlantic representation in the Call for Papers. The program committee, which was charged with reviewing special session proposals, consisted of 33 scholars. In addition, the five members of the Organizing Committee served as special session reviewers. For the reviews of the competitive papers, 93 scholars provided evaluations and feedback. As the lists on the following pages indicate, we for the most part achieved our objective of equal representation. More importantly, as the Conference Program indicates, our primary objective of a cross-Atlantic exchange was also achieved: 83% of the special sessions and 81% of the competitive paper sessions had both North American and European representation in terms of paper authorship.

These specific tactics to increase representation at this European ACR conference appear to have been successful. We registered 189 participants, representing 24 different countries. Eighty-six competitive papers were submitted, of which 47 (55%) were accepted and 33 special session proposals were submitted, of which 18 (55%) were accepted. Given the norm of three papers per special session, the program was roughly equally divided between the presentation of special session papers and competitive session papers.

As with any gathering of this magnitude and coordination over such a long distance, many different people can rightly claim that they had a hand in the success of the conference. We would like to start by thanking those people who helped in the composition of the conference: the reviewers of the competitive papers, the members of the Program Committee, and the members of the Organizing Committee. We deeply appreciate your efforts and commitment to the conference objectives.

Of course, no matter how good the product, it is of little use to anyone if it is not properly delivered, and its value is diminished if good service is not provided. In both cases, we have many people to thank for insuring excellent delivery and outstanding customer service. With respect to the former, we would like to thank Groupe HEC for acting as gracious hosts. The facilities were first-rate, and the up-to-date multi-media equipment allowed for just about any type of presentation. In addition, judging from comments from participants, the “Barbecue by the Lake” and the dinner cruise on the Seine, both situated in stunningly beautiful locales, were a success.

With respect to customer service, we would like to express our undying gratitude to Michele Raigner and Rachel Fillon. Their help ranged from initial contact and correspondence with authors to the minute-by-minute operation of the on-site activities, and they had a helpful hand in just about everything in between. In short, they made us look good.

We deeply appreciate having the opportunity to organize this conference. It was a rewarding experience to have been able to interact and share ideas with colleagues from all over the world.

Bernard Dubois, Groupe HEC
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ASSOCIATION FOR CONSUMER RESEARCH
EUROPEAN CONFERENCE 1999

June 24-26
Jouy-en-Josas, France

THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 1999
SESSION 1
9:45 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.

1.1  Special Session: Lifestyle, Values and Psychographics: Perspectives from Around the World

Chair: Lynn R. Kahle, University of Oregon, U.S.A.

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Tan Soo Jiuan, National University of Singapore
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Pierre Valette-Florence, Universites a l’ Ecole Superieure des Affaires de Grenoble, France

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Chair: David Mick, University of Wisconsin, U.S.A.

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Don't Tell My Students I Am A Semiotician, They Think I Am An Auditor in a Bordello . . .
Benoît Heilbrunn, E.M. Lyon, France

Commercial Semiotics: Selling It In Without Selling Out
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Chairs: Jacqueline J. Kacen, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.
Susanne Friese, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

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In the Mood: The Influence of Emotional State on Consumers’ Consumption Behaviors
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Schemas and Scripts for the Self-Regulation of Emotions Through the Consumption of Goods
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An Exploration of Mood-Regulating Consumer Buying Behavior
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Gender and Compensatory Consumer Behavior: The Case of Addictive Buying
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**THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 1999**

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4.1 **Special Session: Evaluative Formation Processes: Antecedents, Influences, and Consequences**

Chair: Joseph R. Priester, University of Michigan, U.S.A.

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Itamar Simonson, Stanford University, U.S.A.

**The Effect of Expecting to Evaluate on Quality and Satisfaction Evaluations**
Chezy Ofir, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel
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**Influencing Consideration and Choice: The Role of Evaluative Formation Processes**
Joseph R. Priester, University of Michigan, U.S.A.
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4.2 **Special Session: Views of the New World From the Old: European Visions of the American West**

Chair: Gary J. Bamossy, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, The Netherlands and University of Utah, U.S.A.

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The Myth of the Wild West in Advertising
Søren Askegaard, Odense University, Denmark
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Where Does the Marlboro Man Live?
Gary J. Bamossy, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam and University of Utah, U.S.A.
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5.1 Special Session: Dealing with Consumer Discontent
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Vicki Morwitz, New York University, U.S.A.

The Effectiveness of Corporate Responses to Boycotts: Nike’s Defense of Labor Practices
Jill G. Klein, INSEAD, France
The Impact of Product-Harm Crises on Brand Equity: The Moderating Role of Consumer Expectations
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5.2 Special Session: Ethical Issues in Social Sector Marketing
Chair: Gary J. Bamossy, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, The Netherlands and University of Utah, U.S.A.

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Alliances for Social Benefit: Being Good While Doing Good
Alan R. Andreasen, Georgetown University, U.S.A.
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Applying Integrative Social Contracts Theory to Ethical Issues in Social Marketing
N. Craig Smith, Georgetown University, U.S.A. and INSEAD, France

5.3 Competitive Paper Session: Memory and Learning
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A New Typology of Brand Image
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Analogical Reasoning about New Product Introductions by Experts and Novices
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Derrick S. Boone, Wake Forest University, U.S.A.
Harper A. Roehm, Jr., Wake Forest University, U.S.A.

5.4 Competitive Paper Session: Affect and Stress
Chair: Lutz Hildebrandt, Humboldt University, Germany

Christian Derbaix, LABACC, FUCAM, Belgium
Ingrid Poncin, LABACC, FUCAM, Belgium

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6.2 Special Session: New Insights Into Measuring Attitudes and Intentions: Implications for Survey Design, Data Analysis, and Consumer Behavior

Chair: Barbara Bickart, Rutgers University-Camden, U.S.A.

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7.1 Special Session: Fit, Similarity and Congruity: An Exploration of Overlap in “Alikeness” Constructs

Chair: John W. Pracejus, University of Alberta, Canada

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Luk Warlop, K.U. Leuven, Belgium
Joseph W. Alba, University of Florida, U.S.A.

The Impact of Congruity Between Brand Name and Country of Production on Consumers’ Product Quality Judgments
Gerald Häubl, University of Alberta, Canada
Terry Elrod, University of Alberta, Canada
7.2 Special Session: Expectations Filter Reality: How Individual, Sub-Cultural and Culturally Induced Schematic Expectations Influence Consumers

Chairs: Tina Kiesler, New York University, U.S.A.
       Lauren Block, New York University, U.S.A.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Expectations Filter Reality: How Individual, Sub-Cultural and Culturally Induced Schematic Expectations Influence Consumers

Tina Kiesler, New York University, U.S.A.
Lauren Block, New York University, U.S.A.

Expectations of Stereotypic and Non-Stereotypic Advertisements

Lauren Block, New York University, U.S.A.
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Experience Matters: Overcoming the Other-Race Effect in Customer Face Perception and Recognition

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Amy L. Ostrom, Arizona State University, U.S.A.
Tiffany D. Barnett, Duke University, U.S.A.
Kimberly D. Dillon, Duke University, U.S.A.
John G. Lynch, Duke University, U.S.A.

Expectations of Emotional Valence: Culture and the Peaceful Co-existence of Conflicting Emotions

Patti Williams, New York University, U.S.A.
Jennifer Aaker, University of California at Los Angeles, U.S.A.

7.3 Competitive Paper Session: Self-Concept

Chair: Deborah Cours, California State University, Northridge, U.S.A.

Males, Masculinity, and Consumption: An Exploratory Investigation

Allan J. Kimmel, Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Paris, France
Elisabeth Tissier-Desbordes, Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Paris, France

Toward An Integrated Model of Self-Congruity and Functional Congruity

M. Joseph Sirgy, Virginia Tech, U.S.A.
J.S. Johar, California State University, U.S.A.

The Apparent Paradox of Self - a Semiological Analysis of the Role of Consumption in the Life of “Trainspotting”

Mark Renton

Conor Ryan, Guinness Ireland, Ireland
Damien McLoughlin, University College Dublin, Ireland
8.1 Special Session: Magic and Transformation in the Marketplace

Chair: Cele Otnes, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Magic and Transformation in the Marketplace

Cele Otnes, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.

Magical Special Possessions

Eric Arnould, University of Nebraska, U.S.A.
Linda Price, University of Nebraska, U.S.A.
Carolyn Curasi, Berry College, U.S.A.

“When Snow White Dates Mr. Clean… !!! A Narrative Approach to Advertising Discourse

Benoît Heilbrunn, E. M. Lyon, France

Magic and Transformation in Advertising: A Longitudinal Study

Jelena Runser-Spanjol, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.
Pamela Lowrey, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.
Cele Otnes, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.

8.2 Special Session: New Insights in the Construction of Consumer Judgments

Chair: Klaus Wertenbroch, Yale University, U.S.A. and INSEAD, France
Discussant: Dipankar Chakravarti, University of Colorado, U.S.A.

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New Insights in the Construction of Consumer Judgments

Klaus Wertenbroch, Yale University, U.S.A. and INSEAD, France

When it Taxes the Mind: The Moderating Effects of Cognitive Capacity on Judgments of Behavioral Frequencies

Gavan J. Fitzsimons, University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A.
Geeta Menon, New York University, U.S.A.

The Effect of Forced Choice on Choice

Ravi Dhar, Yale University, U.S.A.
Itamar Simonson, Stanford University, U.S.A.

Debt Aversion as Precommitment Not to Overcome

Klaus Wertenbroch, Yale University, U.S.A. and INSEAD, France
Dilip Soman, University of Colorado, U.S.A.
Joseph C. Nunes, University of Southern California, U.S.A.
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Chris A. Janiszewski, University of Florida, U.S.A.
Joseph W. Alba, University of Florida, U.S.A.
Pavlovian vs. Hebbian Accounts of Learning Product Associations Through Consumption Experience
Luc Warlop, K.U. Leuven, Belgium
Frank Baeyens, K.U. Leuven, Belgium
Davy Lerouge, K. U. Leuven, Belgium
Wouter Vanhoucke, K.U. Leuven, Belgium

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Modern, Warm, and Beautiful: Lacing the Transition in Turkish Homes
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Yesim Balım, Unilever, Turkey

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Daniel Miller, University College London, U.K.

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SESSION OVERVIEW

The concepts of **values, lifestyles, and psychographics** overlap. **Values** are enduring beliefs “that a specific mode of conduct or end-state is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence” (Rokeach, 1973, p.5). One participant form this session defines **lifestyle** as an exhibited “set of shared values or tastes” (Solomon, 1994, p 621), thus making clear the overlap between values and lifestyles. Another author defines **lifestyle** more conventionally as “the manner in which people conduct their lives, including their activities, interests, and opinions” (Peter & Olson, 1994, p. 463). Given the evidence of a sequence of influence from values to attitudes to behaviors (Homer & Kahle, 1988), even this second definition shows the strong conceptual overlap between values and lifestyles. Solomon defines **psychographics** as the use of psychological, sociological, and anthropological factors to construct market segments (p. 623), whereas Peter and Olson restrict their definition to the more narrow concept of “dividing markets into segments on the basis of consumer lifestyles, attitudes, and interests” (p. 465). Yet another text explicitly defines **psychographics and lifestyles** as nearly interchangeable: “In fact, psychographics and lifestyle are frequently used interchangeably. Psychographic research attempts to place consumers on psychological—as opposed to purely demographic—dimensions” (Hawkins, Best, & Coney, 1995, p. 328). They describe the other dimensions as values, attitudes, activities, interests demographics, media patterns, and usage rates. Thus, we again see how intertwined the concepts of values, lifestyles and psychographics are.

The past decade has witnessed considerable progress both conceptually and methodologically in lifestyle research. Its persistence continues to befuddle doomsayers. Many researchers have continued to develop ways to incorporate values, lifestyles, and psychographic information into their models, even as others have abandoned it in frustration. Consumer researchers have continued to probe areas in which it proves particularly interesting, such as cross-national research and trend research. Many authors persist in their convictions that individuals differ in important ways above and beyond demographics and that understanding these differences matters greatly in marketing.

One problem has been that lifestyle researchers from around the world have often not interacted with one another. Thus, lifestyle conceptualization have often developed with idiosyncratic local characteristics, thus impeding the development of a truly international theory of lifestyle. This session brings together scholars with experience in researching lifestyles who live in four different areas: Asia, Europe the Southeast United States, and the Northwest United States. The hope is that by sharing recent views in a common forum, the similarities and differences among the approaches will become manifest and that a first step toward international integration may occur.

**Gender Differences in Values, Aspiration, and Lifestyles: A Study of Singapore Consumers**

*Kau Ah Keng, National University of Singapore*

The study of people’s values and lifestyles has gained increasing interest from both social scientist and marketers all over the world. For social scientists, the primary aim is to examine how people’s values and lifestyles have changed over times and to derive implications of such changes for government and society. The marketers, however, would like to know how such changes can bring forth not only marketing opportunities but also possible threats. This is important as the survival and profitability of an enterprise are dependent on how the firm can capitalize on the marketing opportunities identified and mitigate the threats involved.

Perhaps the most widely used approach to lifestyle marketing is the technique developed by Arnold Mitchell (1983) called VALS and its revised formed VALSII. In his book on “The Nine American Lifestyles”, Mitchell provides a very good reason for the study of values and lifestyles (VALS). He stated that the single most compelling reason is that VALS tells us so much about what we are as individuals, as citizens, as consumers and as a nation. He went on to define values as “the whole constellation of a person’s attitudes, beliefs, opinions, hopes, fears, prejudices, needs, desires, and aspirations that, taken together, govern how one behaves”.

The VALS methodology has been extended to describe lifestyle segments in several European countries. It was also used by Transport Canada to study travelers at Canadian airports. Similar studies on values and lifestyle have been mounted in Asia. In Japan, the Hakuhodo Institute of Life and Living had conducted studies related to these areas. Their report, “Young Adults in Japan: New Attitudes Creating New Lifestyles”, published in 1985 aimed at understanding the young Japanese in the age group of 18 and 23. Although no specific clusters were formulated, the values and lifestyles of these young people was well documented. In Taiwan, a commercial firm has been involved in a similar study and marketed the results as Integrated Consumer Profile. In Singapore, a previous study by Kau and Yang (1989) examined over 2000 Singaporeans in the group of 15 to 40. Six groups of Singaporeans were discovered using twodimensions: their value perception and psychological motivation.

This paper reports on a value and lifestyle study of Singaporeans in 1996. It was based on a sample size of 1600 respondents in Singapore from the age group of 15 onwards. Specifically, the gender differences in values and lifestyles are examined. The results reveal that females are more inclined to embrace “a sense of belonging” as compared to their male counterparts. They are also more concerned to be well-respected. As for the things most wanted out of life, females put health as their top priority, followed by love, security and success. As for men, their priority is also for health but that is followed by success, love and security. When their leisure activities are examined, females are noted to favor more sedate activities such as reading, window-shopping, strolling or engaging in hobby-craft. On the other hand, men exhibit different preferences. They enjoy playing computer games, jogging, cycling, fishing and photography. Finally, some implication for marketers in Singapore are discussed.

**A Critical Examination of Time-Integrated Lifestyle Conceptualization: Theoretical and Methodological Issues**

*Pierre Valette-Florence, Universite d’Ecole Superieure des Affaires de Grenoble, France*

Feldman and Hornek (1981) proposed the following classification of activities: work, necessities (sleep, etc.), domestic work, and leisure time. This classification is interesting because it proposes the different activities as a sort of ladder, descending for
obligations, going from mandatory activities that are chosen freely as leisure activities. The authors (Feldman and Hornik) consider the group of chosen activities as corresponding to different behavioral types. According to them, all human activity results from these three following interdependent factors:

- The time aspect (frequency and duration)
- The economic aspect (referring to the cost of the activity)
- The spacial aspect (relative to the location/place of the activity)

According to Feldman and Hornik, time is primarily the determining factor in choosing an activity. Schary (1971) similarly considers the time variable and its impact on one’s choice of activities as important criteria for segmentation. Settle, Alreck, and Glasheen (1978) also put forth evidence showing a link between people’s lifestyles and their personal orientation with regards to time. As a result of their studies, one could say that the activities in which one is involved is a reflection of behavior and use of time.

In lifestyles research, the activities usually examined are leisure activities, vacation(s), ways of relaxing in the home, attendance of social and cultural events, habits linked to professional work, exposure to different forms of media, that which correspond in fact to the partition proposed by Feidman and Hornik.

This approach is not homogeneous. As for the domain of activities chosen, in effect some of them establish a complete group of activities in all mentioned domains, so that others concentrate on certain well specified sectors, such as leisure time or exposure to various forms of media. Activities taken into account by researchers are not always identical and appear more so generated in an empirical manner for the needs of specific studies (Valette-Florence, 1994).

The study of lifestyle as time further implies a number of methodological problems that relate to operationalization of the constructs and the units of measurement, as well as the quantification of those constructs. This paper will explore these issues as well in the context of other methodological perspectives (e.g., Valette-Florence & Rapanelli, 1991).

Consumer Dreams and Nightmares: A Web-Mediated Study of Lifestyle Aspiration

Basil G. Englis, Berry College, U.S.A.
Michael R. Solomon, Auburn University, U.S.A.

We will present preliminary results from a web-based lifestyle research project. This effort includes development of a new interactive methodology that explores the germination and dissemination of fashion trends among young female consumers. The project is funded by The National Textile Center, U.S. Department of Commerce (Solomon and Englis, 1997a), and (with the cooperation of the Stanford Research Institute) uses the VALS2 consumer typology to identify female fashion opinion leaders who will participate in a web-based panel constituted from a national sample of American women corresponding to specific VALS types.

At the core of the project is a web-based interactive data collection technique that allows respondents to manipulate sets of visual images of products as a means of expressing their tastes and preferences (cf. Kephart, 1998). Although potentially very powerful, visually oriented research methodologies have largely been absent in consumer research, or have been limited to small-sample qualitative studies (see, e.g., Zaltman, 1996; Zaltman and Coulter, 1995). In the present study, respondents use visual images to describe their aspiration (or avoidance) lifestyles by creating consumption constellations they perceive as being ideally suited to a desired (or undesired) lifestyle (Englis and Solomon, 1995; 1997a; Solomon, 1988; Solomon and Assael, 1987; Solomon and Buchanan, 1991). By choosing distinctive product groupings with symbolic meaning, consumers can communicate their affiliation with a positively valued, or aspirational, cultural category (Englis and Solomon, 1995; Englis, Solomon, and Olofsson, 1993). They may at the same time eschew other product clusters they associate with negatively valued, or avoidance, groups (Englis and Solomon, 1997b, Solomon and Englis, 1997b).

One key question addressed by this program of research is to learn how female fashion opinion leaders integrate information from mass-media lifestyle depictions as they form their own consumption preferences and communicate these choices to others (Englis, Solomon, and Olofsson, 1993; Solomon and Englis, 1994). We are constructing a visual database of product images containing multiple exemplars of each product category and spanning multiple product categories. Product images are chosen from print media of particular relevance to the twentysomething female consumers in the target population, based on Simmons readership data.

There are three visual layers to the data collection paradigm: (1) sorting and selection of images of people in their daily lives; (2) establishment of a social context in which product selection will occur; and (3) selection of an “ensemble” of products perceived to be ideally suited to each social context. Descriptive information pertaining to both the social images and the product images are included as the respondent navigates through the task.

The present study extends our previous work (Englis and Solomon, 1995; Solomon and Englis, 1997b) in this area by examining how consumers’ aspirations are expressed visually as they evaluate and select products. American women.

Recent Developments in Social Adaptation Theory: An Integrative Review

Lynn R. Kahle, University of Oregon, U.S.A.

In social adaptation theory, values are viewed as the most abstract type of social cognition, which people use to store and guide general responses to classes of stimuli. Individuals adapt to various life roles in part through value development and value fulfillment. Value development summarizes previous experience and provides a strategy for dealing with new choices. For example, people who value fun and enjoyment may want a computer to play video games, whereas people who value sense of accomplishment may want a computer to use as a work tool. People who value self-respect may resist any new technology that defies a goal of self-reliance.

Values develop from life experiences. People interact with their environments in an attempt to develop optimal interchanges with their environments. As Piagetian theory has so well describe, information may be assimilated into existing cognitive structures, or it may accommodate the existing cognitive structures into the more refined structures that result from additional interaction. Once acquired, information is also organized to coordinate the new information with prior knowledge. This organization can result in changes to both the new and old information, and it should lead to greater integration of information.

Homer and Kahle (1988) have shown in a structural equation study of consumer behavior a sequence from values to attitudes to consumer behavior. This sequence is consistent with social adaptation theory and is similar to the trend in corporate use of lifestyle information. Most companies no longer rely on global values alone. Rather, they prefer to use as anchors or cognitive sources from which attitudes may emerge. The attitudes will vary depending upon many demographic factors, and they will be uniquely related to the specific product at hand.
Values have the potential to help clarify the understanding of consumer motivations and may point to the underlying “rationality” or “psych-logic” of ostensibly illogical buying decision processes. Marketers can use value-behavior linkages or value chains to help measure and understand consumers’ involvement with a product. Similarly, value chains provide the opportunity to develop advertising programs that tie product benefits to consumers’ personal meanings at several, increasingly meaningful levels of abstraction. Furthermore, efforts to measure advertising effectiveness may be improved by assessing how successfully the ads tie product meanings back to personal values. Even if value and lifestyle information is not directly utilized creatively can understand the characteristics of certain regions or target segments if this type of information is available.

The purpose of this paper is to present an integrative review of recent research on social adaptation theory. The focus will be on describing the implications of this research for developing an internationally-integrated view of lifestyle Kahle 1995, 1996, Kahle, Kambara, and Rose 1996, Shoham and Kahle, 1998).

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SESSIO N OVERVIEW

Semiotics is a doctrine concerned with communication and meaning. Its fundamental unit is the sign, which is anything that can stand for something else, to some animate being, in a given context. Hence, semiotics can readily address many issues in consumer behavior, from advertising, fashion, household possessions, leisure, and the arts, to retailing, product design, and brand logos.

It is apropos that Jouy-en-Josas was the setting for this ACR special session on semiotics given that the French were the true pioneers in applying semiotics to marketing and consumer behavior issues. Since its earliest beginnings in France in the 1960s, the influence of semiotic consumer research has spread internationally (e.g., Aoki 1994; Floch 1990; Grandi 1993; Holbrook and Hirschman 1993; Larsen et al. 1991; Mick 1986, 1997; Noth 1997; Umiker-Sebeok 1987). Today there is a wide range of consumer research being conducted and published around the world, in many different outlets and languages. At the same time, educators such as Pinson at INSEAD and Heilbrunn at E. M. Lyon have been developing special cases to teach the benefits of a semiotic orientation on consumer behavior, for both undergraduate and graduate classrooms. Moreover, semiotics has become more accepted and applied in businesses and non-profit organizations for conducting a variety of market analyses and developing strategic programs. For instance, the largest advertising agency in Japan (Dentsu, Inc), has spearheaded the use of applied semiotics for several years (e.g., see Fukuda 1990) and one of the leading semiotic consultancies is Semiotic Solutions, based in London.

Over recent years, ACR conferences have been heavily populated by academics based in the United States who present and discuss their latest research. It has been less common for sessions to include non-U.S.-based individuals or presentations about consumer behavior related to pedagogy or consulting. This session for the 1999 European ACR conference brought together consumer researchers, educators, and consultants from America and Europe to discuss the state of semiotics as it applies to research, education, and business practice. The goal of the session was to enrich our understanding of semiotics through a cross-national dialogue about its value in scholarship, teaching, and marketing management. The appeal of the session was made on several bases. First, the session addressed a number of areas of interest to consumer researchers including communication, meaning, culture, symbolism, structuralism, and qualitative research. Second, the session was multidimensional insofar as it concerned not just academic research, but also education and consulting. Finally, the session was multinational, involving individuals from France, England, and the United States—all with considerable expertise in semiotics—allowing for multiple perspectives on semiotics in marketing and consumer behavior to be provided.

The first presentation was based on a paper by Mick, Burroughs, Hetzel, and Yoko Bramen which covered a project underway for the last three years. These researchers collected over 500 citations and papers on semiotics consumer research from around the globe. They then evaluated and synthesized their insights according to structure, process, and content issues related to communication and meaning in consumer behavior. The presentation highlighted the main results such as those areas have received the most semiotic research attention (e.g. advertising); which theoretical insights are dominant in which substantive areas e.g. past research on advertising has heavily emphasized structural issues; the type and level of semiotic foundation in the research reviewed (e.g., the French have relied heavily on the Saussurean heritage and its structural orientation); and, finally, which substantive areas remain most overlooked. The implications of these findings for future semiotic consumer research were also discussed, such as the opportunity for researchers to address signs at multiple levels of analysis within the same topical area.

The second presentation by Heilbrunn was based on his experiences in working with Christian Pinson at INSEAD to develop up-to-date and engaging classroom materials, including cases to tutor students on the opportunities and limits of semiotics for consumer behavior. The presentation included the use of a specific case developed to illustrate and apply semiotics for pedagogical objectives.

The third presentation by Valentine addressed the opportunities and difficulties of building a business consultancy based on using semiotics to help position firms and products in the marketplace. She provided a number of specific international studies involving semiotics, discussed the training and persuasion of clients about semiotics, and generally described the nurturing of applied semiotics from its complex and diverse theoretical bases.

REFERENCES
Fukuda, Toshihiko (1990), Monogatari Mäketingu [Narrative Marketing], Tokyo: Takeuchi Shoten Shinsha.
The rise of semiotics in consumer research over the last forty years has paralleled a growing interest in communication and meaning in marketplace phenomena. Despite this, semiotics remains underutilized in the field and considerable uncertainty still exists as to what exactly it has contributed. Several problems exist. First, many works are unknown due to their farspread and non-English bases. There has also been a tendency of some consumer researchers to caricaturize semiotics (e.g., wrongly equating the whole with only one subdomain such as structural linguistics), which has inhibited a more comprehensive and accurate appreciation of semiotics. Finally, prior reviews of semiotic consumer research are limited for a number of reasons (being outdated, limited to one country, or constrained by page limits). In sum, the organization and evaluation of semiotic contributions across cultural borders and application frontiers (e.g., advertising, leisure, product symbolism) is vital for appraising the value of semiotics to consumer research today and for improving its applications in future work.

To that end, the researchers assembled as a team sharing strong interest in semiotics, but also with varied academic backgrounds (e.g., marketing, philosophy, sociology) and multiple language fluencies (e.g., English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Chinese). They mailed over 400 letters worldwide, conducted extensive computerized data based searches, made announcements in various newsletters, and traveled internationally to meet with researchers and practitioners (e.g., Finland, Japan) to solicit citations and copies of semiotic consumer research. The combined efforts resulted in over 500 examples of semiotic consumer research.

The researchers then reviewed and evaluated the research papers and books collected. They focused on explicit semiotic research, i.e., where historical foundation, key concepts, and established principles of semiotic inquiry are plainly evoked. They also prioritized empirical research, though some of the top conceptual papers were strongly considered as well. In general, the researchers organized the international contributions to semiotic consumer research according to insights about the structure, process, or content of communication and meaning, as each of these divisions appear within the different topical areas addressed (e.g., advertising, fashion, retail-shopping, leisure, the arts, personal possessions). Certain theoretical themes or propositions emerged within and, at items, across topic areas. For instance, the role of the consumer as an active, self-expressive, and not-wholly-controllable reader of advertising texts appears across several papers (based on Umberto Eco’s work on the concepts of undercoded texts and the “model reader”). Similarly, several semiotic analyses of malls and retail stores have emphasized the designs of space and artifacts as subtle ways by which individuals are led into specific walking patterns, voyeuristic experiences, and a general ambiguity about the fundamental buying motivation for their presence there (even though it is the primary marketing intent of the venue).

The project has been quite complex and time consuming due to its global scope. The conference provided the authors an opportunity to present an overview of the project and stress the findings that appear most valuable for theory and methodology in semiotic consumer research.

An Outline of Findings from a Global Review of Semiotic Consumer Research

David Glen Mick, University of Wisconsin—Madison, U.S.A.
James E. Burroughs, Rutgers University, U.S.A.
Patrik Hetzel, Université Robert Schuman, France
Mary Yoko Brannen, San Jose State University, U.S.A.

This communication aims at showing the difficulties facing anyone who wants to teach semiotics to marketing students or practitioners. It is then shown that the semitiomian must act as a hidden persuader and really use a semiotic strategy to infuse semiotic knowledge.

The first part will focus on the reasons for semiotics’ bad reputation among students and practitioners. The following reasons may be put forward:

- it often appears as an obscure discipline reserved to a very limited set of academics who use what is often perceived as useless and pretentious jargon (icon, expression plan, syntagmatic relationship, etc).
- it requires time and effort because of a quite complex conceptual framework and because of the variety of semiotic schools of thought which often have different paradigms and terms (see for instance the difficulty to define such terms as icon, symbol, etc.); also schools such as the Greimassian school and the Peircean school are often perceived as having antithetic viewpoints.
- an exaggerated difference between theory and practice mainly due to the fact that semiotics has often been primarily used by such disciplines as literary criticism, cultural theory, and urbanism which may seem distant from managerial purposes.

The second part of this presentation will provide recommendation on how to overcome these difficulties. The pedagogical devices which have proved to be successful will be mentioned.

There are two parallel approaches to be developed in order to “semitize” students. On the one hand, there is an implicit approach which shows that semiotics infuses most of every day life practices. The objective of this approach is to put students in a position where they cannot deny the fundamental existence of semiosis. Students must be shown that they act as Monsieur Jourdain in Moliere’s Bourgeois Gentilhomme, that is “they do semiotics every minute of their life without even knowing it.” This stage requires a strong emphasis on daily practices; most of Floch’s works illustrate, for instance, this semiotization of every day life by showing that semiotics can help to decode such practices as the visit to a hypermarket, the purchase of a car, the choice of a menu, the interpretation of logos and advertising messages, the choice of clothes, etc. This implicit approach is used to increase the general involvement of students towards semiotics.

On the other hand, an explicit approach must also be implemented; this second approach should provide students with terminology (via dictionaries, encyclopedias etc) as well as tools and models (e.g., the semiotic square). This explicit approach assists students in structuring their semiotic perspectives on reality and provides them with concepts and methods they can readily apply to managerial issues. The use of special case studies are very useful at this stage because they illustrate the extent to which a semiotic perspective can provide diagnostic insights and strategic directions for numerous managerial problems and decisions scenarios. For illustration, the semiotic analysis of time (see Voitrol 1976) in the resolution of the Swatch case will be discussed.

Don’t Tell My Students I Am A Semiotician, They Think I Am An Auditor In a Bordello…”

Benoit Heilbrunn, E.M. Lyon, France

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Commercial Semiotics: Selling It In Without Selling Out
Virginia Valentine, Semiotic Solutions
The thrust of this presentation deals with the problematic of adapting the vast—often obtuse—body of semiotic theory to a methodology that will meet the demands of the marketplace and the needs of the commercial consumer, i.e., how to make it user-friendly without compromising its epistemological principles. And also make a profit. In the presentation I focused on three main areas.

1. Semiotic Solutions—The Brand
Selling semiotics is no different from selling any other product. And Semiotic Solutions lives—or dies—by the rules of the brand.

You have to manufacture the product out of the raw materials of the theory. You have to cost it, price it, and market it. Above all, you have to semiotically construct a subject position for the receiver that enables her/him to see the processed and packaged theory as the custom-tailored solution to a precise marketing problem. This includes meeting the timescales that the buyer—who is probably a cog in a vast ever-turning wheel—is working to, while still maintaining the rigour of the analysis. And it entails reformulating theoretical principles as marketing concepts and models without sacrificing their theoretical point of difference. I outlined how we have approached this production process and talked about some of the problems we have faced: what we’ve managed to overcome and where we are still struggling.

2. Semiotic Analysis as Consumer Research
This is the most difficult part because it re-enacts and repeats the semiotic revolution every time. For a commercial community that regards the humanist sovereign consumer as the centre of his/her world and the source of all understanding and decision-making, the notion that a semiotic analysis—half a dozen ‘semioticians’ sitting round looking at ads and packages—can really tell you what is going on in the consumer mind is, to say the least, difficult to accept. But accept it they must. If not, we may think we’re selling semiotics but they won’t have bought into it.

However, we now sell far more semiotic analyses on precisely that basis, rather than qualitative consumer studies. In my talk, I touched on how we position semiotic analysis as a more accurate first stage alternative to conventional consumer research—and also create programmes that position consumer research as a secondary stage in a semiotic study. At this point in the presentation I brought in several case histories to show how the programmes work and the results they can deliver.

3. Commercial Semiotics—The Way Forward
This section brought the talk full circle. In these concluding remarks I focused on the development of semiotic products. I referred broadly to international studies, semiotic training for clients, semiotic training for clients, semiotic brand-development consultancies, NPD innovators, and so on.

My aim was to look into the future regarding the growth of semiotics out of theory—out of consultancy even—into a series of ‘things’ that will become indispensable tools for marketing, market research, and for all communications. In other words, I advocated that we should look at commercial semiotics not as a commentator on the production/consumption process, but as the dynamic at its heart.
Presentation of US and UK Advertising in Journal and Tabloid Sunday Newspapers: Cross-Cultural Content Analysis

Mark A. P. Davies, University of Loughborough, U.K.
Melvin Prince, Pace University, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT

This study is a cross-cultural content analysis of presentational features of newspaper advertising. A sample of ads from both US and UK journals and tabloids was analyzed by the number of items advertised, their shape, type and mode of illustration, and the use of color.

Presentational features differ between markets for number of items shown, whereas they differ between newspapers within the same market for type of illustration; and vary in both markets and newspapers for the use of color. These results suggest both cross-cultural factors and audience demographics are selectively important for newspaper advertising.

This study involves testing an integrative theory of newspaper advertising, which postulates that presentational features are reflectors of advertising strategy. Presentational features represent design and layout dimensions, such as the number of items advertised within an ad, the shape, the use of photographs or illustrations; whether ads are in descriptive or decorative type; and the use of color. Edwards and Liebowitz, (1981: 172-173) assert that a decorative type portrays the basic character of the merchandise, either in pictures and/or words, but leaves detail to the readers’ imagination, designed to create an atmosphere associated with prestige. Conversely, a descriptive ad illustration shows the merchandise pictorially with accurate detail, designed to trigger immediate sales.

Our theory builds on theories of cognition and perception from advertising psychologists. Tolley and Bogart (1994) assert that newspaper readers who are not necessarily prospects at the time of ad exposure will use peripheral vision to scan vast quantities of newspaper material and then focus more exactly on specific ads that attract their attention. According to Berlyne (1966:182-187), attention is increased by an unexpected or novel stimulus. Our theory purports that presentational features, in concert with other creative approaches, serve to build attention and to uniquely position the merchandise or store by improving reputation, exclusivity or prestige. Thus single-item ads convey distinctiveness, unique ad shapes attract attention (Lund, 1947; Bogart, 1967), photographs convey authenticity that artistic illustrations lack (Ball and Smith, 1992); color advertising communicates attention (Lund, 1947) and exclusivity; whilst decorative illustrations enhance store or product prestige (Edwards and Liebowitz, 1981).

Advertising strategies incorporating presentational decisions can be evaluated for their cost effectiveness. Our theory suggests there are strategic trade-offs between the costs associated with the choice of advertising presentation alternatives (as described above) and advertising frequency. This would suggest that academics might devote more attention to the presentational aspects of advertising, which is often neglected in advertising strategy research.

The theory focuses on strategies in advertising presentation for newspapers with different audience profiles. Marketers segment their audiences on a variety of demographic characteristics such as age, income level, educational achievements and geographical area (Zeithaml, 1985; Slama and Tashchian, 1985; O’Brien and Ford, 1988; and Kahle, 1986). Targeting strategies capitalize on the strategic choice of presentational alternatives. All things being equal, education level and socioeconomic segments vary in responsivity to varying types of advertising presentation. When different newspapers cater for different socio-economic audience profiles serving different regions, we expect differences in the presentational features of advertisements.

Newspapers can be categorized as quality journals that offer more news coverage than the compacted tabloids. Journals report on the news more authoritatively, and less sensational than tabloids. Journals are designed for a readership comprised of predominantly middle to higher socio-economic groups, whereas the readership profile of tabloids tends to be comprised of predominantly lower socio-economic groups (NRS). Applying our integrative theory, we hypothesize that presentational features vary between newspapers according to their distinctive reader profiles within a country. Specifically, we examine whether journals are more likely to use presentational features that we have suggested can uniquely position the store or merchandise. These presentational features may vary more between journals and tabloids within a country than between newspapers comprised of similar audience profiles from different regions or countries. We argue that socio-economic segmentation is more attuned to both the needs of advertisers (insofar as the medium supports the message) and with the expectations of their respective audiences.

Our study adopts a cross-subcultural approach, by focussing on regions rather than countries, as advocated Samiee and Jeong (1994). We test for whether differences in presentational features will be greater between journals and tabloids within the same subculture compared to that between journals or between tabloids across subcultures.

We suggest this will be moderated by the characteristics of retail advertising. Since much of regional advertising is retail (Hathcote, 1995; Nowak, Cameron and Krugman, 1993), any similarities in presentational features found between tabloids and journals might reflect the conditions germane to retailing. First, retailing often deals with merchandise that people need regularly with some buying urgency (Park, 1993), so ads are created quickly for the market, reflected by fast track advertising from initial conception to production in media. Quick decisions may appear best served by following popular presentational approaches in advertising. Second, many retail advertisers are constrained by smaller ad budgets, severe competition and cost pressures (Jackson and Parasuraman, 1988). If retailers need to base their design decisions on economies of scale, by virtue of their vast volume of newspaper insertions, investment may be prioritized into delivery and service rather than creative diversity in presentation. This might help explain advertising similarities between newspapers as compared to other media, even if readership profiles are different.

The retail connection amplifies our theory. Retailing requires a need for advertising exposure to be direct and fast (reducing the time available for investing in the quality of exposure). Cost is likely to feature heavily in advertising strategy, which may be reflected in the choice of presentational features. Due to the fast track and cost-conscious nature of retail ads, we expect a greater incidence of multiple items, vertical formats, drawings, descriptive illustrations, and use of black and white.

Our study examines ads for two distinctly different demographic readership profiles represented by journals and tabloids.
within each region, but which are broadly similar across regions. We choose two quality broadsheet newspapers and two tabloid newspapers, one of each representing either the Greater London and South East market of the United Kingdom, or the New York metropolitan market of the United States. This is the first transnational advertising study that compares variations in presentation features, based on newspaper vehicles between regions or subcultures. Ads are also examined by store format and product, should there be different distributions between the two regions. In essence, region or area stands as a proxy for subculture, whereas newspaper vehicle might account for intra-subcultural differences.

METHOD

In order to summarize a vast amount of manifest pictorial and text data, content analysis was considered an appropriate way of classifying data objectively and systematically (Berelson, 1952; Kassarjian, 1977; Weber, 1990). We developed a classification scheme for coding ads based on selected products and presentation features of advertising design that ensured mutual exclusivity of categories (Ball and Smith, 1992). The classification was pre-tested for its coding suitability. The scheme offered explicit guidance to coders in making appropriate selections that best describe the manifest content for each ad.

Coding was by newspaper section, product, and presentation feature. Presentational features of ads (with response categories) were coded by number of items featured (as single, omnibus or group items), shape (as vertical, horizontal or square), illustration mode (as drawings or photographs), illustration type (as descriptive or decorative), and use of color or black and white, based on their manifest content as described by Edwards and Liebowitz (1981). Products were coded in terms of the merchandise featured in the ads, classified as auto, red goods (i.e., fashion goods and jewelry), electronics, home furnishings and ‘other’ (containing one or more of the preceding items). Each response category was tightly defined operationally in the form of a code book, following definitions advanced in Edwards and Liebowitz, (1981); Moriarty, (1991).

Sampling

A census of ads for the most frequently advertised products was taken. These products were pre-determined by content analyzing and tabulating a smaller sub-sample of ads drawn from the same newspapers. This procedure ensured products important for advertising revenues were examined. Replicate ads were then removed from analysis to reduce any skewing tendencies, in accordance with Stern and Resnick, (1991).

Selection of medium

Newspapers are typically the most widely used ad medium (Frederick-Collins, 1992; Dunn, Barban, Krugman and Reid, 1991), and have been rated as most appropriate medium for local businesses in a study for using non-national advertising media (Otnes and Faber, 1989).

Selection of newspaper vehicles

Journal and tabloid newspapers were chosen that provided a complementary readership composition between US and UK cities, both in terms of geography (i.e., the urban coverage of the respective cities), and level of sophistication (i.e., tabloid versus journal). The London Times and the New York Times (NY Times) represented journals, and The London Express and New York Daily News (Daily News) represented tabloids. Although all newspapers are available in a number of major cities within their respective countries, specific retail advertising varies regionally by city and should be expected to reflect retail distribution patterns. We chose Sunday editions for our analysis because they are replete with advertising. The NY edition of the NY Times was chosen because it is the closest parallel to the London edition of the Times. Each newspaper covers an entire metro area, with the NY edition covering four or more States, while the London edition covers Greater London and the South East. In order to generate comparisons between different readership profiles, we selected tabloids comparable in profiles, but different from the quality journals. The Daily News has a similar coverage (in terms of numbers of readers) to the Times, and was chosen as a prototypical, popular tabloid. An equivalent newspaper chosen for the Greater London area was the Sunday Express (hereafter referred to as the London Express). According to National Readership Survey data, the percent of readers who are classified “middle class” by a socioeconomic index is 86% for the London Times and 60% for the London Express. The 1998 Gallup Media Usage Study a showed a roughly parallel contrast between the New York Times and the Daily News, using education as a proxy variable for social class (80% vs. 43% attended college).

Selection of time period studied: Examining retail ads leading up to Xmas

In order to keep our study manageable, we restricted our sample to ads shown in the Xmas season. All issues from November 17th to the 15th December 1996 were used, considered to provide a sufficient sample size to offer generalizations about the data (n=694 ads in total). We chose this period because we expected more advertising over this period, reflecting an intensity of retail competition, for several reasons. First, the Xmas period is the most important time of the trading year for most retailers, in terms of generating extra volume, improved margins on seasonal purchases (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997). Traditionally, the ritual of gift giving over Xmas is celebrated in similar ways in both the States and the UK (Belk, 1975). This has meant a prosperous time for retailers because additional items are purchased beyond those normally considered by the purchaser.

Selection of countries and regions

By treating heterogeneous populations as simple cultures, true cross-cultural differences cannot be detected. For practical purposes, we focus our attention on two complementary regional areas of business importance, in which these differences are considerably reduced. The United States and the UK were chosen as countries from which to draw regional comparisons because they are widely regarded as having similar economic and cultural orientations (Samovar and Porter, 1994). The advertising industries for both nations are at a similar level of maturity for each country (Katz and Lee, 1992), with similarities in media, language and literacy rates. Both countries enjoy a substantial middle class, of great potential for segmenting media by traditional demographics (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997). Nevertheless, despite several cultural similarities, some important culturally derived differences in ads might still be expected (Frith and Wesson, 1991). Moreover, ad presentation may show a customization that represents different groups or segments, reflecting the different subcultures studied.

Our choice of subcultures was selected because of their importance to advertisers in terms of their concentration of population and similar spread in terms of demographics. For example, the comparability of educational standards for each region indicates that literacy rates would be similar.

The judges

These were selected from students from the two countries who had management degrees. Two judges were selected who independently coded the ads for both the US and UK data. The ads
for each newspaper were numbered for each edition to ensure the coders used the same order of coding. Both judges were subjected to a similar length of training and exposure to the advertising material, in accordance with Wimmer and Dominick (1991, 157-158). Each judge was provided with the same code-book for study and then independently coded a two-week sample of data to test their understanding of the coding system. Both obtained feedback from the investigators.

Reliability Checks of Coding

After refining the explanation of categories, a further sub-sample (20% of the data) was reanalyzed to ensure no future problems. The complete sample was then coded. Intercoder reliability was then tested. Table 1 shows the number of categories for each feature, the number of ads whose classification was originally agreed on for each feature, the percentage of advertisements initially agreed on, and the reliability index $I_r$ recommended by Perreault and Leigh (1989). This measure of inter-coder reliability is more robust than the more prevalent coefficients of agreement technique, since the latter does not take account of the laws of chance in reaching a coding decision. All reliability values were above 0.9 and well within the acceptable levels recommended by Kassarjian (1977) and Nunnally (1978). In accordance with Kolbe and Burnett (1991: 249), intercoder reliability was calculated for individual categories to prevent potential concealment of pooled results overestimating any reliability estimates overall. According to Krippendorf (1980: 3), a content analysis with many features cannot make use of a single figure to assess overall reliability. It cannot be assumed that reliable items compensate for unreliable ones.

Intracoder reliability was interpreted by asking each coder how they had coded the prior sub-sample to test their level of understanding and concentration levels. In the pre-testing, some responses showed differences between coders of >10%. Originally, one coder had some difficulty in distinguishing between ads containing group items and those containing omnibus items, treating group items too narrowly because the term omnibus refers to a diverse range of items, and indiscriminately treating too many ads as decorative when there was a prevalence in the descriptive mode. Further training involved feedback from the researchers that clarified definitions and reduced confusion.

ANALYSIS

Multi-way frequency tables were constructed for each research question and differences between newspapers were analyzed by chi-square analysis. Where contrasts between the regional markets were observed to be different, further significance tests were conducted using Yates’ correction for 2x2 tables, where the critical value for the original table was used as the standard for the reduced tables.

Retail formats

Due to the difficulty in classifying ads by retail format, these were post-analyzed by the researchers for both regional markets. We categorized ads as retailer, manufacturer or co-operative advertising, with retail ads subdivided into specialty chains, independent specialists or department stores. Specialty chain stores and specialty independents were defined according to Jarrow et al., 1987, and actual names were verified by the Retail Directory, 1998 (for the UK sample) and Dun’s Regional Directory for the US sample. Since there were relatively few out-of-town stores in our sample, these were classified with specialty chains. Department stores were verified by the same sources, associated with a wider range of merchandise than specialty stores. The greatest difficulty in classification was found to be auto ads. Some of these were found to be co-operatively funded between manufacturer and retailer, with both names prominent in the body copy of the ads.

RESULTS

There were 694 ads examined in total. Of these, the NY Times accounted for 399, the Daily News: 157, the London Times: 62, and the London Express: 76. The relatively smaller sample size from the UK does not reflect differences in sampling design between the two countries. It reflects the comparative incidence of advertising between the two countries during the period of data collection.

Table 2 provides frequencies and percentages in support of our findings. Results for the differential incidence of multiple item advertising showed that certain newspapers were more likely to have advertising with several items ($\chi^2=85.5$, $p=0.001$, $d.f.=3$).

Contrary to our integrative theory, the incidence of multiple items was not significant between journals and tabloids, but significant between the newspapers in New York and Greater London, with $\chi^2=72.2$, $p=0.001$, $d.f.=3$. The percentage of ads with multiple items was 74.1% and 88.5% for the NY Times and Daily News respectively, compared to only 40% of the advertisements for each of the Greater London newspapers.

As expected, we found that the vast majority of newspaper ads were vertical in shape. The proportion ranged from 80.3% for the London Express to 88.2% for the Daily News. However, the use of vertical ad shapes did not differ significantly across newspapers, (not supporting our integrative theory), with no statistical contrast necessary.
Unexpectantly, the majority of ads showed photographs rather than drawings. The Daily News used photographs in 86.7% of advertising illustrations, while the other newspapers used photographs in 95% of ads. Only a contrast between the Daily News and the other newspapers resulted in overall significance ($\chi^2=8.4$, $p=0.05$, d.f.=3).

Findings for the type of illustration varied by the kind of newspaper within each country which support our integrative theory. The NY Times is significantly more likely than the Daily News to emphasize decorative illustration (71.8% vs. 65.0%), with $\chi^2=21.4$, $p=0.001$, d.f.=3). The difference is even more pronounced for the Greater London newspapers sampled. The London Times is significantly more decorative than the London Express, with 83% and 60% respectively ($\chi^2=15.5$, $p=0.01$, d.f.=3). Differences between the newspapers on type of illustration were significant ($\chi^2=9.9$, $p=0.05$, d.f.=3).

In examining variations in the use of color vs. black and white advertising, this was only relevant for the UK, at the time of the research. It was found that the use of color was significantly greater for advertising in the London Times than for the London Express, supporting our integrative theory (41.7% vs. 16%, with $\chi^2=9.8$, $p=0.05$, d.f.=3).

TABLE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentational Feature</th>
<th>NY Times</th>
<th>Daily News</th>
<th>LDN Times</th>
<th>LDN Express</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>a</strong></td>
<td><strong>a</strong></td>
<td><strong>a</strong></td>
<td><strong>a</strong></td>
<td><strong>a</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Items in Ad<strong>a</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single item</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple items</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>88.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape<strong>a</strong> of advertisement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertical</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>88.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of Illustration<strong>a</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Illustration<strong>a</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorative</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Color**+**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black and white</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colour</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>398</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates a statistically significant difference in the distribution of presentational features across newspapers at $p<.05$.
** Indicates a statistically significant difference in the distribution of presentational features across newspapers at $p<.01$.
+ At the time of this study, New York newspaper advertising was entirely in black and white.
A totals less than 694 due to additional categories that were subsequently incidental in frequency.

Unexpectantly, the majority of ads showed photographs rather than drawings. The Daily News used photographs in 86.7% of advertising illustrations, while the other newspapers used photographs in 95% of ads. Only a contrast between the Daily News and the other newspapers resulted in overall significance ($\chi^2=8.4$, $p=0.05$, d.f.=3).

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**DISCUSSION**

Due to the small sample sizes of the Greater London ads, the research questions were not analyzed by retail format or product. Future research requires larger sample sizes and sample replicates over the same time frame for several years. Instead, observational inferences are reported where warranted based on the distribution of product and retail formats. From all the presentational features studied, only the findings of multiple item ads suggest a greater cross-cultural influence than a demographic influence by newspaper profile. The prevalence of multiple ads in the NY area may reflect the different retail mix between the NY and Greater London areas, possibly with NY retailers requiring a greater support for the amount of advertising from promotional stores and discounters there. Manufacturer ads are far more prevalent in the Greater London market (80% for the London Times, 56% for the London Express), compared to the prevalence of retail advertising in the NY market (85% for the NY Times, 97% for the Daily News). Proposition 1: Retail advertisers in the NY market consider the use of multiple-item ads more appropriate than in the Greater London market, with comparatively more retail ads than manufacturer ads in the NY market, and more retail ads associated with promotional stores. Promotional stores may be more acceptable to a greater number in the US due to their bargain-driven culture, which may be associated with a down-market image in the UK market.

Analyzing ads by product shows the percentage of home furnishings and red goods advertised is 51% in the NY Times and 45% in the Daily News, compared to 12% in the London Times and 14% in the London Express. It is noticeable that home furnishings and red goods are often advertised as multiple items within
department stores or specialist chains. Advertisements from these store formats appear more frequently in the NY market. There is a prevalence of business-to-business products (e.g., office electronics) advertised in the Greater London market. Collectively, by observational inference, the distribution of product and retail format appears to influence advertising presentation. Proposition 2: The prevalence of multiple items in the NY market reflects differences in the distribution of products advertised there compared to the Greater London market.

According to a US copywriter, when merchandise is emphasized, price-featuring might also be promoted. Examining the merchandise advertising more closely revealed a pattern of promoting bargains using special promotions for the NY market rather than promoting clearance lines. This may reflect the competitive intensity at Xmas, in which many retailers may need to offer loss leaders to generate store traffic and hence stimulate additional sales. A managing director of a UK advertising agency suggested the greater emphasis of merchandise advertising in the States is partly a reflection of different business philosophies between UK and US advertising. We were advised that customers are generally less trustworthy in the States, with an emphasis on direct, hard sell approaches. Proposition 3: The greater weight of multiple item ads in the NY market reflects different selling philosophies. In NY, they are more likely selling the merchandise than the image or reputation of the supplier (whether manufacturer or retail store).

The prevalence of vertical formats was expected, but differences were not found between newspapers or regional subcultures. Proposition 4: Ad shape is not directly influenced by demographics nor culture, but more by the constraint of the shape of newspapers. This suggests the use of vertical formats logically improves readability of the advertising and is consistent with the columnar appearance of newspapers.

Neither culture nor demographics appear to influence choice of mode of illustration. Proposition 5: The prevalence of photographs over drawings for each newspaper is attributable to the greater opportunity for projecting the merchandise of retail ads in a more realistic, and therefore convincing manner.

Proposition 6: The relatively greater amount of decorative ads relative to descriptive types of illustration in the journals reflects the greater incidence of luxury or added value items advertised there, that are more likely to be uniquely positioned. However, the predominance of decorative ads, even in the tabloids, is surprising. One explanation for the popularity of decorative ads is the sense of store atmosphere they generate, which can help improve receptivity to new products designed for the New Year.

Proposition 7: The popularity of using color ads in the London Times suggests they are more appropriate than black and white ads for projecting high quality and taste, geared to a younger, upscale audience. But care should be taken in weighing up the cost effectiveness of using color ads, which ultimately should depend on media objectives linked to the products advertised. Hence the London Times, with a greater incidence of premium priced products advertised, may offer greater margins to advertisers to sustain the additional costs of color advertising.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings offer some insight into how advertisers use presentational features to support their advertising strategy in the targeting of particular audience profiles. We conclude this is contingent on the specific presentational feature studied. The different frequencies found in type of illustration and use of color between newspaper types appear to support our integrative theory, together with the popularity of multiple items, vertical shapes, and black and white ads, can be explained by a strong retail presence. But, making decisions about the shapes of ads may simply reflect newspaper advertising practice without a conscious decision to consider shape to reinforce advertising strategy (since unique shapes that can grab attention were found to be rare). In addition, the incidence of multiple items may be a better reflector of cultural effects. The comparative abundance of multi-item ads for the NY area reflects the greater degree of competition there for ad space, which ironically further adds to clutter. The average amount of display ads per page for the US newspapers combined is 1.49 in comparison to only 0.91 for the Greater London newspapers. For some key areas of presentation features, competition may serve to encourage repetition rather than to contribute to a unique position.

Academics can learn from comparative studies such as this by reflecting on normative practice across newspaper types, stores and regions serving different audiences. Advertising practitioners may wish to consider the marginal effects of using additional promotional features to support their advertising strategy, by comparing practices across audience profiles and regional markets.

LIMITATIONS

First, we discuss the limitations for analyzing visual data using content analysis. A general problem of content analysis is that it cannot reveal underlying processes that determine content patterns. The symbolic character of communication is restricted to its manifest content (Ball and Smith, 1992). Therefore, our explanations and discussion of our findings are simply conjectures that cannot be proven by content analysis. However, they offer useful propositions for further research.

Second, observed differences may arise from the presence of uncontrollable variables such as product category specific effects rather than cultural orientations. We acknowledge this as a separate issue for further research.

Third, it can be argued that examining design elements alone are only one aspect that offers a total image to the reader. Further research might investigate how advertising content might mediate the effectiveness of design and layout elements. Fourth, it can also be argued that a content analysis merely highlighting differences between design and layout practices across different audience profiles need not necessarily point to good practice nor effective targeting. But at least differences suggest retail advertisers are thinking beyond a mass marketing approach, by putting some thought behind different types of design. Fifth, an extension of the study across other newspapers and/or regions might be instructive and offer more support to making generalizations on advertising design practice. Further research might fill the void in these limitations and explore further cultural parameters, perhaps those in high context societies.

REFERENCES


Content Analysis in Cross-Cultural Advertising Research: Limitations and Recommendations

Dawn B. Lerman, The City University of New York, U.S.A.
Michael A. Callow, The City University of New York, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT

Although content analysis is widely used in cross-cultural advertising research, its applicability in such settings has never been questioned. This paper argues that the use of content analysis in cross-cultural research requires reliability checks beyond those that have been developed for content analytic studies. As such, this paper offers a particular variation of content analysis for use in cross-cultural advertising research. This two-step process requires 1) members of the target audience to provide a cultural interpretation of the ads selected and 2) bilingual coders to classify the content of these interpretations according to traditional content analytic guidelines. Unlike traditional content analysis, this two-step approach allows researchers to perform cross-country reliability tests and thus be more confident in the validity of their results.

Researchers have been interested in studying ads not only for what they say about consumerism in a given society but also for what they tell us about ourselves. Identification of different kinds of appeals and their use, for example, tells us about our own needs and goals and the kinds of products we use to satisfy them. An affiliation appeal, for example, in an ad for an inanimate object such as a computer might suggest that the reduction in daily personal contact in our lives has not coincided with a reduction in the need for such contact.

Given that ads are thought to reflect behavior and values, it would seem logical that researchers could predict the relative frequency of different advertising appeals both within and across countries based on known cultural tendencies. In fact, such comparisons are quite common in the marketing literature and have revealed what are sometimes vast differences in advertising content and practices across countries. For example, Hong, Muderrisoglu, and Zinkhan (1987) found that Japanese advertisers rely much more on emotional appeals to sell their products than do their American counterparts. In a similar type of study, Callow, Lerman, and de Juan Vigaray (1997) found that affiliation appeals are more widely used in Spanish advertising than in American advertising.

Cross-cultural studies of this kind typically use content analysis as the primary, if not only method for comparing ads. Content analysis is a technique used to classify text or objects into predefined categories for the purposes of comparing basic components (i.e., content) of that text or those objects (Krippendorff 1980). Content analysis was originally intended to capture the presence (or absence) of a word or object and its frequency. For example, coders might be instructed to count the number of times the word “dog” or a picture of a dog appears in a group of ads. Given the lack of theoretical interest in such counts today, however, content analysis is now more widely applied in that researchers often use it to capture meaning. In this case, a researcher would not be as interested in the fact that a dog appears in an ad as much as he might be interested in the classification of the ad’s appeal as affiliation-oriented by the coder based on the apparent relationship between the dog and its owner.

This paper examines content analysis as a research method in marketing and its applicability to cross-cultural advertising research. More specifically, this paper argues that the current use of content analysis in cross-cultural research may compromise the reliability and therefore the validity of results from those studies. Moreover, the method does not allow for complete tests of reliability and validity in such cross-cultural studies. As such, we propose a particular variation of content analysis for use in cross-cultural advertising research. This methodological variation is explained following a discussion of meaning in advertising (i.e., the content to be coded) and the procedures and accompanying limitations of more traditional content analyses in the area of cross-cultural advertising research.

MEANING IN ADVERTISING

The interpretation of ads requires more than just semantic understanding. The meaning of an ad is often found in metaphors that are expressed by words and/or pictures (Cook 1992). According to Fraser (1993, p. 332), a metaphor is “an instance of nonliteral language in which the intended propositional content must be determined by the construction of an analogy.” In language, many idiomatic expressions convey metaphors as is the case with the expression “goes over your head” which Americans and many other English speakers would interpret as signifying “incomprehensible to you” (Cook 1992). Such expressions can appear in ad copy or they can be suggested by the visual elements of an ad. An example of the latter case appears in an ad for Ultra Bold laundry detergent showing money pouring down the drain and in an ad for an insurance firm which shows a competitor literally stealing the shirt from someone’s back (Cook 1992).

An understanding of metaphors such as those contained in advertising can also benefit from Saussure’s view that linguistic signs are arbitrary. Cook (1992) exemplifies how this description of the sign can be extended to describe the metaphor “the heat is on.” In this example, “heat” is the signifier (i.e., vehicle) and “difficulty” is the corresponding signified (i.e., concept). In Saussure’s semiotics, the connection between a signifier and a signified holds because it is known to hold by people who use the system. As such, by making appropriate choices and combinations, a person who knows the system (la langue) encodes his or thoughts into words and transmits them to another person (in possession of the same langue) who decodes them, thus recovering the original meaning. Rhetorical theory expresses it this way: a sender “crafts a message in anticipation of the audience’s probable response, using shared knowledge of various vocabularies and conventions, as well as common experience” (Scott 1994, p. 252).

The common thread in the various approaches to language and meaning is that metaphors are culturally-determined (Fiumara 1995). In advertising, this is the case whether they are expressed through the ad copy or through the visual elements of the ad (Scott 1994). The implication is that an ad appearing in one country may very well be meaningless in another since the consumers from these countries do not operate within the system and do not share the same knowledge. This possibility has consequences for the methodological approach that researchers take toward cross-cultural advertising research. It is to these consequences that we now turn.

CAPTURING MEANING IN ADVERTISING THROUGH CONTENT ANALYSIS

It was mentioned earlier in this paper that over time content analytic studies have become increasingly complex particularly in the type of content they seek to capture. Although classification
based on meaning poses a more challenging task for the coder than does the more traditional count, coders are likely to agree on such classifications if they share the knowledge required to interpret the predetermined categories, extract meaning from ads, and relate that meaning to the categories (Eco 1979). In much of cross-cultural content analysis, however, coders are unlikely to share the required knowledge since coders from different countries are used to code ads from their respective countries. Given the cultural content of advertising, such a scenario is unavoidable if coders are coding the ads themselves. In other words, only a member of a given society will be able to properly interpret an ad from that society.

Despite the benefit of selecting native society members to code ads in cross-cultural advertising research, such an approach poses a problem that has yet to be addressed in the literature: the assessment of cross-country coder reliability. More specifically, the traditional approaches to reliability assessment in content analysis do not allow for such tests. As a result, researchers pursuing these kinds of studies either ignore the issue, perhaps thinking it unnecessary (Aulakh and Kotabe 1993; Parmeswaran and Yaprak 1987), or assume that high cross-country reliability exists. In examining the issue of reliability in content analysis, this section argues that such considerations are necessary in cross-cultural advertising research.

The Reliability of Content Analysis in a Cross-Cultural Setting
A fundamental starting point for any research program is the extent to which the data collected is reliable, particularly since it is a necessary condition for validating the research findings. Reliability is broadly defined as the degree to which measures are free from error and yield consistent results (Peter 1979). In the case of content analysis, the researcher must consider both the reliability of the categories used for coding and the reliability of the judges (Kassarjian 1977). The procedures for achieving reliable categories and a high interjudge reliability have been well documented and agreed upon in the literature. These procedures, however, center on the application of content analysis within a domestic environment. As a result, procedural concerns arise when applying content analysis within a cross-cultural framework.

Category Reliability
Category reliability deals with the definition of the codes and the extent to which judges are able to use these definitions to classify the specified material. The narrower and more simplified the category, the higher the category reliability and therefore the higher the interjudge reliability (Kassarjian 1977). This can lead to the oversimplification of categories, which paradoxically reduces the relevance of the findings. For instance, advertisers are less interested in finding out the number of women portrayed in print ads than they are in the role of these women. A coding system that focuses on whether or not females are depicted in ads would lead to high category and interjudge reliability, but would be of little relevance to theory development. Sexual stereotypes of women, however, are more abstract in meaning and therefore are likely to be less reliably coded although at the same time of greater interest to the researcher. As such, Kassarjian (1977) suggests that the researcher must strike a balance between reliability and the relevance of categories.

Within cross-cultural research, the drive for relevance in category development is further compounded by the distinction between emic and etic perspectives. An emic perspective is the meaning that is derived from within a specific culture, whereas an etic perspective is a comparison of meaning between cultures based on dimensions that are considered universal (Triandis 1995). With domestic content analysis, the categories selected can therefore be either emic or etic in nature. When conducting cross-cultural content analysis, however, the researcher must make sure that the categories selected are relevant to the cultures included in the study. For example, using McClelland’s achievement motive as a category for cross-cultural comparisons between ad appeals in an individualist and a collectivist country may be construed as an emic measure. Indeed, many cross-cultural researchers have argued that McClelland’s emphasis on an individualistic type of achievement is culture-bound, and neglects other cultural meanings, contexts, and modes of achievement (see for instance Church and Lonner 1998). Researchers should therefore strive for truly etic categories or, at the very least, be aware of the bias inherent in the use of emic categories when interpreting their results.

Interjudge Reliability
The second area of concern in content analysis is the degree of consistency between coders, i.e., that they apply the same set of categories to the same content (Kassarjian 1977). The most common method for measuring interjudge reliability is the ratio of coding agreements between the judges to the total number of coding decisions. Not surprisingly, the greater the number and complexity of the codes, the lower the interjudge reliability. As a general guideline, agreement rates at or above 80% are considered to be satisfactory.

Unfortunately, the interjudge reliability in cross-cultural studies is rarely calculated. This is due to the procedures used by researchers when conducting cross-cultural content analyses. More specifically, the researcher has a variety of options when selecting judges to code cross-cultural material. Assume for the moment that a researcher wishes to categorize ads from Japan and the United States. The researcher can choose to use (1) judges from one of the countries or (2) judges from both countries. Each of these options will be examined in turn.

If the researcher chooses the first option, then either the judges must be fluent in both English and Japanese or the ads from the foreign country must first be translated into the judges’ language. The use of bilingual judges is perhaps more desirable than the translation option particularly since the translation process will only focus on the copy of the ad, and will not translate the visual element of print and television ads. This means that any symbolic appeals ingrained in the visual element will either be overlooked by the judge or may be misinterpreted. This problem is aggravated further when comparing ads between high and low-context cultures such as Japan and the United States. Within high-context cultures, the communication style is highly implicit, whereas in low-context cultures, the communication style is more explicit. One can safely assume that in high-context cultures the visual element is laden with symbolism that will be difficult to interpret correctly for an outsider (Hall 1989). In this case, then, the interjudge reliability may be high, but the validity of the data becomes questionable.

As an alternative to translation, the researcher may use judges that are fluent in both languages. The issue of fluency, however, is also problematic. It may be the case that the coders are Americans who have learned Japanese as a second language. Whereas the coders may be highly proficient in the Japanese language, they are not “cultural” translators. In other words, their literal interpretations of the copy element of the ad may be correct, but their cultural interpretations of the translation and of the visual elements will still be biased by their American perspective. This would once again put into question the validity of the data.

To overcome the problems inherent in using coders from a single country, cross-cultural researchers have used local judges to content analyze the material. In other words, American judges are used to code American ads and Japanese judges are used to code
Japanese ads. The logic behind this approach is that the judges apply cultural knowledge to correctly interpret the material while at the same time applying universal codes to categorize the material. In theory, this would provide a more relevant, and therefore more valid, comparison between the two cultures. The main issue for the researcher then becomes the development and translation of universal categories.

When using this approach (i.e., local judges from each country), interjudge reliability is calculated between judges within each culture. Using this approach, however, does not allow for the measurement of interjudge reliability between cultures, since the coders from each country are not coding the same material. In other words, if the American and Japanese judges code American and Japanese ads respectively, then there is no means to compute the percentage of agreement between American and Japanese judges. How do we know, then, whether or not these judges interpret and apply the categories in the same manner? Given that reliability is a necessary condition for validity, we simply should not feel confident that our results are meaningful without assessing the degree of such consistency across cultures.

An additional problem arises in that unreliable measures lessen the correlation between measures. Using the above example, let us assume that the researcher hypothesizes that differences in sociocultural measures between Japan and the United States help predict differences in ad content. A low correlation between these variables can be interpreted as either proof of little relationship or evidence of poor reliability within one or more of the variables. Without a measure of reliability for the dependent measure, the researcher has no way of knowing which interpretation is most likely. In short, the use of local judges to code local material does not allow for a reliability check between the judges from different cultures and limits the researcher when testing his or her hypotheses.

Based on whether the researcher chooses to use judges from one country or from each country under analysis, the study risks losing either a culturally-relevant interpretation of the material or a method for attaining a measure of cross-cultural interjudge reliability. Most of today’s cross-cultural content analyses seem willing to forego cross-cultural interjudge reliability checks in favor of a more relevant interpretation of the material. It would, however, be more desirable to have both cross-cultural interjudge reliability checks and valid interpretations of the material when conducting a content analysis between countries.

AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD IN CROSS-CULTURAL CONTENT ANALYSIS

An alternative to the two judging approaches mentioned above would be to provide a cultural interpretation of the material before it is content analyzed. This cultural interpretation would involve decoding the material into a form that is easily understood by the judges. Such decoding cannot take place directly (i.e., by the judges themselves) particularly since much of today’s advertising consists of complex images and themes that the target audience needs to “think into” in order to decode (Phillips 1997). Returning to rhetorical theory, the formal elements of an argument are selected according to the sender’s expectations about how the audience will react (Burke 1969; Scott 1994). As such, the sender and receiver of the message must share a common symbolic system for the communication to be effective (Rogers 1995). As pointed out earlier, the shared knowledge between a coder and the advertiser can be achieved by employing native coders for each set of ads. Problems arise, however, in determining cross-cultural interjudge reliability.

The alternative is to have subjects from the target audience interpret the messages themselves before engaging in content analysis. In other words, subjects from the American target audience would interpret American ads and subjects from the Japanese target audience would interpret Japanese ads. In this approach, subjects would be instructed to base their interpretations on a set of questions established by the researcher. The framework used by Mick and Politi (1989) and Phillips (1997) in examining consumer inferences as evoked by an ad’s message provides a useful precedent:

- In your own words, please describe the ad.
- Ignore what the advertiser may have intended and describe your opinions and feelings about the ad.
- What do you think the advertiser was trying to communicate with the ad?
- How do you know what the advertiser was trying to communicate with this ad? What makes you think so?

Obviously, the goals of the research project will determine the nature of the questions. At this stage, however, the subjects are not acting as judges of the material and are instead being asked to provide a written account of the meaning of the material. The purpose of this stage is to convert any implicit messages in the material into explicit information.

Once the cultural interpretation has taken place, judges can be used to categorize the new material. In order to attain a cross-cultural interjudge reliability measure, the judges should be fluent in each language that is used in the material. Since the material has been converted from complex messages to explicit verbal interpretations, the judges need only rely on language translation instead of cultural interpretation to categorize the material.

This two-step process to cross-cultural analysis brings together the benefits of using subjects to make culturally relevant interpretations of marketing material with the means for determining interjudge reliability at a cross-cultural level. It therefore improves on the present judging techniques that are used in cross-cultural content analysis.

Despite the advantages of this new approach, the method raises a number of operationalization issues. For example, how many members of the target audience are needed for the first phase and how is reliability across these members established? The answer to these questions lies in the recognition that interpretations are culturally, subculturally, and personally-determined (Shiffman and Kanuk, 1994). The cultural determinant will be shared by maximally-different members of the target culture whereas the subcultural component will only be shared by target audience members with a similar demographic and/or psychographic profile. The personal component is unlikely to be shared by other target audience members, except perhaps a friend or family member who either witnessed or participated in the particular personal experience driving the interpretation. The key for the researcher, then, is to separate the cultural component of the interpretation from the personal and/or subcultural component.

Separating the cultural component from the subcultural and personal components can be achieved by calling on multiple target audience members who are maximally different in terms of their demographic and psychographic profiles. Thus, suppose the researcher calls on three members of the target audience to provide cultural interpretations of a set of ads, resulting in three texts (one for each target audience member) for each ad. These texts are then coded by the judges who determine that for a particular ad, only one of these texts identified an affiliation appeal; this minority interpretation suggests that affiliation is a ‘weak implicature’ for the ad. On the other hand, all three texts identify an achievement appeal, thereby suggesting that achievement is a ‘strong implicature’
CONCLUSION AND DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This paper examines the limitations of content analysis in cross-cultural advertising research and proposes a variation on content analysis for overcoming these limitations. However, additional methodological studies should be pursued before researchers widely adopt this approach. More specifically, further research needs to be conducted to determine an appropriate number of interpreters needed for step one; this recommendation should seek to minimize confounding from subcultural and personal interpretations without requiring the researcher to collect enormous amount of data that then need to be coded by judges. An establishment of a minimum cutoff for reliability (i.e., based on a correlation coefficient) among audience members would likely be useful as part of this recommendation.

In addition to working out methodological details, researchers might return to the ads from the data sets in their own cross-cultural content analytic studies, perform the two-step process advocated here, and compare the results to those originally obtained. Such comparisons would not only serve to validate the claims made here regarding the limitations in applying content analysis to cross-cultural advertising research, but would also aid in the development of specific guidelines and recommendations for applying this two-step content analytic method. As such, these studies would provide an important step in overcoming the methodological problems which have so often been cited as hampering the development of and contribution made by cross-cultural marketing research (Malhotra, Agarwal, and Peterson 1996).
A Visual Esperanto? The Pictorial Metaphor in Global Advertising
Michael A. Callow, The City University of New York, U.S.A.
Leon G. Schiffman, The City University of New York, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT
The increasing use of pictorial metaphors in advertisements is meant to engage and cognitively challenge the audience. At the same time, the growing popularity of standardized visual images in global advertisements is fueled by the belief that pictures are part of a “universal language.” This paper discusses the conceptual implications of these two trends on the cross-cultural interpretation of pictorial advertisements. It is argued that the use of pictorial metaphors for global advertisements neglects the role of culture on the consumer’s comprehension of visual cues. A cross-cultural research agenda exploring the effects of visual advertisements within a semiotic framework is proposed.

INTRODUCTION
In today’s global environment, the consumer is constantly faced with a barrage of visual images that claim to satisfy his or her needs, wants, and desires. It has been suggested that visual communication is based on a universal understanding, given that most consumers can comprehend pictorial messages (Bougyroy and Guimaraes, 1993; Kernan and Domzal, 1993). This would seem to explain why there has been a shift to global positioning strategies and the creation of global brands such as Benetton that rely almost exclusively on visual images instead of copy in their advertising (Evans and Riyait, 1993). The notion of a “visual Esperanto” is an appealing concept, since it proposes a means for standardizing the advertising message across countries and benefiting from strategic consistency and economies of scale. It may come as a surprise, therefore, that this important topic has received minimal attention within the academic literature.

Does the mere fact that we can all “read” a picture in an ad really mean that we tend to interpret it in a similar fashion? Traditional research in advertising has considered the role of images as a peripheral cue that is meant to trigger an affective response from the audience (for a review of this literature, see Scott 1994). Recently, however, researchers have paid greater attention to the type of information that consumers derive from visual communication (Phillips, 1997). This alternative approach to visual imagery suggests that consumers are often forced to “think into” the meaning of complex pictorial metaphors to infer the meaning of the message. The driving force behind this reasoning is an attempt to cut through the communication clutter, to make the familiar appear shocking, thus grabbing the audience’s attention. Semiotic theory posits that for these types of symbolic metaphors the interpretation is culture-specific (Berger, 1984). This being the case, one may question the effectiveness—or at least the limitations—of the “visual Esperanto” approach.

This paper examines the role of the pictorial metaphor in cross-cultural advertising and questions the universality of meaning of standardized visual ads. It argues that the metaphorical meaning of pictorial elements in an ad is at times culturally-determined. The implications of this position are then discussed.

THE MEANING OF PICTURES IN ADVERTISING
The traditional approach to the meaning of pictures in advertising has been that they reflect objects in the real world. This means that visual language is different from words. Words are arbitrary creations (Saussure, 1959), whereas images are naïvely assumed to be naturalistic representations of the external environment. This would imply that an individual does not have to learn the meaning of pictures as he or she does the meaning of words. Given that the meaning of pictures is deemed not to be arbitrary, it is considered to be a “universal language.” Fowles (1996, pg. 84, italics original) sums up this position as follows:

Because images are one kind of symbol and words are distinctly another, a deep, modal tension exists between them within advertising. Words are completely arbitrary creations; whether we call the domesticated pet dog or Hund or chien makes absolutely no difference so long as those with whom we are most likely to converse are willing to employ the same symbol. An illustration of a dog, however, is another matter; it is a similar figure irrespective of the local language and thus is not arbitrary but a naturalistic representation.

This suggests that advertisers can rely on visuals in their ads to standardize the meaning of the message. Recently, however, advertisers have rightly begun to question the assumption that the meaning of a picture does not exhibit any metaphorical or symbolizing properties of its own (Fowles, 1996; Phillips, 1997). Indeed, the fields of visual art, anthropology, and psychology acknowledge that individuals do infer metaphorical associations with images much as they do with words (Scott, 1994). The art historian Sir Ernst Gombrich points out that the systems of words and images are interrelated (Fowles, 1996; Gardner, 1982). A person has to already have a metaphorical schema of an object such as a dog in order to make sense of the pictorial representation of the object. The picture is therefore in part naturalistic and in part learned; the audience identifies the picture as a representation of a real dog and then makes a connection with the concept of a dog and its associations. For example, the metaphor “It’s a dog’s life” may be conjured up. In this case, the picture becomes a symbol for something greater: the dog is a metaphor for laziness. The meaning of a picture is more than a one-on-one representation of an external object, tying in other metaphorical associations that are inferred by the audience.

Breaking through the Clutter: Metaphors in Visual Images
The growing use of complex visual images in advertisements emphasizes the perceived importance of visual thought among the advertising community. The rhetorical approach to advertising suggests that advertising creators continually defy convention with the creation of unexpected metaphors. A metaphor is “an instance of nonliteral language in which the intended propositional content must be determined by the construction of an analogy” (Fraser, 1993, p. 332). In order to decipher these novel metaphors, the audience tends to rely on cultural conventions (Phillips, 1997).

Not all visual images in advertisements require interpretation by analogy. Indeed, some visual images are highly explicit in their intended meaning, whereas others are highly implicit. The metaphorical complexity of visual images is varied and, one would expect, has a significant impact on whether the meaning is uniform across cultures. The semiotic framework, developed by the philosopher Charles Pierce, provides an insightful typology into the metaphorical nature of visual signs.
An Arbitrary or Naturalistic Meaning

Semiotics is the study of signs, usually in the form of pictures or words. The sign is made up of the signified and the signifier (Saussure, 1959; Culler, 1986). The signified is the object or concept that the picture or word refers to. The signifier is the picture or word itself, used to label the signified so that individuals can communicate with one another. There are three types of signs: the icon, the index, and the symbol.

The icon is a sign in which the signifier explicitly resembles the signified (Berger, 1984). For example, a picture of a bottle of cologne can be interpreted at the iconic level as an illustration of the packaged product. As long as the audience is familiar with the object in the picture, then the iconic meaning of the picture is clear, since it is a naturalistic representation of reality. The concept of a bottle of cologne, for instance, may be similar in both the United States and France, although the analogies that are created from this concept may differ. At the iconic level of interpretation, a pictorial representation of this object would be understood among American and French consumers without the need for translation. If the main goal of a print ad were to let the product “speak for itself,” then one would assume that this pictorial image could be standardized between countries. At the iconic level, therefore, the notion of a visual Esperanto may work if the primary intention is merely to depict the product or brand, and if the target audience is satisfied with this iconic interpretation.

The indexical interpretation of a sign relies on a causal connection between the signified and the signifier. The audience must make a logical, non-arbitrary inference between the picture and the object that it represents. For example, a smile indicates happiness, be it in New York or Paris. The audience must make a metaphorical leap between the picture and the concept it represents. However, since this metaphorical leap is considered logical, there is still a “universality” in the meaning of the sign.

The symbol is more complex than the other two signs. The relationship between the signified and the signifier is completely arbitrary. The word “house” is arbitrarily chosen in the English language to represent the concept of a house, much as the terms “maison” and “casa” are used in French and Spanish respectively. Pictures also take on symbolic meaning. In their study on the use of creative strategy in French advertising, Taylor, Hoy, and Haley (1996, pg. 1) remark on the different pictorial metaphors used:

Plastic wrapping surrounding packaged salad is a windbreak. Compatibility between computers and software simulates sexual intercourse. An industrial machine can be your mistress. Such metaphorical thinking—in which one thing stands for another—sounds strange to American advertisers, but these examples represent the way French professionals think about products and how they should be presented to French consumers.

The symbol is therefore culture-specific. Individuals within a culture share a common knowledge that helps them communicate with one another at this level of interpretation. Unlike the other two types of signs, symbolic knowledge has to be learned in order to be understood. At this level of interpretation, the visual Esperanto hypothesis does not hold. Individuals from one culture are likely to share a different symbolic system than individuals from another culture. They will therefore interpret images differently at the symbolic level. This has important ramifications for the global advertiser, and poses an interesting question as to whether target audiences from around the world interpret different types of visual signs in ads at the iconic, indexical, and/or symbolic level.

The CROSS-CULTURAL INTERPRETATION OF VISUAL ADVERTISEMENTS

According to semiotic theory, the visual sign in advertising can hold meaning at the iconic, indexical, and/or symbolic level. Given the amount of clutter in the media environment, the trend in American advertising has been to rely on visual images that challenge familiarity with unconventional metaphors (Phillips, 1997). These metaphors are neither natural nor causal, and are arbitrarily selected by advertising creators. At the same time, the globalization of communication and technology has led to a drive for standardization in the advertising industry. These two forces—the drive for metaphorical complexity and the drive for visual standardization—appear to be at odds with one another.

A Drive Towards Metaphorical Complexity

An important cross-cultural issue with the first driving force is whether the use of complex metaphors is a universal phenomenon in advertising. Whereas there is a clear trend towards visual complexity in American advertising, it is still unclear whether there is a similar pattern in other countries. It is highly likely that the propensity to use symbolic metaphors in visual ads differs from one country to another. Indeed, it may be the case that in some countries meaning of visual images rests predominantly at the iconic and/or indexical level of interpretation. In fact, Hall’s (1989) classification of high-context versus low-context communication styles provides a useful insight into a potential relationship between a country’s communication style and the use of metaphor.

Implicit versus Explicit Communication Styles

According to Hall, communication styles vary in terms of the amount of implicit meaning that is ingrained in the message. In a high-context culture, the communication style relies heavily on implicit sources of meaning such as non-verbal cues. In low-context cultures, on the other hand, the message is highly explicit in terms of the information that is being conveyed. The majority of the information derived from a high-context message is therefore either implied in the physical context or internalized in the person. Alternatively, in a low-context message the mass of the information is vested in a highly explicit code (Hall, 1989). Hall points out that most Eastern cultures use high-context communication styles, whereas most Western cultures rely on a more low-context communication style.

If this is so, then one would expect that the communication styles would be reflected in the tendency to favor either symbolic or iconic/indexical types of signs. Since symbolic signs are by their very nature highly implicit, it is likely that they would be predominant within Eastern cultures that rely on a high-context style of communication. At the same time, low-context cultures would have a lesser emphasis on symbolic forms of communication, preferring a more explicit communication style. From an advertising perspective, this means that symbolic visual metaphors would be more predominant in Eastern cultures than in Western cultures. Whereas the trend in American advertising is towards greater use of visual symbolism, it may be the case that the propensity of these types of metaphors is still significantly lower compared to, say, Japan. This is an interesting proposition that merits empirical analysis.

A Drive Towards Visual Standardization

Another important issue facing the global advertiser is whether visual meaning is universal or culture-specific. As was mentioned earlier, semiotic theory suggests that at least one type of sign—the symbol—is dependent upon arbitrary codes. Proponents of standardization would argue that the globalization of media communi-
ations and technology is homogenizing the way that global consumers interpret symbols. In other words, the arbitrary codes are becoming more and more universal with the advent of the global marketplace. At the same time, the detractors of standardization would argue that cultural differences still outweigh similarities, and that a large proportion of a consumer’s metaphorical conventions are still culture-specific.

What is clear, however, is that this important topic has received minimal attention within the academic community. Whereas there have been some studies in cross-cultural interpretations of pictorial ads (see for instance Evans and Riyait, 1993), very little is known about the role and interpretation of visual metaphors from one culture to another. It may be that consumers create metaphors to reflect their underlying values and motivations. This being the case, supposedly iconic images may in fact take on symbolic meaning for the audience. Indeed, a target audience living in a metaphor-full world may seek to fill in the void created by an iconic interpretation and re-create the meaning of the icon using culture-specific metaphors. For instance, the image of a bottle of cologne by itself in a print ad may be interpreted by an achievement-oriented consumer as a metaphor for independence. Or, it may be that there is no such thing as an iconic interpretation of a product. The product itself, or even the brand, may indeed incorporate a cultural meaning to the target audience. More importantly, the concept and metaphorical associations of a familiar product such as cologne may differ between countries. Further research is needed to understand how consumers from different cultures go about interpreting these visual messages, and to determine whether iconic interpretations are possible when using visual images that simply “show” the product.

From a normative perspective, it is still unclear whether standardized visual advertisements should rely predominantly on symbolic or iconic/indexical signs. If the codes used to decipher arbitrary metaphors are indeed similar from one country to another, then symbolic visual signs are more appealing in order to stand out from the clutter. If, however, there are significant differences in cultural metaphors, then this would suggest that images eliciting iconic and/or indexical interpretations would be more appropriate. Unfortunately, however, this approach runs contrary to the trend towards complexity, and risks being engulfed by communication clutter. Alternatively, a customized approach would allow complex visual ads to be aired across countries, even though the message loses uniformity of meaning. It should be noted that the standardization versus customization decision regarding the ad will be influenced by other factors such as whether the product and other elements of the marketing mix are standardized or adapted from one country to another.

The position of this paper is that cultural codes are still significantly varied between many countries and that the meaning of symbolic visual images will therefore vary. For instance, in Spain a white carnation flower is a symbol of mourning. In China, a man wearing a green hat is a sign that his wife has been unfaithful. In India the owl is a symbol of bad luck, whereas it is often used as a metaphor for wisdom in many Western societies. These visual metaphors are culture-specific, and are relatively unknown among consumers from other countries. It is also unclear whether truly iconic interpretations of visual ads can exist in advertising, with the audience perhaps creating metaphorical associations when none are intended.

Cultural models may provide an insight into the general nature of metaphors for each culture. For instance, Hofstede’s (1991) individualism-collectivism dimension may help predict underlying values that are of importance to a particular country. In a collectivist culture such as the Philippines, for instance, a coffee ad with an image of a woman by herself sipping a cup of coffee may elicit unintended negative interpretations of solitude and loneliness. Or, a metaphor for personal achievement may be less effective compared to group achievement. In a more individualist culture, such as the United States, however, the image of the woman drinking coffee by herself may conjure up metaphors for independence, power, and achievement. To date, the authors are unaware of any academic research into the effect of culture on the interpretation of visual images in advertising.

CONCLUSIONS

The use of pictorial metaphors in global advertisements is an important issue that can further our understanding of how culture influences the way consumers decode messages. Visual images are more than naturalistic representations of reality. Advertisers are constantly applying unconventional metaphors to challenge the audience’s cognitive processes. In order to clearly understand the message, the consumer must rely on prior knowledge. A fundamental issue in cross-cultural advertising, therefore, is whether this prior knowledge is similar from one culture to another. It is clear that the “visual Esperanto” approach is too simplistic, and one that most theoreticians and practitioners do not endorse. Semiotic theory proposes that only iconic and indexical signs are truly universal. Symbolic visual signs, on the other hand, rely on culture-specific knowledge.

The increasing use of complex visual metaphors in domestic advertising is borne out of the need to catch the audience’s interest. This approach, however, is fraught with uncertainty when targeting a global market. If, as semiotic theory holds, symbolism varies from one culture to another, then the use of a standardized pictorial image in the global market could lead to systematic variations in meaning across countries. In order to create a truly universal message, the standardized pictorial image would require iconic or indexical interpretations. Yet, one could argue that the audience may interpret supposedly iconic images (depicting the product) within a symbolic framework, in effect “over-reading” into the meaning of the visual. Alternatively, within a cluttered advertising medium, the use of these types of signs may be less effective in stirring the consumer’s interest. In particular, in high-context cultures, explicit messages may be labeled as too simplistic. This would suggest a customized approach to creating complex visual advertisements.

Future research in this area should examine the relationship between culture and the pictorial metaphor. The dichotomy between high-context and low-context communication styles across cultures, for example, suggests that symbolic metaphors are more predominant in Eastern cultures than in Western cultures. This being the case, the apparent lack of a metaphor in a visual ad (i.e. a so-called iconic representation of the product or brand) may in fact challenge audiences living in a metaphor-full environment to develop unintended analogies using cultural conventions. Advertising researchers would therefore benefit from a greater understanding into how consumers from different cultures think into the different types of visual signs outlined in semiotic theory.

REFERENCES


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SESSION OVERVIEW

It is widely accepted that products are symbols—they stand for things that are important to consumers. This special session was assembled by researchers who, rather than focusing exclusively on what products stand for, examine how they come to stand for what they do.

The “Symbolization” of Brands: A Sociocultural Investigation of Consumers and the Transformation of Brand Symbols

Jennifer E. Chang, Penn State University, U.S.A.

Based on extended household-level field studies this presentation shows that consumer culture is neither passive nor merely interpretive, but strongly participatory in nature. Consumers are “poachers” of text and media, as well as seemingly mundane household brands. In the household, consumers become “alchemists” and “manufacturers.” Brands are unpackaged and repackaged, manipulated and assigned new identities. Interviews, participant observation and photoelicitation techniques will be reported to provide a rich understanding of the sociocultural aspects of brand-related behavior. Findings converge on a typology of symbolization related to household culture and personalization.

A Purpose for Consumption? Exploring the Contrast Between Functional and Symbolic Purchase Meanings

Mark Ligas, University of Connecticut, U.S.A.

The meanings that a consumer associates with products (and services) tend to fall into either a functional or symbolic meaning category. Regardless of category, the resultant meaning depends not only on the individual consumer and product but also on the situation in which one acts with the purchase. In-depth interviews with single, female homeowners offer exploratory data on consumers’ intended product meanings. The data speak to the existence of two specific types of behaviors that the informants undertake with their purchases, depending both on the context and on the purchase meaning. When focusing on functional meanings, the informants identify problem solving behaviors that they undertake in specific contexts in order to make their lives easier or more productive. Discussions about symbolic product meanings usher in the notion of value expressive behaviors—i.e., behaviors that the informants are able to experience because of the purchases.

A Symbol Is Just a Symbol? Indexicality and Irreplaceable Special Possessions

Kent Grayson, London Business School, U.K.
David Shulman, Lafayette College, U.S.A.

Researchers have long noted that special possessions can represent personally relevant events, people, places and values. However, although researchers have focused considerable attention on what possessions mean (and to whom), little empirical research has centered on the processes through which a special possession acquires and communicates these meanings. The field of semiotics provides a useful theoretical base for understanding these processes. It highlights the fact that there are many ways by which an object can acquire meaning, and that the meaning of an object may change because of the semiotic mechanisms that support its meaning. By introducing the semiotic concept of indexicality and by then testing it via open-ended interviews and a cross-national study, will illustrate the usefulness of semiotic frameworks in contributing to our understanding of how products function as symbols.
SESSION OVERVIEW

This session brought together three papers that investigate social cognitive processes related to the concept of the self. Consistent with ACR’s mission to extend our theoretical borders, these authors represent experience and data from Asia (China, Hong Kong, and Japan), Eastern Europe (Romania), and North America (Canada, U.S.).

Cross-cultural research allows us to examine the degree to which our theories about consumer behavior, most of which were developed in westernized cultures (mostly North America), appropriately describe and predict behavior in other cultures. It is interesting to investigate the similarities and differences in consumer behavior across cultures. In this session, we explore cross-cultural similarities and differences in social psychological processes that affect individual traits and self-identification.

The first paper, by Louie and Cours, explored forced upward and downward social comparisons and the implications for consumer behavior and propensity toward social comparison. The authors compared data from Hong Kong Asians, recent Asian immigrants to Canada from Hong Kong, Asian Canadians, and non-Asian Canadians. Cultural differences existed, in that Asians were more likely to use negative comparison information, while non-Asian North Americans were more likely to use positive comparison information. Yet, cultural similarities existed as well: for example, gender differences in social comparison behavior were similar across cultures.

In the second paper, Hiromi Ikeuchi, Takehiro Fujihara, and Itsuko Dohi (all Japanese social psychologists), explored victims’ reactions to the loss of goods following disastrous earthquakes. They compared data from victims of the 1994 Northridge, California (U.S.) earthquake with data from victims of the 1995 Nishinomiya, Kobe (Japan) earthquake. They find cultural similarity and validate Belk (e.g., 1988) in that personal belongings were measured to be an important part of the extended self across both Japanese and U.S. populations. The authors also reported cultural differences in the types of objects that were reported as most regrettable lost and the type of emotional reactions experienced in reaction to the loss.

The third paper (Luca and Cours) introduced Taylor’s model of positive illusions and presents applications to consumer preference and choice behavior. Positive illusions, which are characterized by an above-average sense of control and unrealistic optimism, are related to personal well being and success. The authors presented data from a sample of Romanian MBA students showing that positive illusions can be demonstrated by some measures of consumer behavior. Luca and Cours also discussed some potential relevant areas of consumer research that can be explored using Taylor’s model of positive illusions.

There were several integrating themes within the session, and these themes were reflective of the discussion that followed the paper presentations. A common theme across all three papers was the consideration of the nature of cultural differences. Both the paper by Louie and Cours and the paper by Ikeuchi, Fujihara, and Dohi compared data from cultures typically regarded as collectivist (Hong Kong and Japan) to data from cultures typically regarded as individualist (U.S. and Canada). Luca and Cours also reported on past research on differences in self-serving biases between cultures that are collectivist vs. individualist. Luca (1999) found evidence for the existence of positive illusions in Romanian culture, a culture typically considered more collectivist than North American culture. It was noted that researchers must exhibit caution in attributing differences between samples of different cultures and nationalities to broad cultural traits.

Another theme considered the trade-offs between homogeneity and heterogeneity in research samples. Ikeuchi, Fujihara, and Dohi had the unusual opportunity to compare victims of very similar natural disasters that occurred in two very different cultures. The Northridge and Kobe earthquakes occurred exactly one year apart and were both located near large universities. In the Luca and Cours study, using a sample of Romanian MBA students might be criticized for being non-representational of broader cultural values (i.e. one might argue that MBA students would be more likely than other sub-groups within the culture to demonstrate positive illusions). However, this homogeneous sample leads to a tougher test when looking for differences among the subjects with relatively lower versus higher levels of positive illusions.

Finally, we all sought to explore and explain both similarities and differences between cultures. The session’s presentations and discussion focused on the importance of cross-cultural research and the applicability of our theories to other cultures.

Examining Forced Social Comparisons: Effects of Ethnicity and Gender

Therese Louie, University of Washington, U.S.A.
Deborah Cours, California State University, Northridge, U.S.A.

Although research has examined the propensity and implications of engaging in voluntary social comparisons, little research has examined what happens when comparison information is provided unsolicited, what we call “forced comparisons.” This paper represents an exploratory study of forced comparisons. We compare Asian and non-Asian samples on their reports of receiving forced comparisons while growing up, of the nature of those comparisons (i.e. upward vs. downward), of the effect of those comparisons, and of their current propensity to engage in voluntary upward and downward social comparison as adults. We find that non-Asians report having received more downward (favorable) comparisons about their personality and behavior than Asians report. More Asians than non-Asians rate downward comparisons as having an unfavorable effect. Asians report engaging in more voluntary upward (unfavorable) comparisons than do non-Asians. In seeking to explain these differences, we speculate that perhaps collectivist cultures use upward comparisons to establish and maintain group standards and, hence, enhance the group. Individualist cultures may use downward comparisons to boost self-esteem and enhance the individual. Several gender differences were also found. We discuss implications of this research and potential for future consumer research.

Involuntary Loss of Extended Self of Victims of Great Hanshin Earthquake and Northridge Earthquake

Hiromi Ikeuchi, Kwansei Gakuin University, Japan
Takehiro Fujihara, Kwansei Gakuin University, Japan
Itsuko Dohi, International Buddhist University, Japan

“Extended self” is defined as the aggregation of all objects that people regard as a part of themselves; for example, their body parts, parents, friends, animal pets, job, social roles, etc. The main
The purpose of this study was to investigate the emotional reaction of involuntary loss of the extended self, that is, “material possessions,” and to examine the structure of “extended self.” We collected samples from the victims of the 1995 Hanshin Earthquake (209 university students) and the 1994 Northridge Earthquake (87 university students). We asked them to describe what kinds of the favorite possessions they lost, the emotion when they lost them, and what kinds of the external objects they regarded as a part of themselves, etc. The results showed interesting similarities and differences between the victims of two earthquakes. The similarity was found that the most victims of both earthquakes had similar emotional reactions, that is, “sad,” to the loss of important possessions. The differences were found that the victims of Hanshin Earthquake regarded the material possessions as the extended self and valued the lost possessions more than the victims of Northridge Earthquake did.

**Positive Illusions, Success and Consumption: Romanian and U.S. MBA Students**

*Anastasia Luca, UCLA, U.S.A.*

*Deborah Cours, California State University, U.S.A.*

We seek to introduce the notion of positive illusions to the consumer literature, extend the measure of positive illusions to consumption behavior, and consider consumer theory implications of the positive illusions construct.

Using the Romanian sample data from Luca’s (1999) study, we explore differences in expected consumption between individuals who score high vs. low on positive illusions.
ABSTRACT

Although research has examined the propensity and implications of engaging in voluntary social comparisons, little research has examined what happens when comparison information is provided unsolicited, what we call “forced comparisons.” This paper represents an exploratory study of forced comparisons. We compare Asian and non-Asian samples on their reports of receiving forced comparisons while growing up, of the nature of those comparisons (i.e., upward vs. downward), of the effect of those comparisons, and of their current propensity to engage in voluntary upward and downward social comparison as adults. We find that non-Asians report having received more downward (favorable) comparisons about their personality and behavior than Asians report. More Asians than non-Asians rate downward comparisons as having an unfavorable effect. Asians report engaging in more voluntary upward (unfavorable) comparisons than do non-Asians. In seeking to explain these differences, we speculate that perhaps collectivist cultures use upward comparisons to establish and maintain group standards and, hence, enhance the group. Individualist cultures may use downward comparisons to boost self-esteem and enhance the individual. Several gender differences were also found. We discuss implications of this research and potential for future consumer research.

FORCED SOCIAL COMPARISONS

Have you ever been told that your brother, sister, cousin, or friend is better or worse than you are on some trait? Most individuals have been subject to such “forced comparisons,” occasions when they were compared to another individual without having requested that information. Although research has focused upon the impact of voluntary comparisons when individuals actively seek self-information by comparing themselves to others (e.g., Buunk, Collins, Taylor, Van Yperen and Dakof 1990), there is a lack of research that examines what happens when comparison information is unsolicited. What types of forced comparisons do individuals endure, and how does the information shape their attitudes and interests?

Voluntary upward comparisons occur when one compares oneself to someone else who is rated more highly on a trait or behavior. This type of comparison, therefore, is unfavorable to the self and would be characterized by comparison statements such as “He’s better than I am” or “I’m not as good as she.” Upward comparisons are informative. They provide us with information about what traits we need to improve and how to improve. We can observe how more successful others have performed and use that information to emulate their success. Upward comparisons can also lead to affiliative improvement, by which we engage in impression management by affiliating with successful others.

Despite the usefulness of upward comparisons, evidence suggests that people more frequently engage in downward social comparisons. Voluntary downward comparisons describe social comparisons in which one compares oneself to someone else who is rated more poorly than oneself on a trait or behavior. They are characterized by comparisons such as “I’m better than she” or “He’s not as good as me.” Hence, this type of comparison results in a favorable comparison and is self-enhancing.

Social cognitive research has established in Western cultures that individuals engage in self-serving biases, particularly in the area of self-assessment. For example, Alicke (1985) and Brown (1986) show that positive personality traits are rated as more representative of the self than are negative traits. Individuals also show better cognitive processing and memory for positive personality information than for negative personality information about the self (Kuiper and Derry 1982; Kuiper and MacDonald 1982; Kuiper et al. 1985). Although it is important to have accurate information about the self in order to manage self-presentation and engage in successful decision-making, among other things, research demonstrates that there are benefits to engaging in positive self-assessment. Individuals who exhibit positive biases in self-assessment generally possess higher self-esteem, which leads to greater performance and reported happiness (Taylor and Brown 1988).

As mentioned above, self-serving biases have been well-established in North American samples. However, researchers have had difficulty replicating the effect in non-Western cultures. For example, Heine and Lehman (1995) found that Canadians demonstrated significantly more unrealistic optimism than did a Japanese sample. The authors speculated that perhaps the lack of self-serving biases in Asian populations was due to the collectivist nature of the culture, as opposed to the individualistic nature of Canadian and U.S. culture. Hofstede (1991) presents individual-collectivism as an important defining dimension of cultures. This dimension has been shown in the consumer literature to predict attitudinal and behavioral differences (c.f., Aaker and Maheswaran 1997). Individualist cultures (e.g., Canada and the United States) promote the separateness and uniqueness of the individual; success is usually defined according to individual achievement. Collectivist cultures (e.g., China, Hong Kong, and Japan) tend to promote similarity within the group and define success according to the group’s achievement. Heine and Lehman (1997) hypothesized, therefore, that Asians might demonstrate a group-serving bias rather than a self-serving bias. However, they found no support in a Japanese sample for either self-serving or group-serving biases.

Our research is exploratory in nature and seeks an initial understanding of the commonality of upward and downward forced comparisons, the individual’s evaluation of the effects of those comparisons, and the resulting likelihood of later engaging in voluntary comparisons. Our research investigates these issues and examines how the nature of comparisons differs between Asian and non-Asian cultures.

HYPOTHESES

Due to different cultural orientations, we might expect non-Asians to demonstrate a positive self-assessment bias, in which they will be subject to and seek more downward social comparisons by which an individual stands out and above from others. Likewise, we predict that Asians will be subject to and maybe even seek more upward social comparisons by which the individual can note and attain group norms. Specifically:

H1: Non-Asians will report being subjected to more favorable forced comparisons than will Asians
H2: Asians will report being subjected to more unfavorable forced comparisons than will non-Asians.
H3: Non-Asians will engage in more favorable voluntary comparisons than will Asians.
H4: Asians will engage in more unfavorable voluntary comparisons than will non-Asians.
H5: Asians will believe that favorable comparisons have a more negative effect than will non-Asians.
H6: Non-Asians will believe that unfavorable comparisons have a more negative effect than will Asians.

We also explored differences in the nature and use of social comparison across men and women. We suspected that forced comparisons are more likely to occur in domains that are relevant to role development. For example, athletic skill is stereotypically considered more important for men than women, while artistic ability is generally considered a feminine characteristic. Hence, we hypothesized that males and females would be the target of different types of comparisons: males might be subject to more references about their athletic skill, and females might be subject to more references about their artistic ability.

H7: Men will report being subject to more forced comparisons about their athletic abilities than will women.
H8: Women will report being subject to more forced comparisons about their artistic abilities than will men.

METHOD

Sample
The sample consisted of 296 students at large universities in Canada and Hong Kong. Individuals were classified as Asian if their ancestry was from an Asian country. This included the sample from a university in Hong Kong, recent immigrants from Hong Kong to Canada, and Asian-Canadians. The sample consisted of 63 male non-Asians, 37 male Asians (19 of whom grew up in Canada and who have parents or grandparents from Asia), 102 female non-Asians, and 94 female Asians (34 of whom grew up in Canada and who have parents or grandparents from Asia).

Questionnaire
Subjects each completed a similar questionnaire, in which they were asked to rate how often they have been compared, by others, to others throughout their lives on a number of different traits (i.e. athletic ability, physical appearance, academic performance or intelligence, artistic abilities, and personality or behavior). Respondents were also asked to rate the frequency both of (downward) comparisons that were favorable to them (i.e., “You are better than person X”) and of those (upward) that were unfavorable to them (i.e., “You are not as good as person X”). Responses were recorded using a 10-point scale on which each point was labeled, ranging from “never” (0) to “more than once a week” (9). In addition, respondents revealed by free response whether forced comparisons had positive or negative effects on them. These open-ended responses were coded by an independent judge as describing a “favorable effect” or an “unfavorable effect.” Finally, respondents were asked how often they compared themselves to others (engagement in voluntary comparisons). This response was collected on the same 10-point scale as was used to measure frequency of forced comparisons.

Results
The results reveal different effects of forced comparisons based upon both gender and ethnicity. There were no significant interaction effects; therefore, the ethnicity differences discussed below occurred similarly across genders and the gender differences occurred similarly across ethnicities.

Hypothesis 1, which predicted that non-Asians would report having received more downward forced comparisons than would Asians, was supported in only one domain. Non-Asians reported more favorable forced comparisons related to their personality and behavior than did Asians (F(1, 294)=4.73, p<.05). Hypothesis 2 was not supported. There were no significant differences between Asians and non-Asians in the reported frequency of upward forced comparisons in any domain.

No support was found for Hypothesis 3, which predicted that non-Asians would report engaging in more frequent voluntary downward (favorable) comparisons than would Asians. However, Hypothesis 4, which predicted that Asians would report engaging in more frequent voluntary upward comparisons than would non-Asians, was marginally supported (F(1, 253)=3.54, p=.06).

Hypothesis 5 predicted that Asians would report a more unfavorable effect of downward comparisons and was supported (χ² (1)=4.221, p<.05). The frequency distribution is provided in Table 1. From that distribution, we see that while even a slight majority of non-Asians believed that the downward forced comparisons had a long run unfavorable effect, a significantly greater proportion of Asian subjects reported that there was an unfavorable effect of downward forced comparisons. There were no differences between Asians and non-Asians in their beliefs about the long run effects of upward forced comparisons; hence, Hypothesis 6 was not supported.

Several gender differences were supported by the data. Hypothesis 7 predicted that men would experience more forced comparisons, both upward and downward, about their athletic abilities than would women. This was supported only for downward comparisons (F (1, 294)=32.66, p<.001). There was no significant difference for upward comparisons. Tesser’s model of self-evaluation maintenance (e.g Tesser 1988), may help explain this finding. Tesser claims that individuals need to feel good about themselves and will engage in downward comparison in domains central to the self-concept and will avoid upward comparison in those areas. However, individuals may seek upward comparison in domains that are less relevant to the self-concept. Because Tesser’s model is based on individuals’ self-evaluation processes, and we are examining comparisons made by others in this current research, we did not base our hypotheses on this model. However, it is possible that family members, the most likely sources of forced comparisons, will behave in the target’s interest. Therefore, because athletic performance is often believed to be more important for males, and hence more central to the self concept, than for females, upward comparisons about athletic performance may be avoided. Also, we might speculate that because athletics is often considered masculine trait, compliments or downward comparisons serve to strengthen the masculine role. Less flattering upward comparisons could be perceived as a threat to masculinity.

As anticipated, relative to males, females received more favorable comparisons about their artistic skill (F(1, 295)=7.55,
p<.01), partially supporting Hypothesis 8. Somewhat surprisingly, males received more unfavorable comparisons about their artistic skill (F(1, 296)=4.62, p<.05). Although this pattern only supports half of our hypothesis, Tesser’s argument again provides a possible explanation for these data. Artistic ability is stereotypically considered to be a feminine trait, so artistic ability may be more central to the average female’s self-concept than to the average male’s. Downward, favorable comparisons of a girl’s artistic abilities will reinforce this feminine trait, while upward, unfavorable comparisons could be a threat to her femininity. Also, because artistic ability is seen to be a feminine trait, boys may receive more unfavorable, upward comparisons of their artistic abilities to strengthen a masculine rather than feminine self-concept.

**DISCUSSION**

This research should serve as an exploratory study of forced comparisons and their impact on later social comparison behavior. We have also explored gender and cultural differences, finding some support for each. Interestingly, the cultural differences were common across genders, while the gender differences were common across culture.

Although this paper did not specifically address consumption behavior, it certainly has relevance for consumer research. We know that consumers look to others for guidance in consumption behavior and that people use consumption activities to engage in impression management. One common type of advertisement appeal that is widely discussed and used is a referent appeal. Hence, advertising, in essence, often creates or forces social comparison. Understanding the implications of forced upward and downward comparisons might influence strategies for selection of spokespersons or the structure of referent appeals. We suggest that further research into social comparison, voluntary and forced, will provide useful insights to consumer behavior and response to advertising.

**REFERENCES**


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### TABLE 1

Means for Frequency of Forced Comparisons on Personal Traits (0=never, 9=1/week)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Valence of Comparison</th>
<th>Asians Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Non-Asians Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletic ability</td>
<td>favorable</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>6.87</td>
<td>4.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unfavorable</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>4.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical appearance</td>
<td>favorable</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unfavorable</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics/ Intelligence</td>
<td>unfavorable</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>6.51</td>
<td>6.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>favorable</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic ability</td>
<td>favorable</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>4.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unfavorable</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality or Behavior</td>
<td>favorable</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>6.32</td>
<td>6.99</td>
<td>6.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unfavorable</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>5.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 2

Frequency Distribution for Reported Long Run Effect of Favorable Forced Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Non-Asian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favorable Effect</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable effect</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Involuntary Loss of Extended Self of Victims of Great Hanshin Earthquake and Northridge Earthquake

Hiromi Ikeuchi, Kwansei Gakuin University, Japan
Takehiro Fujihara, Kwansei Gakuin University, Japan
Itsuko Dohi, International Buddhist University, Japan

ABSTRACT

“Extended self” is defined as the aggregation of all objects that people regard as a part of themselves; for example, their body parts, parents, friends, animal pets, jobs, social roles, etc. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the emotional reaction of involuntary loss of the extended self, that is, “material possessions,” and to examine the structure of “extended self.” We collected samples from the victims of the 1995 Hanshin Earthquake (209 university students) and the 1994 Northridge Earthquake (87 university students). We asked them to describe what kinds of the favorite possessions they lost, the emotion when they lost them, and what kinds of the external objects they regarded as a part of themselves, etc. The results showed interesting similarities and differences between the victims of two earthquakes. The similarity was found that the most victims of both earthquakes had similar emotional reactions, that is, “sad,” to the loss of important possessions. The differences were found that the victims of Hanshin Earthquake regarded the material possessions as the extended self and valued the lost possessions more than the victims of Northridge Earthquake did.

We are deeply attached not only to our spiritual activities, but also to our pet animals, significant others, some particular material possessions and physical environments. When our feelings become intense, we come to think as if those objects were a part of our ‘self.’ Belk (1988) and Dittmar (1992) proposed the self which goes beyond the cognitive world of ‘internal self,’ and extends its boundary to external objects existing in the physical environments. They conceptualized this self as ‘extended self.’ In short, extended self is defined as “the aggregation of all objects that people regard as a part of their own self” (Fujihara and Ikeuchi, 1996).

Then, what kind of objects do we tend to regard as a part of our self, that is, extended self? The empirical studies conducted by McClelland (1951) and Prelinger (1959) present some important suggestions. They tried to categorize the objects which people regarded as a part of self. Considering that people will regard some particular external objects as a part of self when they can exercise control over them, McClelland (1951) presented the following categories of objects that could be identified as self: 1) myself and my ‘free will’ 2) my body and my consciousness 3) my possessions 4) my friends 5) strangers and physical objects. On the other hand, Prelinger (1959) asked the subjects to rate 160 items consisting of eight categories by a 4-point-scale according to the extent to which they regarded each item as a part of self. The following result was obtained concerning the order and mean self score of each category: 1) body parts 2) psychological or introorganismic processes 3) things which indicate personal characteristics and attributes 4) material possessions and products 5) abstract ideas 6) other people 7) objects within the close physical environments 8) distant physical environments.

Then, if we lose above mentioned extended self, what sorts of feelings do we have? For example, if we lost our significant others or pets, if we lost our body parts or a part of our physical functions by disease or accident, if we lost important material possessions, how will we feel? In this study we will examine the meanings and significance of extended self from the viewpoint of ‘loss.’ To put it more concretely, we focus especially on ‘material possessions,’ one of the constituents of extended self, and investigate the values and significance attached to the lost possessions.

There are three reasons why we focus on the loss of material possessions. First of all, it is not until we lose them that we can realize the values of our particular material possessions. Secondly, the relationship between the loss of material possessions and self has been discussed by some authorities for years. For example, Simmel (1950) argued that “material property is, so to speak, an extension of the ego, and any interference with our property is, for this reason, felt to be a violation of the person” (p. 322). Pointing out the relationship between material possessions and self, Goffman (1961) also stated the reason why such institutions as mental hospitals, prisons and concentration camps deprived people of all their personal possessions was that it lessened the individual’s sense of self and promoted them to adjust more readily to a new environment. Finally, the third reason is that we considered studying the relationship between material possessions and possessors had significant meanings in the field of social psychology. In this field a considerable number of studies have been made on interpersonal relationships; however, there is a paucity of research which focused on the relationship between possessions and possessors. Since social psychology is a study which deals with the relationship between individuals and society, there seems to be no problem if ‘other people’ are replaced with material things which exist in society. Far from that, it seems that differences in value concerning material possessions can give significant suggestions to explain people’s social attitudes and behaviors.

Generally, two patterns can be considered regarding the loss of material possessions. One is voluntary loss, and the other is involuntary loss. Voluntary loss includes the situations where people dispose their possessions because they change the residence, go on to school in a different area, the possessions no longer fit their self-image or they became unusable. On the other hand, involuntary loss includes the situations, such as unintentional loss by theft or casualty. Belk(1988) maintained that “the trauma that may attend involuntary loss of possessions normally is not present in voluntary disposition of possessions” (p. 443).

In respect of the feelings at the time of unintentional loss by theft, Rosenblatt, Walsh, & Jackson (1976) suggest that victims may experience a deep grief and a process of sorrow that they will have in the death of their significant others. Donner (1985) interviewed 20 victims of theft, and asked them to recall their initial feelings upon discovering the loss. As a result, Donner found that feelings of invasion and violation were the most reported reactions following anger and rage. Similar results were reported in the studies of Paap (1981) and Horosc-Serfaty (1985). On the other hand, regarding the feelings of involuntary loss by natural disaster, McLeod (1984) conducted in-depth interviews for flood victims six weeks after the flood occurred in summer, 1986. As a result, it was found out that most victims were still in the early stage of grief and unwilling to talk about the incident. Furthermore, Freedy, Shaw, Jarrell and Masaters (1992) investigated 1,200 hurricane victims of Charleston, and found that prevalence of clinically meaningful
distress level was significantly greater among the victims who experienced a high level of loss of the resources, compared with those who experienced a low level of loss. Ikeuchi and Fujihara (1998) also found that in their study of Great Hanshin Earthquake victims a stress level was significantly greater among the victims who experienced loss of material possessions, compared with those who did not experience any loss. As for the latter studies, that is, involuntary loss of material possessions by natural disaster, few studies have been conducted because natural disaster rarely occurs. Consequently, there are still many unsolved problems.

The first purpose of this study is to investigate kinds of important material possessions the victims of natural disaster lost, values they gave to those possessions, and feelings they had when they lost them. To put it more concretely, this study focuses on the victims of Great Hanshin Earthquake and Northridge Earthquake. Great Hanshin Earthquake is a great earthquake of magnitude 7.2 and occurred in the south of Hyogo Prefecture on January 17, 1995. By this earthquake, over 5,000 people lost their lives and over 140 thousand buildings collapsed or were burnt down. Northridge Earthquake is a great earthquake of magnitude 6.6 which occurred in the Northridge district, northwestern part of Los Angeles on January 17, 1994. By this earthquake one thousand people died or were injured, and many apartments and highways collapsed.

By possessing it(=your favorite materials), my life was very convenient. “It helped to reduce my loneliness.”. “It helped me to remember my relationship with certain people.”

3. The questions of extended self
In this study, they were asked to describe freely all things which they regarded as specially important as a part of themselves.

RESULTS

1. The damage by the earthquake
As for the question whether their property was damaged by the earthquake or not, one hundred eighteen victims of Hanshin earthquake (56.5%) and 65 victims of Northridge earthquake(74.7%) answered yes. Chi-square test revealed that the Northridge earthquake victims significantly suffered more damage in property than the Hanshin earthquake ones(\(\chi^2(1)=8.67, p<.01\)).

As for the degree of damage by Hanshin earthquake, 8 victims answered ‘very severe’ (3.9%), 18 victims ‘severe’ (15.3%), 20 victims ‘moderate’ (16.9%), 67 victims ‘minor’ (56.8%), and 5 victims ‘others’ (4.2%). On the other hand, as for the degree of damage by Northridge earthquake, 0 victims answered ‘very severe’ (0.0%), 4 victims ‘severe’ (5.1%), 21 victims ‘moderate’ (26.9%), 48 victims ‘minor’ (61.5%), and 5 victims ‘others’ (6.4%). Chi-square test found that the Hanshin earthquake victims significantly suffered more serious damage than did the Northridge earthquake ones (\(\chi^2(4)=12.43, p<.05\)).

2. The lost possessions
1) Whether they lost their favorite material possessions by the earthquake or not; forty-two Hanshin earthquake victims experienced the loss of their favorite material possessions by earthquake (20.1%) and twenty-eight Northridge victims did it (32.2%). The Northridge earthquake victims significantly lost more favorite material possessions than the Hanshin earthquake ones (\(\chi^2(1)=4.87, p<.05\)).

2) What kind of possession they lost; The victims who experienced the loss of their favorite material possession were asked to answer what kind of one they lost. Forty-four responses were obtained for Hanshin earthquake victims and 32 for Northridge earthquake victims. Responses were classified categories (see Fig. 1). The most frequent responses of lost possessions were house/ wall for the Hanshin earthquake victims. The reason why they listed them seems to come from the strong magnitude of the earthquake. On the other hand, the Northridge earthquake victims mostly described ‘tableware/glass products’ as the lost favorite ones, which were easy to break. Chi-square found Hanshin earthquake
feel depressive and have a rational and positive thinking more than results, it was found that the Hanshin earthquake victims tended to investigate the difference between Hanshin earthquake victims and victims and 89.3% for Northridge earthquake ones. Furthermore, to agreement about their judgement was 85.0% for Hanshin earthquake judges classified these answers into five categories; as a result, the “felt lonely, were significantly listed earthquake ones (“I was upset” or “I was depressed,” “angry” one were “I was angered” or “I was vexed,” “depression” one were “I was sad” or “I felt lonely,” “rational or positive thinking” one were “I was inconvenienced” or “I was anxious of a repair fee,” and that of “others” was ‘I was thankful to save my life.’ Two independent judges classified these answers into five categories; as a result, the agreement about their judgement was 85.0% for Hanshin earthquake victims and 89.3% for Northridge earthquake ones. Furthermore, to investigate the difference between Hanshin earthquake victims and Northridge earthquake ones, chi-square test was conducted. As a results, it was found that the Hanshin earthquake victims tended to feel depressive and have a rational and positive thinking more than did the Northridge earthquake victims (in order, $\chi^2(1)=3.33, p<.1$, $\chi^2(1)=3.04, p<.1$).

3) Feelings when they lost their favorite material possession;

We also asked to answer how they felt about the loss of their favorite material possession. The answers from Hanshin earthquake victims were 44 and the ones from Northridge earthquake victims were 32. We classified these answers into five categories by Kübler-Ross(1969) (see Fig.2). The typical responses of ‘panic’ category were “I was upset” or “I was disturbed,” “angry” one were “I was angered” or “I was vexed,” “depression” one were “I was sad” or “I felt lonely,” “rational or positive thinking” one were “I was inconvenienced” or “I was anxious of a repair fee,” and that of “others” was ‘I was thankful to save my life.’ Two independent judges classified these answers into five categories; as a result, the agreement about their judgement was 85.0% for Hanshin earthquake victims and 89.3% for Northridge earthquake ones. Furthermore, to investigate the difference between Hanshin earthquake victims and Northridge earthquake ones, chi-square test was conducted as a results, it was found that the Hanshin earthquake victims tended to feel depressive and have a rational and positive thinking more than did the Northridge earthquake victims (in order, $\chi^2(1)=3.33, p<.1$, $\chi^2(1)=3.04, p<.1$).

4) The factor structure of materialism scale;

Next, to investigate how they valued on their lost possessions, the principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted. According to the change of eigenvalues and the probability of interpretation, the following three factors were extracted for Hanshin earthquake victims. Items that loaded>.40 were retained in the description of factors. The factor pattern after rotation are shown in Table 1. The first factor accounted for 27.26% of the variance. High loaded items were, for example, “By possessing it, I felt really impressive,” or “By possessing it, I could attract others’ attention.” All of these items show such values that the material possessions are useful as a means to present themselves to the others. So first factor was interpreted as ‘self-presentational value.’ The second factor accounted for 16.64% of the variance and high factor loadings items were “Even though I looked for it all over the world, I would not be able to find a substitute,” or “It symbolized important moments my life,” and high negative loadings on such 5 items as “Since I lost it, life has become more inconvenient,” or “It played practical role in my life.” The former items seem to show such values that the material possessions are useful as a means to symbolize the relation with significant person and event, the latter items seem to show that they don’t value on the essential function of material possessions. So second factor was named as ‘symbolic value of relationship/nonfunctional value.’ The third factor accounted for 11.19% of the variance and included such 7 items as “It helped to reduce my loneliness,” or “Possessing it gave me great personal satisfaction.” All of these items show that their material possessions related with emotion. So third factor was interpreted as ‘emotional value.’ The Cronbach alpha .916, .842, and .790 for first factor, second factor, and third factor indicated high reliability of internal consistency. On the other hand, the same analysis was conducted for the Northridge earthquake victims. According to the change of eigenvalues and the probability of interpretation, extracted three factors were rotated and were shown in Table 2. The first factor accounted for 48.50% of the variance. It included such 5 items(item number:4,5,15,16,19) that they valued on the essential function of material possessions and such 6 items(item number:1,2,3,11,13,22) that they related to their material possessions emotionally. So first factor was interpreted as ‘functional and emotional value.’ As a result of interpreting the second and third factor as we did the first factor, in that order, each factor accounted for 13.67% and 7.60% of the variance and was interpreted as ‘symbolic value of relationship’ and as ‘self presentational value.’ The Cronbach alpha were .936, .925, and .893 for factor1, factor2, and factor3, so internal consistency would be also indicated acceptable reliability for Northridge earthquake victims.
5) **Materialism factor score by the degree of damage and by country**. Next, to investigate the difference of materialism scale by the degree of damage (minor and severe) and by country (Hanshin earthquake victims and Northridge earthquake victims), a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. Factor scores were computed by averaging across several items with commonly factor analysis of variance. The four factors that is ‘functional value’ (item number: 4, 5, 15, 16, 19), ‘emotional value’ (item number: 1, 2, 3, 11, 13), ‘self presentational value’ (item number: 6, 7, 8, 18, 24, 25), and ‘symbolic value of relationship’ (item number: 9, 10, 14, 21) were selected. The Cronbach alpha coefficients .868, .834, .903, and .881 indicated high reliability of internal consistency. The degree of damage and the country were the independent variables. As for the degree of damage, the victims were divided into two groups, such as ‘severe damaged group (severe)’ and ‘minor damaged group (minor)’. The former included ‘very severe,’ ‘severe,’ and ‘moderate’ and the latter did ‘minor,’ and ‘others’ was excluded from analysis.

As a result, significant main effects of the degree of damage and country were observed, $F(1,78) = 6.09, p<.05$ and $F(1,78) = 23.66, p<.001$, for a score of ‘functional value.’ It was found that Hanshin earthquake victims compared with Northridge earthquake ones, and the severe damaged victims compared with minor damaged ones gave more functional value to their favorite material possessions. The main effect of country was significant, $F(1,78) = 14.44, p<.001$, $F(1,78) = 9.32, p<.01$, and $F(1,78) = 4.45, p<.05$, for scores of ‘emotional value,’ ‘self presentational value,’ and ‘symbolic value of relationship.’ In short, it was found that Hanshin earthquake victims gave more emotional value to their favorite material possessions than did Northridge earthquake ones, and that the former compared with the latter valued their possessions as a means to present themselves to the others or to symbolize the relation with significant others and event. Furthermore, a significant interaction between the degree of damage and country was observed for ‘emotional value,’ ‘self presentational value,’ and ‘symbolic value of relationship,’ $F(1,78) = 14.73, p<.001, F(1,78) = 6.71, p<.05$, and $F(1,78) = 7.27, p<.01$, respectively. As a result, it was found that the degree of damage didn’t have an great effect on how they value on their lost material possessions for Hanshin earthquake victims. On the other hand, in Northridge earthquake victims, it was found that the severer their damage was, the more they valued on their lost favorite material possessions.

### 3. The structure of extended self

In order to measure extended self, we asked to describe freely all things which they regarded as specially important as a part of themselves. As a result, the number of responses from Hanshin earthquake victims were 536(2.56 per capita) and the ones from Northridge earthquake victims were 198(2.27 per capita). Two independent judges classified these responses into 9 categories on the basis of the scale of Prelinger; as a result, the agreement about their judgement was 86.0% in Hanshin earthquake victims and 88.5% in Northridge earthquake ones. We compared the percentage of each category between Hanshin earthquake victims and Northridge earthquake ones. Fig. 4 shows that frequent responses were ‘the other people (42.35%),’ ‘material possessions (33.33%),’ ‘psychological or intraorganismic processes (16.23%)’ for Hanshin earthquake victims. On the other hand, ‘psychological or intraorganismic processes (33.33%),’ ‘the other people (25.76%),’ and ‘material possessions (21.83%)’ for Northridge earthquake ones. Chi-square test (see Table 3) found that Hanshin earthquake victims significantly listed more answers of material possessions, the other people, and others than Northridge earthquake ones, while the Northridge earthquake victims significantly did more answers of psychological or intraorganismic processes, distant physical environment, and abstract ideas than Hanshin earthquake ones. In short, it was the characteristic of Northridge earthquake victims that they listed many answers of the internal aspect of self, while it was the characteristic of Hanshin earthquake victims that they listed many answers of the external objects, especially the other people.

![FIGURE 2](image-url)

**Feelings When They Lost Their Favorite Material Possession**

- **Hanshin**
  - 5
  - 5
  - 21
  - 11
  - 22

- **Northridge**
  - 4
  - 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Hanshin</th>
<th>Northridge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **panic**
- **angry**
- **depression**
- **rational or positive thinking**
- **others**

The four factors that is loading between Hanshin earthquake victims and Northridge ones. A two-way interaction between the degree of damage and country was observed.
DISCUSSION

Value on lost possessions

Materialism scale (Ikeuchi & Fujihara, 1996) was applied to investigate the victims’ value on lost cherished possessions. Factor analysis of materialism scale revealed three factors in both samples, that is, self presentational value, symbolic value of relationship, and emotional value for Hanshin earthquake victims and functional and emotional value, symbolic value of relationship, and self presentational value for Northridge earthquake victims. Although the number of mainly extracted factors were three in both samples, the content of items was a little different. For Hanshin earthquake victims, emotional value factor was purely extracted as one factor, but for Northridge earthquake victims emotional value and functional value are mixed within one factor.

Three results might suggest that Northridge victims didn’t discriminate between emotional value and functional value and they perceived them to be related. From these results, it is speculated that functional usefulness of possessions may lead an attachment to possessions such as “friends of heart” and “it decreases the loneliness.” These results might represent American modal personality which put an importance on rationalism.

Factor analysis commonly extracted self presentational factor in both victim samples. This factor seems to be consistent with
success factor by Richins & Dawson (1992) which means belief and value that possessions can present success. That is common findings was that possession have some values by which people can present oneself to others.

2*2 (damage*country) ANOVA revealed a main effect for damage and country, with higher ratings of functional value in Hanshin earthquake than in Northridge earthquake and higher ratings of it in severe damaged group than in minor damaged one. There were significant main country effects and interaction effects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factor analysis of materialism items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Northridge)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4) Since I lost it, life has become more inconvenient.</td>
<td>.842</td>
<td>.181</td>
<td>.277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) It greatly influenced the way I viewed my life.</td>
<td>.825</td>
<td>.308</td>
<td>.262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) It was indispensable to achieve several purposes in my life.</td>
<td>.802</td>
<td>.301</td>
<td>.152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) It (=that belonging) was like my best friend.</td>
<td>.768</td>
<td>.172</td>
<td>.132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19) By possessing it, my life was very convenient.</td>
<td>.759</td>
<td>- .003</td>
<td>.412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) It played a practical role in my life.</td>
<td>.715</td>
<td>.394</td>
<td>.313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) As long as I had it, I could escape from reality.</td>
<td>.681</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>.292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) It helped to reduce my loneliness.</td>
<td>.652</td>
<td>.367</td>
<td>.140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22) It helped me feel that I was really myself.</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td>.524</td>
<td>.167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) I could not achieve my goals without it.</td>
<td>.589</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) It helped to reduce my stress.</td>
<td>.429</td>
<td>.362</td>
<td>.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) It symbolized important moments of my life.</td>
<td>.182</td>
<td>.902</td>
<td>.251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23) It was given to me by someone special.</td>
<td>-.035</td>
<td>.875</td>
<td>.333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) It helped me to remember my relationships with certain people.</td>
<td>.226</td>
<td>.853</td>
<td>.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) I could feel proud of myself by possessing it.</td>
<td>.172</td>
<td>.801</td>
<td>.432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21) Even though I looked for it all over the world, I would not be able to find a substitute.</td>
<td>.358</td>
<td>.797</td>
<td>-.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Possessing it gave me great personal satisfaction.</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td>.784</td>
<td>.349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Money could never replace it.</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>.710</td>
<td>-.211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20) By possessing it, I could feel close to particular friends and relatives.</td>
<td>.144</td>
<td>.588</td>
<td>.225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Others were envious of my having it.</td>
<td>.238</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>.790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24) By possessing it, I could attract others’ attention.</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>.251</td>
<td>.747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25) By possessing it, I felt really impressive.</td>
<td>.409</td>
<td>.237</td>
<td>.737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18) By possessing it, I could get a sense of superiority.</td>
<td>.548</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>.694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) It helped to increase my attractiveness.</td>
<td>.323</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>.683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) It was useful to express my status.</td>
<td>.589</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>.618</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Eigenvalue | 12.13 | 3.42 | 1.90 |
| Proportion (%) | 48.50 | 13.67 | 7.60 |

indicating higher ratings of emotional, self presentational, and symbolic values factors in Hanshin earthquake than in Northridge earthquake. These results suggested that Hanshin earthquake victims relatively tended to put an importance on material possessions. What make such differences? The first explanation may base upon extended self. With regards to the structure of extended self, Hanshin earthquake victims regarded material possessions as a part of self in comparison with Northridge victims, suggesting that material possessions might be an important position in their lives.
FIGURE 3
Materialism Factor Score by the Degree of Damage and by Country

FIGURE 4
The Structure of Extended Self
The second explanation comes from the difference of the magnitude of earthquake. This study measured value on possession in terms of lost ones. Hanshin earthquake victims with large magnitude of earthquake tended to list expensive possessions like houses and walls as cherished lost possessions. Expensive possessions might have high value, leading to high score in materialism scale of Hanshin earthquake victims.

Feeling toward lost possessions

Many victims of Hanshin earthquake listed “house/wall” “computer” “TV, stereo, audio component,” and many victims of Northridge earthquake listed “dishes/glass goods” “TV, stereo, audio component” “pictures/letters.” In comparison with Northridge earthquake, Hanshin earthquake killed many people and destroyed lots of houses. Thus it is speculated that these differences may attribute to the magnitude of earthquake.

With regards to feeling toward lost possessions, both victims commonly and frequently reported depressive such as “I felt depressed as if one of myself was lost.” Accordingly, loss of cherished possessions might leads to strong stress for both victim samples. Why loss of cherished possessions make victims feel stressful? These results can be explained by “conservation of resource theory” (Hobfoll, 1989). This model suggests that the promotion of well-being and prevention of stress depends on the availability and successful management of resources. According to Hobfoll, resources are personal characteristics, energies, conditions, and objects which people strive to retain, protect, and/or build. When any of these resources are lost, people become vulnerable to psychological and physical disorder and debilitated functioning. Thus, loss of cherished possessions can be perceived as stressful because of the threat on the resources.

The structure of extended self

While Hanshin earthquake victims regarded “material possession,” “the other people,” and “others” as extended self, Northridge earthquake victims regarded “psychological and intraorganismic processes,” “physical environment in distances,” and “abstract ideas” as extended self. These results suggest that the extended self of Hanshin earthquake victims stretches itself to outer objects in its scope and the extended self of Northridge earthquake victims is composed of inner objects.

These differences might come from the difference of self. Markus & Kitayama (1991), for example, propose two kinds of self: an independent view of self and an inter dependent view of self.

### TABLE 3
Chi-Square Test of Extended Self Category between Hanshin Earthquake Victims and Northridge Earthquake Ones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Hanshin (n=208)</th>
<th>North (n=88)</th>
<th>( \chi^2 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>psychological or intraorganismic process</td>
<td>self</td>
<td>57 (27.40)</td>
<td>52 (59.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-self</td>
<td>151 (72.6)</td>
<td>35 (40.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>body parts</td>
<td>self</td>
<td>6 (2.88)</td>
<td>6 (6.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-self</td>
<td>202 (97.12)</td>
<td>81 (93.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>objects within the close physical environments</td>
<td>self</td>
<td>3 (1.44)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-self</td>
<td>205 (98.56)</td>
<td>87 (100.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distant physical environments</td>
<td>self</td>
<td>5 (2.40)</td>
<td>7 (8.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-self</td>
<td>203 (97.60)</td>
<td>80 (91.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>things which indicate personal characteristics and attributes</td>
<td>self</td>
<td>28 (13.46)</td>
<td>13 (14.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-self</td>
<td>180 (86.54)</td>
<td>74 (85.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>material possessions</td>
<td>self</td>
<td>70 (33.65)</td>
<td>18 (20.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-self</td>
<td>138 (66.35)</td>
<td>69 (79.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the other people</td>
<td>self</td>
<td>138 (66.35)</td>
<td>29 (33.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-self</td>
<td>70 (33.65)</td>
<td>58 (66.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abstract ideas</td>
<td>self</td>
<td>5 (2.40)</td>
<td>13 (14.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-self</td>
<td>203 (97.60)</td>
<td>74 (85.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others</td>
<td>self</td>
<td>49 (23.56)</td>
<td>10 (11.49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-self</td>
<td>159 (76.44)</td>
<td>77 (88.51)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 1: ( ) = %
Note 2: *p<.05, ***p<.001
Asian cultures, such as Japan, have an interdependent view of self and they are socially oriented, and they are concerned with fitting in, belonging to others and group. On the contrary, Americans typically have an independent view of self and seek independence from others. Also, Sampson (1988) defined Western self as “mutually exclusive” and Japanese as “mutually inclusive.” Hamaguchi (1982) proposes similar term, “Contextualism” in which Japanese people are apt to attach importance to relationships with others and to regard it as part of self. Minami (1983) points out that the characteristics of Japanese self are weak and unstable.

From the above suggestions, we may conclude that Japanese may take in external objects as self and may extend their self in comparison with American people because of weak consciousness of individuality. Thus, it is speculated that the difference of extended self between two earthquake victims sample might attribute to the differences of self.

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Positive Illusions, Success, and Consumption: A Romanian Investigation
Anastasia M. Luca, UCLA, U.S.A.
Deborah Cours, California State University, Northridge, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT
Individuals’ interpretation of reality, with implications for decision-making and information evaluation, has been a major research interest in psychology, economics, organizational behavior, marketing and consumer research, among other disciplines. In this paper, we examine a model of the positive interpretation of reality that occurs by individuals in the evaluation and interpretation of data, and the forecasting of likelihood of future events. We seek to introduce Taylor’s model of positive illusions (henceforth referred to as TPI) (Taylor 1983; 1989; Taylor and Brown 1988) to the consumer research field, to highlight the associations among TPI and consumption patterns, and to discuss the usefulness of this construct in consumer research.

WHAT ARE POSITIVE ILLUSIONS?
Social cognition research has provided strong evidence that mentally healthy individuals process and interpret reality to their benefit via self-serving biases (Fiske and Taylor 1988; Nisbett and Ross; Kahneman and Tversky 1984). Several models of positive reality interpretation have evolved in the social psychology and social cognition literatures. Psychologists have collected significant evidence that individuals interpret reality with a positive bias. Alicke (1985) and Brown (1986) show that positive personality traits are rated as more representative of the self than are negative traits. Kuiper and colleagues (Kuiper and Derry 1982; Kuiper and MacDonald 1982; Kuiper et al. 1985) demonstrate that individuals show better cognitive processing and memory for positive personality information than for negative personality information about the self. Ross and Fletcher (1985) report the fundamental attribution error, a self-serving bias whereby one makes favorable attributions when making attributions about oneself and less favorable attributions when making attributions about others. For example, individuals will make internal, stable and uncontrollable attributions for positive outcomes, but attribute negative outcomes to external, unstable uncontrollable sources.

This study employs Taylor’s model of positive illusions (TPI) (Taylor 1983; Taylor and Brown 1988; Taylor 1989). According to this model, individuals mildly distort reality to their benefit due to self-serving biases. This construct represents an in-depth synthesis of many models. According to the TPI model, individuals with positive reality interpretation biases develop enhanced self-esteem, sense of control, and unrealistic optimism, as well as the belief that they are better off than their peers.

The benefits of positive illusions may not be immediately or intuitively apparent. While these biases might be expected to have deleterious effects due to inaccurate self-assessments, findings suggest that TPI has beneficial consequences. Higher levels of positive illusions are related to increased happiness and contentment, as well as to more creative and productive work, a greater capacity to care for others, higher motivation persistence and performance. In addition, TPI provide an adaptive mechanism, enabling individuals facing critical illnesses to adjust and cope better (Taylor and Armor 1996; Taylor et al 1998).

CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISONS OF POSITIVE ILLUSIONS
Positive illusions have been demonstrated in numerous studies using North American samples in social psychology and health psychology. TPI has not been previously tested cross-culturally. Heine and Lehman (1995) find that Canadians demonstrate significantly more unrealistic optimism than does a Japanese sample. In 1997, Heine and Lehman speculate that one explanation for the lack of positive self-serving biases in Asian cultures may be due to differences between the collectivist vs. individualist nature of Asian vs. North American cultures (Hofstede 1991). This interpretation suggests that Japanese, as members of a collectivist culture, do not focus on individual success. Therefore, positive illusions and other self-serving biases, which function to improve self-evaluation, would not occur. Heine and Lehman suggest that if members in a collectivist culture show a group orientation instead of an individual orientation, that perhaps Japanese would show a group-serving bias instead of a self-serving bias. However, the authors find a lack of both self and group serving biases among Japanese subjects.

Luca (1999) employs TPI as a means of exploring positive self-assessment. She compares a sample of Romanian MBA students to U.S. MBA students along the dimensions of TPI, and found a similar pattern of positive illusions despite the fact that the Romanian culture is considered to be more collectivist than the U.S. culture. Thus, this study provides evidence that the positive illusion phenomenon may be a cultural similarity rather than difference.

Luca applies positive illusions to individuals in the workplace. Her findings include demonstrating that individuals with high positive illusions are more motivated in the workplace than those with lower positive illusions. She also finds that individuals with relatively higher levels of positive illusions enjoy greater career success and produce a higher level of performance than do individuals with lower levels of positive illusions. This research contributes to the organizational literature by developing a positive self-assessment model as well as demonstrating its association with increased motivation and career success. Luca also identifies career expectations as a useful arena in which to measure positive illusions.

POSITIVE ILLUSIONS AND CONSUMPTION
We seek to introduce the notion of positive illusions to the consumer literature, extend the measure of positive illusions to consumption behavior, and consider consumer theory implications of the positive illusions construct.

Using the Romanian sample data from Luca’s (1999) study, we explore differences in expected consumption between individuals who score high vs. low on positive illusions.

Hypotheses
Luca’s questionnaire instrument includes questions about several important and relevant purchases. Her questions include descriptions of the respondent’s current and expected future car, current and expected future home, and expected vacation location and frequency. Future expectations are framed according to “at graduation” and “ultimately.” We hypothesize that we would find evidence of positive illusions in the predicted consumption data, such that individuals with higher levels of positive illusions would report higher likelihoods of owning nicer cars and homes and of taking more frequent and more prestigious vacations.

The Sample
The sample consists of 85 Romanian executive MBA students. The data collection occurred at an institution located in Bucharest.
Sixty-five percent of the sample was male, the mean age was 35, and 27% of the students in the sample are entrepreneurs.

The Measures

Luca (1999) develops a survey instrument incorporating several sub-scales. The positive illusion dimensions are based upon Taylor’s Positive Illusions scale. Luca provides eleven business scenarios describing a mix of positive and negative situations. Twenty-two questions are created by asking the participants to appraise the likelihood of each of the eleven business scenarios occurring to themselves, and to their peers. That is, each scenario was presented twice; once in the context of self-likelihood assessment and once in the context of evaluating the likelihood a peer would experience that situation. The questions are asked in a random order. After reverse scoring for negative vs. positive events, positive illusions are then measured by difference scores, created by deducting the self ratings of outcome likelihood from the respondent’s rating of a peer’s likelihood of experiencing the same outcome. The eleven difference scores are then combined to form an overall level of positive illusions.

The consumption measures include a description of the respondent’s current car and the cars expected to be owned at graduation and ultimately (ultimately to refer to after some post-graduation period of career development). Current housing and expected housing, at graduation and ultimately, data are collected by asking for a description of the type of houses currently owned and expected to be owned at graduation and ultimately. Just as in the U.S., one can afford a larger house in a less prestigious neighborhood, while a small apartment in a more prestigious location may have more value. Hence, data are also collected on the “district” of the current and expected housing. Finally, expectations of vacationing behaviors, in frequency and in location, are collected.

These descriptions are coded with knowledge of Romanian and European brands, housing preferences, and vacation preferences. Scaled categories of consumption for each category with scores ranging from 1 (lowest, worst, least valued) to 5 (highest, best, most valued) are developed.

Analysis

Multiple regression analysis, controlling for age, gender, and entrepreneurship is run on the consumption measures to determine the role of positive illusions as measured by the self-other difference scores. F-statistics are calculated to evaluate the significance of the effects.

Results

Cars. Positive illusions are marginally significant in predicting the car currently owned by the students (F(1)=3.57, p=.06) and in predicting the car expected to be owned at graduation (F(1)=3.72, p=.06). There is no effect of positive illusions on predicting the car expected to be ultimately owned (F(1)=0.86, p>.3).

Houses. There are no significant effects of positive illusions in explaining the type of current housing (F(1)=.70, p>.4) or the housing expected to be owned at graduation (F(1)=1.07, p>.3). However, positive illusions do have a significant effect in explaining the type of housing expected to be owned ultimately (F(1)=5.39, p<.05). In a similar pattern, there are no significant effects of positive illusions on the expected district of housing at graduation (F(1)=1.41, p>.3), but there is a significant effect of positive illusions in explaining the district for ultimate housing expected to be owned (F(1)=8.13, p<.01).

Vacations. There are no statistically significant results for either of the vacation measures. Positive illusions do not explain variance in the expectations of locations of vacations (F(1)=2.45, p>.1) nor in the expectations of vacation frequency (F(1)=.035, p>.8).

Summary. Although we do not find a great deal of support for the relationship between positive illusions and consumer behavior and expectations, we did find some results that encourage us to pursue this stream of research. The coding of housing, car, and vacation preferences is a difficult task. It is possible that our coding scheme does not permit as fine-tuned scaling of the consumption expectations as we would like to have. As we pursue this research, we recommend the use of consumer-based evaluations, by independent interviews or focus groups by appropriately matched consumer groups.

DISCUSSION

Through this research, we have introduced Taylor’s construct of positive illusions to the consumption arena. We have established that positive illusions can be measured by (expected) consumer behavior. We believe that the further study of positive illusions and consumption has significant potential. Due to their differing response to statistical information about event likelihood, we expect that individuals with higher levels of positive illusions will respond differently to some types of advertising appeals than individuals of lower (or no) positive illusions. For example, an individual with high positive illusions may be more willing to accept that she can experience the same outcomes as a celebrity or other ideal referent. An individual with a lower level positive illusions might be more influenced by a similar-other referent such as a peer. We might also expect expenditure differences between individuals with high versus low positive illusions. We suggest that the relationship between positive illusions and risk proneness, and the resulting implications for consumer behavior, is an interesting path to pursue. Finally, we wonder about the impact of positive illusions on customer satisfaction. Do individuals with higher positive illusions cause them to have higher expectations and hence, make them more difficult to satisfy, or do they reinterpret their experiences with this positive bias, and hence, report greater satisfaction?

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Examining the Relationship Between Background Musical Tempo and Perceived Duration Using Different Versions of a Radio Ad

Steve Oakes, University of Central Lancashire, England

ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between background musical tempo and perceptions of the duration of three versions of the same radio ad (fast tempo/slow tempo/no music) using digital music technology to isolate the tempo variable whilst retaining other musical variables as constants. The experiment reveals how mean estimates of the duration of the fast version are significantly higher than those for the no music version. Although no significant difference in perceived duration is revealed between the slow and fast versions, the results are encouraging enough to indicate the need for further research experimenting with even wider variations in tempo.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

The underlying hypothesis which drives this particular study is the contention that there is a significant, positive relationship between background musical tempo measured in beats per minute (BPM) and respondent perception of temporal duration. Whilst various studies (e.g. Frankenhausser 1959; Ornstein 1969; Piaget 1969; Zakay et al 1983; Bickel 1984) have confirmed a significant, positive relationship between metronomic tempo (i.e. using a metronome rather than a musical stimulus) and perceived duration, no studies support the existence of a similar relationship between musical tempo and perceived duration. This research seeks to establish that such a relationship also exists when the background tempo is varied using musical, rather than merely metronomic accompaniment.

When considering the use of music in ads, Scott (1990) argued that music can be used to make the perceived ad time shorter than the actual ad time. If such music can be harnessed appropriately, it may be used to reduce boredom and maintain the attention spans of ad viewers/listeners. This view was supported by Kellaris and Mantel (1996), who argued that an ad which seems to be shorter than its actual running time is less likely to be ‘zapped’ by listeners using the remote control unit. Therefore, if carefully selected background music can be used to reduce subjective time estimation, thereby enhancing the attention span of consumers exposed to ads, it may then have a positive impact upon consumer recall of ad content.

Conversely, Kellaris and Mantel (1996) also argued that commercial cost saving benefits could be derived from augmenting perceived duration, e.g. by achieving the memorability impact of a 30 second ad exposure with just a 20 second ad slot. This supports research (Kellaris and Kent 1992) which argued that sellers might benefit from increasing, rather than decreasing the perceived duration of ad exposure.

Although research into the effects of musical tempo have an extensive history (e.g. Rigg 1940), early studies were hampered by the inability to manipulate tempo in isolation. If they increased the speed of their tape recording, it would raise the pitch of the notes. Alternatively, if they recorded multiple performances of the same piece at different speeds, this would be very time consuming, and would suffer from confounding tempo with variations in performance (Kellaris and Rice 1993). Many recent studies have taken advantage of digital technology to explore the effects of varying tempo (e.g. Kellaris and Kent 1991; Kellaris and Rice 1993; Herrington and Capella 1996), or have used a programmable keyboard (Holbrook and Anand 1990) whilst keeping the other variables constant. Kellaris and Kent (1992) have used this technology to isolate the effects of varying harmony (modes).

Empirical study conducted as part of this research (carried out on November 20th/21st 1997) acknowledges the desirability, where possible, of observing the effects of manipulating individual musical variables whilst retaining the rest as constants. Consequently, this experiment focuses upon the musical tempo variable in isolation from other variables.

For this study, advantage is taken of advances in electronic music technology that facilitate the reproduction of digital musical data at various speeds without altering the other musical elements. Using the appropriate hardware and software technology of MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface), an electronic synthesiser that plays back the edited musical data can produce original textures, as well as reproducing the wave patterns and sound textures of acoustic musical instruments. Original instrumental compositions have been used here in order to circumvent the potentially confounding effects of lyrics, prior exposure and emotional associations.

Much research has been undertaken into the communicative capacity of poetry/drama/fiction (e.g. Wimsatt 1954), contrasting authorial intention (the intentional fallacy) with reader/literary critic interpretation (the affective fallacy). In comparison to such verbal communication studies, research into the impact of non-verbal musical communication upon consumer response within a commercial context is still relatively sparse. There is then a clear need for more comparable research exploring the relationship between advertiser intention and consumer interpretation of music used in advertising. Likewise, the use of specific musical devices in advertising (e.g. dissonance resolving to consonance) is capable of influencing consumer behaviour in ways that have not yet been adequately documented in academic marketing literature. Research is needed which will enable managers to predict with more certainty the ways in which consumers will respond to the musical stimuli they are exposed to. A deeper understanding of the objective structural properties of music is required in order to reduce managerial dependence upon subjective consumer interpretation and response to the music they hear in both ads and service settings.

Although it is impossible to negate the influence of musical culture upon subjective response to musical stimuli, the experiment conducted as part of this research attempts to minimise the influence of inherent preferences and prejudices by using a short (40 seconds), originally composed digital composition. The underlying intention is to provide a more ‘neutral’ musical stimulus than many other studies which have used well known popular and classical compositions in their entirety (e.g. Areni and Kim 1993; North et al 1998).

In seeking to verify that a significant, positive relationship exists between background musical tempo and subjective time estimation, it is acknowledged that previous studies (e.g. Bickel 1984; Chebat, Gelinas-Chebat, Filiatrault 1993; Hui, Dube, and Chebat 1997; North et al 1998) have concluded that no such significant relationship exists. However, these studies did not use digital musical technology to alter tempo whilst keeping the other variables constant, thus increasing the likelihood of the presence of confounding effects.
METHOD
In order to ascertain the nature of the relationship between the independent variable (musical tempo) and the dependent variable (perceived duration), the pilot study consisted of a basic design laboratory experiment carried out in an artificial environment using 114 undergraduate student subjects divided into 3 cells of 38.

A real radio ad of 40 seconds duration was selected from a bank of radio ads. Three versions of this ad were recorded, with no variation in content or duration of the ad between recordings. The original ‘dry’ ad was used to provide a control condition with no background music. Identical background music was superimposed over the other two recordings, with tempo as the only variation (90 BPM and 170 BPM). These tempo settings were slightly faster than the tempo settings used in a previous study (Kellaris and Rice 1993), which argued that it is unusual to hear music slower than 60 BPM or faster than 120 BPM in a service environment or a commercial. However, in this experiment, 60 BPM was considered too labour a tempo for the musical genre to sound effective. In addition, pretesting indicated that this slow pulse sounded incongruous within the context of the rapid verbal delivery of the ad.

Whereas other simulated radio ad studies have used various classical music selections (e.g. Kellaris, Cox, and Cox 1993; Kellaris and Mantel 1996), the potentially confounding influence of other musical variables (e.g. genre, harmony, rhythm) has been minimised in this study by varying only tempo whilst holding the others as constants. In order to minimise as far as possible the confounding effects of such extraneous musical variables, the background music used in this research has been originally produced with the aid of musical software allowing reproduction of digital musical data at various tempi without altering other musical elements.

Undergraduate students were selected as an appropriate sample, since this age segment includes a particularly high proportion of the most frequent radio and music listeners (Mediamark Research Inc. 1989), and various studies (e.g. Kellaris, Cox, and Cox 1993) have acknowledged that they are regular targets for musical ads. The musical composition was designed to imitate styles of music commonly featured in youth-oriented ads, in order to represent a genre of commercial music regularly targeted at this age segment (Kellaris and Kent 1992).

The dependent variable to be measured is the retrospectively perceived duration of the ad. The procedure involved randomly assigning 2nd year Marketing Management undergraduate students to a test ad, providing them with a written questionnaire and instructions similar to those provided to respondents in the Kellaris and Mantel (1996) study. The participants arrived by appointment over a period of two days, and were informed that they would each be listening to the same radio ad. Having listened to the ad using the cassette recorders and headphones provided, they were then asked to answer brief written questions concerning their attitude to the ad, their retention of its content, and their perception of its duration. They were not made aware that any variation existed between the ads in terms of musical background. By not revealing the true purpose of the experiment, it was hoped to minimise distortions associated with the ‘Hawthorne effect’ which can arise when respondents alter their responses when they are being observed.

The questionnaire requested information to ascertain specific details regarding respondent attitude to the ad and content recall. Additional instructions read as follows: ‘How long did the ad you have just heard seem to last? Try to be as precise as possible to the nearest second, even if you are not certain. Using the table below, please put a circle around the number which indicates how many seconds you thought the ad lasted.’

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results calculated from responses to the experiment are shown below (Tables 1 and 2). In questions where there is only one possible correct answer (i.e. questions 2 and 3), the number of correct answers from each cell of 38 are included in bold print. Other responses to questions 2 and 3 are included for the sake of completeness, but they are all considered to be equally incorrect. Responses to Question 4 allow comparison of mean perceived duration estimates for each of the 3 treatment conditions. Although there were the same number of respondents in each cell (38), where more than one answer has been ticked for a particular question, both answers have been included in the results, and the cell size total has been modified accordingly. The overall results were as shown in the Tables.

Comparing Perceived Duration Under the 90 BPM and Control Condition Treatments
Using a one-tail test at the 5% level of significance, the results conclude that the mean perceived durations do not differ significantly. However, since the mean perceived duration of the 90 BPM treatment is 5 seconds greater than the control condition treatment, it is possible that differences in duration estimates only reach a level of significance beyond a specific BPM tempo level.
TABLE 1
Radio Advertising Experiment Results

1. How interesting did you find the ad you have just heard?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CONTROL</th>
<th>90</th>
<th>170</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Very interesting</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Fairly interesting</td>
<td>(18)</td>
<td>(12)</td>
<td>(15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Fairly boring</td>
<td>(17)</td>
<td>(17)</td>
<td>(16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Very boring</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) I was indifferent to the ad</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Which one of the following products was being highlighted?

*The number of correct (c) answers are in bold:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CONTROL</th>
<th>90</th>
<th>170</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Ultrasecure System 2000 range of doors</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Ultrasecure System 3000 range of doors</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Ultrasecure System 2000 range of windows</td>
<td>(30)</td>
<td>(30)</td>
<td>(20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Ultrasecure System 3000 range of windows</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Don’t know</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Which of the following offers was not made by the advertiser?

*The number of correct (b) answers are in bold:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CONTROL</th>
<th>90</th>
<th>170</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Interest free credit</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Free delivery</td>
<td>(29)</td>
<td>(24)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Will beat all other quotes</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Buy now, pay next summer</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Don’t know</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. How long did the ad you have just heard seem to last? Try to be as precise as possible to the nearest second, even if you are not certain. Using the table below, please put a circle around the number which indicates how many seconds you thought the ad lasted:

*The mean perceived duration estimates were as follows:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CONTROL</th>
<th>90 BPM</th>
<th>170 BPM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42.5526</td>
<td>47.3157</td>
<td>53.3684</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Background music is used on most radio ads. What did you feel about the music used in this ad?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>90</th>
<th>170</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) The music was very enjoyable</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) The music was moderately enjoyable</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) The music was mildly irritating</td>
<td>(17)</td>
<td>(16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) The music was very irritating</td>
<td>(15)</td>
<td>(17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) I was indifferent to the music</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

38 38
Comparing Perceived Duration Under the 90 BPM and 170 BPM Treatments

Using a one-tail test at the 5% level of significance, the results conclude that the mean perceived durations do not differ significantly. However, the difference in mean perceived duration between the two groups is substantial enough to merit further experimental research using tempo variations wider than the variation between 90 BPM and 170 BPM.

It is interesting to note that the fast music treatment led to a greater degree of inaccuracy in estimations than did the slow music treatment. This result contradicts the findings of a study by North et al. (1998), whose experimental findings concluded that ‘slow music led to a greater degree of inaccuracy in estimations’ when compared to fast music. However, the latter study did not use digital musical technology to isolate the tempo variable from other musical variables.

Comparing Perceived Duration Under the 170 BPM and Control Condition Treatments

Using a one-tail test at the 5% level of significance, the results conclude that the mean perceived duration at 170 BPM is significantly greater than the mean perceived duration in the no music control condition treatment. The fast music treatment led to a greater degree of inaccuracy in estimations than did the no music control condition treatment.

As the faster music treatment in Experiment 1 contained more data than either the slow or no music treatments, this result could be viewed as generally supportive of the storage-size theoretical model of temporal perception (Ornstein 1969) which explained how subjective estimates of stimulus duration are larger for complex stimuli than for simple ones. With this model, the relationship between task complexity or information processing load and perceived duration is positive. It tends to disconfirm attentional models of temporal perception (e.g. Frankenhauser 1959) which argued that the relationship between task complexity or information processing load and perceived duration is negative.

Comparing the Number of ‘Accurate’ Content Recall Responses Under the Different Treatments

Although the main focus of this experiment was upon the perceived duration variable, it is interesting to note that estimates of actual duration and ad content recall responses were both less ‘accurate’ at the fast tempo (170 BPM). Responses to Question 2 (Table 1) indicate no difference in the number of subjects who accurately recalled the advertised product under the 90 BPM and control condition treatments (30 in each case). However, at the faster tempo of 170 BPM, there were only 20 accurate recollections of the advertised product, which could indicate that the increased complexity of message processing caused by the additional musical data at the fast musical tempo resulted in a distraction from content recall.

The same pattern is in evidence in responses to Question 3, revealing 29 correct content recall responses under the control treatment, 24 correct content recall responses at 90 BPM, and only 19 correct content recall responses at 170 BPM. Such a pattern could be worrying for advertisers using music in an attempt to enhance the communicative power of their ad message, although the artificiality of the experimental situation does not take into account the value of critical factors such as music’s attention gaining capacity.

LIMITATIONS

Limitations with this experiment need to be noted. Firstly, the convenience sample of undergraduates reduced the generalisability of the findings. In addition, the search for a usable radio ad without existing background music or extraneous noise proved problematic, since the overwhelming majority of radio ads targeted at this age group already had background music. This resulted in a compromise when selecting a ‘dry’ ad, which meant that the product (windows and doors) was not primarily targeted at this group of respondents. It would be desirable to repeat the experiment with older subjects who would be a more obvious target segment for the advertised products. Further research is also needed to establish whether tempo effects are likely to be curvilinear in nature, or whether they are only likely to appear beyond a specific BPM threshold.

An additional limitation of the experiment was the high attentiveness paid to the radio ad in this focused experimental context. The use of headphones to shut out extraneous noise emphasised the need to concentrate on the content of the ad, and thus created a particularly artificial advertising environment. Although the laboratory environment experimental situation allowed
more precise filtering out of extraneous and potentially confounding musical variables, thus enhancing internal validity, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent results provided a prediction (in terms of external validity) of the way in which people would respond to given musical stimuli in an authentic commercial context.

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to investigate the impact of source credibility on the believability of an advertising claim. While earlier research had suggested that source credibility influences truth ratings, it was not clear when the credible source exerts its influence—is it when one is exposed to an advertising claim (at encoding), or, when it is subsequently remembered (at retrieval), or, at both times? Results show that while the credibility of source at encoding as well as the source remembered at retrieval influenced truth ratings of a claim, the source at retrieval influenced truth ratings the most. Marketing implications of the results are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Consider the following statement: “Peanut butter is low in cholesterol.” Do you believe it? Past research in marketing has demonstrated that if you have seen this item before this article you are likely to believe it more this time, regardless of whether it is true or not. Mere repetition increases belief (the truth effect). People are naturally predisposed to believe that which is familiar and familiarity increases with repetition (Hawkins & Hoch, 1992). If this does seem familiar—where did you hear it before? As a consumer, one could have learned this “fact” from numerous sources: a radio or television commercial, a close friend, a research report, a nutrition expert. Let’s say this item is from an ad by Kraft. If you remember this source correctly, then your natural skepticism regarding commercially motivated claims may temper your belief in this claim. On the other hand, if you misattribute this claim to a dietitian friend you hold in high regard, then one would expect that regarding commercially motivated claims may temper your belief.

What is not clear from previous studies, however, is when source credibility influences rated truth. Is the influence of source credibility on beliefs exerted at the time when the message is encoded? Or, is the effect of the source on the credibility of the message exerted when the message and its source are retrieved just prior to making a decision?

The next section reviews evidence from the truth effect literature concerning the relationship between source memory and beliefs. The article then discusses the rationale and hypothesis of the present study. Following this, the design, procedure, and results obtained are discussed.

Source memory and beliefs: A brief review

Subjects’ memory for the credibility of a message source influences truth rating. Several studies have found that claims presented during the study but attributed to an extra-experimental source received the highest truth ratings (Arkes et al., 1991; Arkes et al., 1989, Experiments 1 and 1A; Law, Hawkins, & Craik, 1998; Sitton & Griffin, 1980). For instance, Arkes et al. (1989) report that the rated truth of repeated claims when identified as seen in the experimental session was 3.87 (on a 7 point scale where 7 was “definitely true”), whereas those attributed to a source outside the study were rated as 5.03 (an increase of 1.16 scale points). Presumably, subjects considered the extra-experimental source to be more trustworthy and hence trusted claims attributed to outside sources more than claims attributed to the experimental setting.

Results reported by Law (1998) are also consistent with the view that a spokesperson’s credibility influences truth ratings and also raises the possibility that source credibility has greatest impact at the time the truth judgment is being made. Subjects saw advertising claims at study, some paired with credible sources (such as Better Business Bureau, Consumer Reports) others paired with doubtful sources (such as National Enquirer, Commercial messages). After a brief distractor task, the studied claims were repeated together with similar, new claims and subjects were asked to (a) assess the truth of each claim, and (b) indicate whether they recognize having encountered the claim before. For the claims they recognized, subjects were required to circle the source of prior exposure from a list which had two broad options, First session and Outside of Experiment (e.g., commercial material; word-of-mouth; personal experience; News/ research reports). The primary objective was to examine the impact on truth ratings when the experimentally provided source was forgotten, and when it was misremembered. It was observed that subjects’ memory for the source of a claim had a significant impact on truth ratings even when those memories were false. Not only did participants frequently commit false memory errors (i.e., they reported having seen an ad claim before, outside—which was not possible since the claims were fictitious and created for experimental purposes), but they also showed a tendency to trust these false judgments the most.

These data seem to converge on the notion that source remembered when making a judgment is an important determinant of truth ratings. However, because source memory was tested by a general “seen in first session/seen outside experiment” measure, it is not clear from the Law (1998) results whether differences in truth ratings were a result of poor learning at encoding (when claims were paired with credible or doubtful source) or result from the subjects’ inability to remember source information at retrieval. In order to more fairly evaluate memory mechanisms underlying truth ratings,
source should be manipulated at exposure and memory for both the claim, and its source must be evaluated at retrieval.

Thus, the issue of when source memory exerts its influence on consumer beliefs is investigated here within a more general framework of memory which involves the processes of encoding and retrieval.

Based on a popular framework of memory (Craik & Tulving, 1975; Tulving, 1983; Cole & Houston, 1987; Park, Smith, Dudley & Lafronza, 1989; Park & Hastak, 1994; Rabinowitz, Craik & Ackerman, 1982), one can postulate two ways in which the credibility of a source will affect future decisions. It is possible that subjects make decisions regarding their belief in a statement at the time of encoding. That is, the subject evaluates all relevant factors (plausibility of a claim, credibility of its source) at encoding and tags the claim with a credibility assessment as soon as it is processed at encoding (called the encoding-tag hypothesis). This hypothesis therefore predicts a main effect of spokesperson credibility at encoding on truth ratings and can be formally stated as thus:

H1: Encoding Tag Hypothesis: Claims presented with a credible source at encoding will be perceived as being more truthful than claims presented with a doubtful source at encoding, regardless of the source to which they are attributed at retrieval.

Alternatively, the assessment of the truthfulness of a claim may occur at the time of retrieval—for instance, at the time of purchase. In this case, the subject stores the claim and source information, but does not evaluate its credibility since there is no express need to do so. At the time of purchase, or in the case of the experiment, at the time of retrieval, the subject retrieves all information about the claim, the fact and the source, and forms a judgment regarding its credibility. This pattern was obtained by Begg et al. (1992, Experiment 3) and Law (1997) where rated truth was found to be influenced solely by subjects’ memory for the credibility of presenter. Hence, the retrieval-evaluation hypothesis predicts that source credibility exerts an influence on beliefs when a task or circumstance requires a truth judgment to be made:

H2: Retrieval Evaluation Hypothesis: Claims accorded to a credible source at retrieval will be perceived as being more truthful than claims accorded to a doubtful source at encoding, regardless of the source with which they were presented at encoding.

Investigating whether the impact of source credibility on beliefs occurs at the time of learning (encoding) or, whether such evaluations occur when a purchase decision is being made (retrieval), is not only important for theoretical reasons, but also has important marketing implications. If validity assessments are tagged to a message at the time of encoding, then information gleaned from a credible source would be believed, regardless of whether one remembers the source from which the message was learned. In a marketing context, this means that the critical mediator of a consumer’s belief in an ad claim would be her impression of the credibility of the communicator of the message at the time of learning, and it should not matter whether the source of the claim is remembered at point of purchase.

However, consumers do not have perfect memory. They may forget or misattribute the source. If so, validity assessments will depend upon the credibility implications of the source retrieved rather than source presented at encoding. Indeed, if validity assessment is made during retrieval, then we would expect people to believe more in those messages which they (correctly or incorrectly) attribute to a credible source at the time of retrieval. Here, the failure to remember a credible source, or mistakenly assigning it to an incorrect source at retrieval, could incorrectly inflate or deflate the consumers’ belief in a claim. The present study investigates this question by manipulating source credibility at presentation and measuring subjects’ memory for item and source information, and truth ratings of claims at retrieval.

It is important to recognize, however, that the encoding-tag and retrieval-evaluation may not occur exclusive of each other. It is plausible that both effects operate simultaneously, though the numerical size of their effects may differ. It is conceivable that the presented source has a certain quantitative effect, and that this may be added to or discounted depending upon the source to which the statement is accorded at retrieval. Also, in addition to their main effects, the final outcome may depend on an interplay between the two. If this is so, then an investigation of the encoding-retrieval interaction will be necessary for a complete understanding of belief formation.

Participants were presented with a list of claims taken from the same pool as reported by Law, Hawkins and Craik (1998), half of which were attributed to a high credible source while the other half were attributed to a low credible source. After an interval of 20 minutes, participants were again shown the original claims mixed with similar, but new claims and instructed to evaluate how true each claim was, indicate whether they recognized the claim, and indicate which source they remembered the claim to be from.

Several aspects of this experiment should be highlighted. Unlike the majority of investigations of source credibility, this study required participants to evaluate more than one advertising claim. By presenting subjects with multiple claims, the study mimics the everyday consumer context more closely. Furthermore, consumers are frequently confronted with endorsements from credible and dubious sources at once, a situation in which memory errors may have graver consequences. Thus to make the laboratory experiment more reflective of the real-life scenario, each subject saw both credible as well as doubtful sources (i.e. credibility manipulation was within subject).

In addition to manipulating the credibility of a claim’s source at encoding, this study also involved a manipulation of levels of encoding. The reason for including a level of encoding manipulation was twofold: First, the two levels of encoding provide the opportunity of exploring the hypotheses over more than one task condition. This would strengthen the robustness of the results. Second, the shallow encoding condition is expected to result in poorer source memory relative to the deeper encoding condition and thus generate a wider range of retrieval outcomes (i.e., higher incidence of source forgetting and source misattributions). Hence, by providing more than one encoding context and providing a wider range of source retrieval outcomes, this manipulation will allow a more precise investigation of the mechanism through which source memory influences rated truth.

The two levels of encoding were operationalized in the following manner. Different groups of subjects were given either syllable counting or typicality rating instructions prior to the presentation of the claims (discussed under Procedure). According to the levels of processing (LOP) framework, the syllable counting task is data-driven and encourages little elaboration of the to-be-learned material, which represents a shallow encoding task. In contrast, the typicality rating task, by orienting the subjects to the meaning of the claim and hence encouraging elaborative processing of its meaning, constitutes a deeper task (Craik & Lockhart, 1972). Therefore, item and source memory performance was expected to be relatively poor for syllable counting instructions compared to the typicality rating instructions.
In summary, the general hypothesis investigated in the present study was that validity judgements about advertising claims are moderated by memorial processes at encoding and retrieval. This hypothesis was tested first by examining the relative influences of these two memory processes on validity ratings, and second, by manipulating source credibility at exposure (encoding), and third, by examining the relative influences of encoding and retrieval on validity ratings.

**METHOD**

**Subjects.** 74 undergraduate students at a large northwestern university participated in the study in exchange for course credit. Data from two subjects were excluded because they failed to follow the instructions.

**Design and Stimuli Lists.** The experiment was a 2 (Source at presentation: Credible versus Doubtful) x 2 (Source at retrieval: Credible versus Doubtful) x 2 (Level of processing: Deep versus Shallow) mixed-factorial design, with encoding task (shallow vs. deep level of processing) manipulated between subjects and source credibility (credible vs. doubtful) varied within subjects. There were 36 subjects in the deep encoding condition and 38 in the shallow condition. Credibility was manipulated at presentation by dividing the list of claims into two sets of equal length: for one set, subjects were told that the claims are from research and investigative reports appearing in the *Globe and Mail* (a Canadian national newspaper) while for the other set, subjects were informed that the claims were reprinted from the *National Enquirer*.

Pretesting was conducted to ensure that the sources chosen would be sufficiently different in credibility ratings for adequate investigation of the influence of credibility on truth ratings. Sixteen students drawn from the same population as the main experiment participated in the pretest. Each participant was asked to indicate whether they were familiar with each of 14 local and other publications (*The Toronto Star, Consumer Reports, Advertising material, The National Enquirer, etc.*) and rate how credible they perceived them to be. *Globe and Mail*, a Toronto based national newspaper, received the highest ratings (*M* Globe=1.27 on a continuous scale from 0 [very credible] to 7 [very doubtful]). In contrast, the *National Enquirer*, a publication equally familiar to the respondents, received a mean rating of 6.72 on the same scale. This finding was the basis for selecting the sources used in the study and was further confirmed in a post-test survey using the subjects in the main experiment.

The experimental stimuli were 73 statements selected from the list described in Experiments 1 and 2. These 73 items included a set of 64 target items (32 to serve as old claims and 32 to serve as new claims) and 9 items to serve as non-tested buffer items in the study and test lists. Two versions of the study list (List A and List B) were prepared and rotated across groups of subjects such that old items shown to about half of the subjects would be the new items shown to the remaining participants and vice versa.

To create the study list, the 32 “old” target items were randomly divided into two sets of 16 items. For each set of 16 target items, three buffer items were added to the beginning and served as practice items. An additional four obviously true or obviously false filler items were randomly inserted in the appropriate claim set in order to reinforce the contrast between the credible and doubtful blocks (example of obvious fillers: The current federal government of Canada is Liberal—true; sitting too long makes you shorter—false). Thus, one set of 23 claims was presented as the credible set and the other presented as the doubtful set. As in the case of repetition status, the order of presentation of credibility was balanced across subject groups such that about half of the participants were told that the first block of claims were from the *Globe and Mail* while the others were told that the first block was culled from the *National Enquirer*.

The test list contained 67 items, 32 of which were repeated from the study list and were thus “old”, 32 of which were “new” claims never seen before, and 3 buffer items were added at the beginning of the list to allow subjects to become familiar with the task.

**Procedure.** Participants were tested in groups of three to six. At the start of the study phase, subjects were given a rating sheet and informed that they would be asked to evaluate the communication styles of different publications. This was followed by information about the source of the to-be-presented claims (*Globe and Mail* or *National Enquirer*), and a description of the task. In the syllable counting condition, subjects were told that their primary task was to indicate the number of syllables in each claim. Here, the purpose of the study was stated as assessing whether some publications had a higher proclivity towards using polysyllabic words. For the typicality condition, subjects were required to judge whether the claim was typical of those seen in the *Globe and Mail* (*National Enquirer*). To maintain the cover story the instructions in this condition stressed that the research interest was to assess whether readers perceived differences in the communication styles of different publications. See the Appendix A for the experimental protocols.

The study items were presented via an overhead projector at the rate of a claim every 10 seconds. As discussed, the presentation of the claims was blocked by source credibility (credible vs. doubtful source). After a 20-minute distractor task, subjects were presented with the 32 “old” claims together with 32 “new”, but similar, fictitious claims. The subjects were informed that half of the claims had not been presented in the study list. Each statement was presented for 12 seconds, and subjects were asked to indicate: (a) how credible each statement was on a Truth scale (a continuous Likert scale, 16 cm. long, and anchored at Definitely False on the left and Definitely True on the right with higher scores reflecting greater validity); (b) whether they had seen the claim before (a forced choice Yes/No; i.e., recognition memory for item); and (c) where they had seen the claim before from a list of sources (*Experimental source*: *Globe and Mail* news, *National Enquirer*; *Outside source*: *Globe and Mail* news, Other news/research, *National Enquirer*, Advertising material, Word of Mouth, Other source; *Don’t Remember*). See the Appendix for details on dependent measures. Following this, subjects were required to fill out a post-test version of the source rating task. This questionnaire was very similar to the pretest version: Subjects were given a list of 14 sources and asked to indicate how credible they perceived each to be on the 0 to 7 continuous scale with high values indicating low credibility. A debriefing session was conducted at the end to receive input from participants about the instructions and experimental demand effects.

**RESULTS**

The dependent variable was the truth-rating that the subjects accorded to a given statement. There were several independent factors. The first was the source attached to a statement at presentation, it had two levels: *Globe and Mail* (credible) vs. *National Enquirer* (doubtful). The second factor was the source to which the subjects accorded the statements on retrieval. This was, by definition, a post-hoc assignment depending upon the subjects response and could be accorded to: *Globe and Mail* (credible), *National Enquirer* (doubtful), a source outside the experiment, or unable to recall a source. A cross between these two factors (encoding and retrieval) provides a total of eight cells, and in principle a subject could provide data for each of these eight cells. The levels of
TABLE 1
Analysis of Variance output testing the main effects of Levels of Processing (LOP), encoded source, retrieved source, and their interactions on rated truth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect Tested</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>80.75</td>
<td>7.29*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOP within group error</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>(11.07)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encoded Source (ES)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43.02</td>
<td>9.69*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOP x ES</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOP x ES within group error</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>(4.44)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retrieved Source (RS)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>403.97</td>
<td>67.89**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOP x RS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.07</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOP x RS within group error</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>(5.95)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES x RS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOP x ES x RS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOP x ES x RS within group error</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>(3.66)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors. *p<.01. **p<.001.

Processing manipulation was a between subject manipulation which subsumed the above two factors. For each subject, the average of the truth-ratings for statements in each cell was used as the dependent variable for analysis instead of analyzing ratings for each claim. If the raw statements are taken as the unit of analysis, it leads to more than 4,000 degrees of freedom for the Error sums of squares and does not control for the within-subject nature of the study. This aggregation of data is in keeping with previous research in the truth effect (Hawkins & Hoch, 1992).

The results are presented in three sections. First, data regarding manipulation checks and counterbalancing procedures are reported. Second, the results relating to the replication of the truth effect are presented. The final section contains the analysis of the impact of encoding and retrieval of source information on truth ratings.

Counterbalancing of Booklet and Source Credibility. A two-way ANOVA including the booklet type (List A or B) and the order of presentation of sources (credible first vs. doubtful first) on truth ratings showed no significant main effect of study list, \( F(1,70)=1.33, p>.2 \), no significant main effect of credibility order, \( F(1,70)=1.6, p>.2 \), and no reliable interaction between the two, \( F(1,70)=0.61, p>.4 \). These results confirm that the process of stimulus and task order randomization had their desired effects. As a result data across booklet types and order of presentation were pooled for further analysis.

Levels of Processing. These instructions had the expected effect in that subjects’ ability to discriminate between old and new claims (as measured by \( d’ \)) systematically increased as instructions changed from shallow to deep elaboration (\( M_{\text{shallow}}=1.3 \) vs. \( M_{\text{deep}}=1.9 \)). An ANOVA of these data indicated that the benefits of deep encoding instructions on memory were reliable, \( F(1,69)=14.9, p<.001 \), and thus the levels of processing manipulation had its desired effect.

Truth Ratings. As in previous studies, the data were analyzed separately for actual and perceived repetition. An ANOVA showed that repeated claims were rated higher in perceived truth relative to claims seen for the first time, (\( M_{\text{old}}=9.9, M_{\text{new}}=9.1, F(1,71)=38.5, p<.001 \)), thus confirming previous results of the positive impact of actual repetition on beliefs. Also in line with previous findings, claims thought to be repeated were given higher truth ratings compared to claims thought to be new, regardless of their true repetition status, (\( M_{\text{perceived old}}=10.8, M_{\text{perceived new}}=8.2, F(1,71)=200.0, p<.001 \)).

To assess the impact of LOP on rated truth and the encoding-tag and retrieval-evaluation hypotheses, a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted on the truth ratings for items recognized as being old using LOP, source presented at encoding (credible or doubtful), and the source identified at retrieval (credible or doubtful) as factors. The dependent variable was the average truth rating accorded by each subject to claims in a given condition. Since the encoding manipulation was administered between-subjects, the data were analyzed using a mixed factor model (within-subjects for credibility of encoded and retrieved source, and between subjects for level of encoding). Table 1 gives the appropriate degrees of freedom used to test each main effect and interaction in this analysis, and the respective \( F \) values and significance levels obtained.

As revealed in Table 1, there was a significant main effect of LOP on rated truth, \( F(1,70)=7.29, p<.01 \). Inspection of the mean truth ratings showed that shallow processing instructions led to higher belief ratings than deeper processing instructions (\( M_{\text{shallow}}=10.8 \) vs. \( M_{\text{deep}}=9.7 \)). However, the two way interactions between encoding task and source credibility (\( F(1,68)=0.46, p=0.5 \)) and the three way interaction among encoding task, credibility at study, and retrieved source was not reliable (\( F(1,58)=0.43, p=0.5 \)).

Encoding Tag Hypothesis. The encoding tag hypothesis proposed that source presented at learning will influence subsequent ratings regardless of what source comes to mind at retrieval. From Table 1 it is evident that truth rating of claims showed a significant
main effect of encoded source, \( F(1, 68)=9.69, p<.01 \). The average truth ratings showed that regardless of subjects’ accurate memory for encoded source, claims actually paired with a credible source were rated more true (10.8) than those paired with a doubtful source at presentation (9.8). This difference in mean ratings corresponds to a partial eta squared of 0.03; and the effect size index (mean difference divided by pooled standard deviation, computed as per Cohen, 1987) reveals that the encoding effect size index is 0.28 which is small according to Cohen.

If subjects assess truthfulness of claims at the time of learning, then claims paired with a credible source at encoding will be more likely to be believed than claims paired with a doubtful source even when subjects fail to remember the source at retrieval. Thus, a comparison of the truth ratings for claims across the two credibility conditions in cases where the claims are correctly recognized as being repeated, but for which subjects do not remember the source, could be viewed as a better test of the encoding-tag hypothesis, since there is no retrieved source that could potentially influence the ratings. A separate analysis of this data (a contrast analysis of the ‘source forgot’ column presented in Table 2 revealed a significant difference in truth ratings based on whether the claims were initially paired with a credible or doubtful source (Mcredible=11.39, \( M_{\text{doubt}}=7.9 \), \( F(1, 71)=19.8, p<.001 \)).

In sum, truth ratings of claims show evidence of being influenced by the credibility of the source presented at encoding. The fact that claims initially paired with a doubtful source were believed less than those presented with a credible source was obtained even in cases where the original source was forgotten at the time of testing attests to the strength of the influence of encoding on beliefs.

Retrieval Evaluation Hypothesis. This hypothesis predicted that source remembered at retrieval would influence rated truth. This expectation was confirmed in the repeated measures ANOVA presented in Table 1 shows that the main effect of retrieved source was significant, \( F(1,67)=67.89, p<.001 \). Subjects were most skeptical of claims remembered (correctly or incorrectly) as being learned from doubtful sources (9.0) compared with those remembered as being learned from credible sources (11.5), the difference between the two is large (partial eta squared=0.27; effect size as per Cohen=0.93) and the difference is reliable.

Encoding versus Retrieval. The foregoing results suggest that encoding has an effect on beliefs and so does retrieval. Which of these two is the more important determinant of beliefs? This issue can be answered in several forms. First, numerically the effect size of the source at presentation was smaller than the effect size of the source at retrieval (partial eta squared 0.03 versus 0.27; Cohen’s effect size index 0.28 vs. 0.93).

A more intuitive comparison can be made by referring to data on encoding-retrieval reciprocal mistakes. Comparison of ratings for claims presented with a doubtful source but accorded to a credible source at retrieval (ED-RC) with those presented with a credible source but accorded to a doubtful source (EC-RD) gives valuable insight about the relative impact of encoding versus retrieval on beliefs. If encoding is the more important determinant of beliefs, then we would expect claims presented with a credible source even if attributed to a doubtful source, would be rated higher than claims presented with a doubtful source but accorded to a credible source (that is, EC-RD>ED-RC). Conversely, if retrieval has a greater impact on beliefs, then one would expect claims presented with a doubtful source but attributed to a credible source would be rated higher in validity compared to claims presented with a credible but attributed a doubtful source (that is, EC-RD>ED-RC). The data show that ED-RC has a mean value of 11.3 (SD=2.5) versus a EC-RD value of 9.6 (SD=2.9).

The comparison of ED-RD to EC-RD constitutes neither a main effect nor an interaction. It is a comparison of diagonal cells to each other. To get a formal statistical comparison of the two cells, we directly compared them using a one-way ANOVA, with the two cells as two levels of the factor. There is a significant difference between ED-RD and EC-RD in favor of the former (\( F(1,61)=13.07, p=0.006 \). The difference between EC-RD and ED-RD, which reflects the superiority of retrieval over encoding is a large effect size (effect size index of 0.62 as per Cohen, a partial eta squared=0.18). These results indicate that the retrieved source tends to have a bigger impact on subsequent truth ratings than the presented source. However, it is important to bear in mind that both source at presentation and retrieved source have significant influences on belief.

**DISCUSSION**

Both encoding and retrieval processes impact beliefs about advertising claims. However, the retrieval evaluation has a more prominent effect. Although one must always be cautious when inferring the nature of mental representation from behavioral responses (Braitenberg, 1984), the results suggest that some kind of validity is tagged on to the statement at encoding, but that this is modified by the source which is retrieved at the time of decision. If
the source at retrieval is a credible one, it inflates belief, whereas if the retrieved source is a doubtful one it may negate any benefit of having actually presented the statement with a credible source.

One has to be cautious whenever extrapolating from results in the laboratory to real life purchasing situations. But, two limitations of our model should be particularly highlighted. First, the interval between encoding and retrieval was of the order of about twenty minutes. In real life scenarios it is usually much longer. Since there are suggestions in the marketing literature that with increasing duration there may be a qualitative change in consumers evaluative responses (sleeper effect studies), one must be careful when extrapolating from these data. Second, while the subjects had no indication regarding the true purpose of the experiment at the time of encoding, a reasonable person may fathom the purpose of the experiment from the dependent measures at retrieval. Thus, there is the potential that the bigger effect size accorded at retrieval may be influenced by the demand effects of the experiment. However, a post-experimental questionnaire asking for subjects’ guesses regarding the hypotheses showed that only four of seventy two subjects could say that the study had something to do with source credibility and belief. Besides, withholding these subjects from the analyses did not produce any significant changes in our conclusions. Hence, demand effects do not appear to be a major concern in this experiment.

In the marketing context these findings suggest that while marketers should do their best to design advertising copy and campaigns to ensure that consumers associate their chosen endorser with their product, they should also expend resources to enhance the accurate retrieval of the endorser at the point of purchase. In other words, the fee marketers pay to their spokesperson will have the greatest facilitatory impact on consumer beliefs when (a) the same spokesperson is repeatedly paired with the same product information, and (b) when the advertising copy and identity of the product’s endorser is reinstated at the point of purchase.

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A Theoretical and Empirical Study of Retail Crowding
Delphine Dion, Rennes University, France

ABSTRACT
The analysis of the person–environment is proposed to understand density influences in retail setting. This approach is based on appraisals of the significance of the person–environment relationships. It incorporates the different theories proposed to account for crowding development and facilitates the development of a more elaborate and involved model. Results of an empirical research identify density influences on consumers and confirm the processes underlying crowding–related phenomena.

One of the most important recent advances in consumer research is recognition that, in some cases, the place or more specifically its atmosphere, is more influential than the product or the service itself in the purchase decision (Kotler, 1974). Yet, the academic literature regarding the impact of various atmospheric elements (music, color, odor, crowd, etc.) is still rather sparse. Consequently, decisions to use atmospherics factors have generally been based more on intuition and beliefs. Concerning crowding, this is most unfortunate because we are facing an atmospheric variable that is not easily understood and controlled by management. Indeed, some crowded situations are exciting and inviting, others are threatening and foreboding. How can managers face this dilemma?

There has been a long history of interest in the effects of crowding on human health and behavior (Epstein, 1981). Marketing research documenting the effects of crowding is limited. Studies indicate that consumers are less satisfied in a crowded store (Ergulu and Machleit, 1990; Cimbalo and Mousaw, 1975), more stressed and tensed (Siberil, 1994; Langer and Saegert, 1977). Satisfaction with the store, with purchased products and with the whole shopping experience is affected by the density conditions. (Ergulu and Machleit, 1993; Harrell, Hutt and Anderson, 1980). In a crowded store, buyers deviate from their planned shopping time (Harrell, Hutt and Anderson, 1980). Decision processes take more time (Langer and Saegert, 1977). Shoppers do not fulfill their purchase plan (Siberil, 1994).

However, many issues ought to be discussed: differences between social and spatial dimensions of density, multidimensionality of the crowding concept, buyers’ responses in a crowded store, mediating variables, and the crowding process.

This research is designed to explore consumer behavior under conditions of crowding. After a brief overview of fundamental theoretical concepts about crowding in general, a more specific in-store buyers’ behavior under crowding conditions is described and the empirical research–involving 585 shoppers–is reported.

BACKGROUND
A number of different theories have been proposed to account for crowding phenomena: cognitive overload (Ergulu and Harrell, 1986), arousal (Worchel and Teddlie, 1976), behavioral constraints (Stokols, 1976), perceived control (Hui and Bateson, 1991), etc. All approaches have something to contribute to an understanding of crowding. However, it is not possible to point to one theory as reflecting most accurately all of the process underlying the broad range of crowding–related phenomena. Yet, a number of difficulties remains (Dion, 1998).

First, crowding concept is not well defined. Two measures have been used interchangeably. One assesses how crowded people feel (“How crowded do you feel?”), and the other assesses how crowded people rate the environment (“How crowded is this room?”). It is important to differentiate between these two crowding measures, since people may rate a setting as crowded but not describe themselves as feeling crowded (Kalb et Keating, 1981). Furthermore, implicit in each theoretical approach is the assumption that crowding consists of a unitary experiential condition. It is unlikely that the different density situations cumulate in a single crowding experience (Machleit, Kellaris and Ergulu, 1994).

Second, all approaches assimilate density to a stimulus and subjects to passive receptors. A better model would envision more than a person simply reacting to an environment.

Third, models are linear and static. They do not account for the existence of retroactive and parallel processes.

Fourth, a major underlying theme in many of the theoretical perspectives of crowding has been the degree to which crowding affects actual or perceived control of the individual over the environment (Baum et Paulus, 1987). Given this consistency, it is surprising to note the heterogeneity among the constructs researchers use to describe control. Lack of clarity about the construct has been costly to the study of crowding in theoretical, empirical and practical terms.

In order to incorporate the different theories that are proposed to account for crowding phenomena, we have developed a more elaborate and involved model based on the person–environment relationships analysis. This approach is relational and process oriented (Folkman, 1984).

The relational characteristic is evident in the definition of crowding as a relationship between the person and the environment. Indeed, a fundamental idea of a relational theory of crowding is that we cannot understand it solely from the standpoint of the person or of the environment. Crowding must be viewed in the particular person–environment relationship in which it is embedded. It depends on the meaning of the situation as related to the individual (Dion, 1999). Within this theoretical formulation, crowding is determined by two appraisal processes (Figure 1): primary evaluation which deals with whether something of relevance to a person’s well–being has occurred or not, and secondary evaluation which concerns perceived control over the situation.

Primary and secondary appraisal converge to shape crowding feelings. Different cognitive and behavioral efforts are developed in order to adjust the situation. Cognitive coping strategies change only the way in which the relationship is attended to or interpreted (psychologically withdrawing, humor, etc.). Problem–focused copings modify the actual situation (avoidance, aggressiveness, etc.). This process is shaped by an array of persons and situation factors:

- commitments (importance of goal and compatibility with density),
- beliefs (locus of control and causal attribution),
- informational, decisional and behavioral control (store familiarity, density anticipated, crowding information, temporal constraints, store choice and shopping hour choice).

The process orientation means that the person–environment relationship is always changing, along with the crowding sensations it generates.

To test this model, a study involving interviews with 585 subjects was undertaken.

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Research design
The study was conducted in a medium–size hypermarket operated by a large, nationally known chain. The store is located in a French city with a population of approximately 70,000. The store’s patrons are predominantly middle–class. The study covered a seven–week period starting on February 27 and ending on April 11, 1998. All data were collected exclusively during rush hours (on Fridays afternoon and on Saturdays). Density was statistically constant over the test period. Every 16th minute, a shopper was intercepted before entering the check stand and asked to respond to a brief questionnaire as part of a university’s research project. After completing the questionnaire, the respondent was thanked. Approximately, fifteen percent of the persons declined to be interviewed. The final sample consisted of 300 customers.

Measures
Prior to the study three experimental studies were conducted in order to aid the development of measures corresponding to the theoretical base and to the actual purchase situation. They provided qualitative and quantitative insights into buyer’s perceptions of retail density, shoppers goals, crowding and coping.

First, a field study was conducted to explore in–store shopping behavior. Interviews occurred over a one–week period with approximately the same amount of interviews on weekends and weekdays. As the individuals were about to depart, they were intercepted and deeply interviewed about whether they prefer shopping on weekdays and their reactions in a crowded store.

Next, a laboratory experiment using videotapes was conducted. Ten 4–minutes video sequences were taken in a crowded hypermarket. A group of four judges selected the more crowded sequence. Fifty volunteers were recruited from a management class at the University of Rennes. The sample was 52% female. Ages ranged from 20 to 25 with a median age of 21. Subjects were divided into two groups. They were told that their participation was sought for a research project. Before the subjects watched the video sequence, they were asked to read the following scenario: “Saturday afternoon, Mrs. Smith goes shopping. The video we are going to show you depicts the setting of the store while Mrs. Smith is there”. After reading the scenario and viewing the video, respondents were asked to complete the four following sentences: “Mrs. Smith might feel...,” “Mrs. Smith might be...,” “Mrs. Smith might want to...,” and “Mrs. Smith might have the impression...”. The use of hypothetical scenarios is recommended by Halvena and Holbrook (1986) and confirmed by the study of Hui and Bateson (1991).

Finally, we tested crowding and coping scales with 205 shoppers in situation (following the procedure used in the general field study).

We conducted a series of factor analysis to examine the dimensionality and the validity of the different measures. Following Gerbing and Anderson’s (1988) paradigm for scale development, we performed an exploratory factor analysis and a confirmatory factor analysis (using the results from the exploratory analysis as a starting point for further refining the measures). We assessed convergent and discriminant validity using the procedures recommended by Forman and Larcker (1981).

The perceived density scale consisted of six likert–type items. These items were compiled from literature review and pilot studies. Two composite scales were formed from these items. The fit values indicate a good fit of the data to the two–dimensional model of perceived density (χ²/dl=0.668; GFI=0.999; AGFI=0.988; RMR=0.007; ECVI<ECVI saturated model; NFI=0.998). The first scale consisted of the following items: “the circulation in the store was difficult” and “there is not enough space between counters”. We labeled this construct “spatial density” (reliability: ρ=0.75, convergent validity: pcv=0.63, discriminant validity: pcv>r²). The second scale consisted of two items: “there was many people in the store” and “we were squashed up”. This dimension was labeled “social density” (ρ=0.65, pcv=0.48, pcv=(0.48)r²(0.52).

Buyers’ goals were measured by six items representing the reasons why buyers enter a specific counter. Factor analysis have shown a two–factor structure: “exploration” (ρ=0.79, pcv=0.49, pcv>r²) and “efficacy”. The fit values indicate a good fit of the data to the two–dimensional model (χ²/dl=1.930; GFI=0.987; AGFI=0.962; RMR=0.031; ECVI<ECVI saturated model; NFI=0.973). This result corroborates Bellenger and Korgaonkar (1980) dichotomy between recreational shopping and convenience shopping.

Control possibilities (informational, decisional and behavioral control) were measured by five items describing store familiarity, density anticipated, temporal constraints, store choice and shopping hour choice. The respondents were asked to describe their experience in the store by checking a five point scale (from “not at all” to “extremely so”). Because of items heterogeneity (Bartlett test =77, MSA=0.53), common factor analysis was not completed.

Primary evaluation which deals with whether or not something of relevance to a person’s well–being has occurred was measured through buyers’ pleasure. That way preconceived of retail crowding were avoided. Pleasure was assessed using a five–point semantic differential scale of six items selected from the

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

FIGURE 1
Retail Crowding Process

Commitments
(goals/density compatibility)

Primary evaluation
(challenge/threat)

Crowding

Secondary evaluation
(perceived control)

Coping

Beliefs

Control possibilities

Primary evaluation
(challenge/threat)
“Pleasure” scale of Mehrabian and Russell (1974); “annoyed/pleased, despairing/hopeful, unhappy/happy, unsatisfied/satisfied, melancholic/contented and bored/relaxed”. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the unidimensional structure (\(\rho = 0.80, \rho_{c} = 0.45\)). The fit values indicate a good fit of the data to the three–dimensional model of perceived control (\(\chi^{2}/\text{df}=2.797; \text{GFI}=0.982; \text{AGFI}=0.945; \text{RMR}=0.033; \text{ECVI}<\text{ECVI saturated model}; \text{NFI}=0.966\)).

Secondary evaluation which concerns perceived control over the situation was measured by a five–point semantic differential scale of six items selected from the “Domination” scale of Mehrabian and Russell (1974). Two composite scales were formed from these items. The fit values indicate a good fit of the data to the two–dimensional model of perceived control (\(\chi^{2}/\text{df}=1.065; \text{GFI}=0.998; \text{AGFI}=0.982; \text{RMR}=0.011; \text{ECVI}<\text{ECVI saturated model}; \text{NFI}=0.990\)). The first scale consisted of “guided/autonomous and cared for/in control”. We labeled this construct “freedom” (\(\rho = 0.60, \rho_{c} = 0.44, \rho_{vc}>\tau^{2}\)). The second scale consisted of “controlled/controlling and awed/important” which we labeled “power” (\(\rho = 0.58, \rho_{c} = 0.44, \rho_{vc}>\tau^{2}\)).

The initial crowding scale consisted of 41 five–point Likert scales preceded by the prompt “In the store, I felt:”. The items describing positive and negative crowding feelings in retail environment were compiled from literature review and pilot studies. Three composite scales were formed from these items. The fit values indicate a good fit of the data to the three–dimensional model of crowding (\(\chi^{2}/\text{df}=1.52; \text{GFI}=0.978; \text{AGFI}=0.954; \text{RMR}=0.042; \text{ECVI}<\text{ECVI saturated model}; \text{NFI}=0.967\)). The first scale consisted of “uncomfortable, stuffy, dull and annoyed”. We labeled this construct “discomfort” (\(\rho = 0.80, \rho_{c}=0.50, \rho_{vc}>\tau^{2}\)).

The second scale consisted of “lost and confused” which was labeled “disorientation” (\(\rho = 0.81, \rho_{c}=0.70, \rho_{vc}>\tau^{2}\)). The third scale consisted of “rushed and cramped”. It was labeled “rush sensations” (\(\rho = 0.67, \rho_{c}=0.51, \rho_{vc}>\tau^{2}\)).

A 58 item list based on stress–coping literature and results of the two exploratory studies was drawn up. The respondents were asked to describe their experience in the store by checking a five point scale (from “not at all” to “extremely so”). Four composite scales were formed from these items. The fit values indicate a good fit of the data to the model (\(\chi^{2}/\text{df}=0.789; \text{GFI}=0.990; \text{AGFI}=0.976; \text{RMR}=0.029; \text{ECVI}<\text{ECVI saturated model}; \text{NFI}=0.953\)). The first scale consisted of the items “I blamed myself” and “I criticized myself”. We labeled this construct “self–blame” (\(\rho = 0.58, \rho_{c}=0.42, \rho_{vc}>\tau^{2}\)). The second scale consisted of “I rushed others” and “I forced my way through the crowd”. It was labeled “aggressiveness” (\(\rho = 0.70, \rho_{c}=0.57, \rho_{vc}>\tau^{2}\)). The third scale consisted of the items “I looked for promotions” and “I through it was possible to make good deals”. It was labeled “opportunism” (\(\rho = 0.65, \rho_{c}=0.51, \rho_{vc}>\tau^{2}\)). The fourth scale consisted of “I postponed non–urgent purchases” and “I did not fulfill my purchase plan”. It was labeled “avoidance” (\(\rho = 0.63, \rho_{c}=0.46, \rho_{vc}>\tau^{2}\)).

Analysis

The data were analyzed through modeling of structural equations (using AMOS, Arbuckle, 1997). Because of some non–normal variables, results were estimated with a bootstrap procedure (Didellon and Valette–Florence, 1996). The model was proved to be identified through a procedure suggested by Bagozzi (1983).

The various goodness of fit indicators lend sufficient support to deeming the results as an acceptable representation of the hypothesized constructs (\(\chi^{2}/\text{df}=0.851; \text{GFI}=0.956; \text{AGFI}=0.936; \text{RMR}=0.045; \text{ECVI}<\text{ECVI saturated model}; \text{NFI}=0.819\)). Coefficients are shown in Figures 2, 3 and 4 (the model was split in three figures in order to be more easily readable). Examination of the \(t\) values associated with each coefficient indicates that all of them exceed the critical value for the 0.10 significance level. Any normalized residuals exceed 2.58. Two coefficients have modification indicators slightly above the suggested level. The \(t\) values associated with each multiple correlation coefficient do not fall below the critical value for the 0.05 significance level. Yet, multiple correlation coefficients are not too high.

In conclusion, the assessments of measurement and structural models lend substantial support for the proposed model.

DISCUSSION

The use of structural analysis provided an interesting and suggestive exploration of the sequential relationships among many variables pertinent to retail crowding. Results identified density influences on consumers and the processes underlying crowding–related phenomena:
**FIGURE 3**
Direct Effects

**FIGURE 4**
Indirect Effects
• the social and the spatial dimensions of density were differentiated;
• a crowding typology was developed;
• consumers’ coping to high density situations were isolated;
• coping processes were identified.

**Perceived density**
Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis yielded a two–factor scale. This bi–dimensional structure confirms Loo’s (1975) distinction between social density (number of people) and spatial density (amount of space). Perceived density is enhanced when control possibilities are higher (Figure 2). Social as spatial density directly exerts an effect on perceived control, discomfort feelings and avoidance behaviors (Figure 4). However, their impact is not exactly the same. Social density leads to aggressive behaviors. Spatial density influences self–blame reactions in a positive way and opportunism in a negative one (Figure 3).

**Crowding**
The results provide insights into shoppers crowding feelings. Three factors emerged from factor analysis: disorientation, rush sensations and discomfort. In other words, some people feel lost in a cramped store. They have difficulties finding their way. Others feel rushed and pushed. Others feel uncomfortable, stuffy and annoyed. This multidimensional structure suggests that crowding do not consists of a unitary experiential condition. The term crowding has multiple experiential referents, and these referents comprise different experiences. According to Hui and Bateson studies (1991), crowding is mediated by perceived control. Results indicate that processes are more complex. Crowding sensations are shaped in many different ways. For instance, the relation between density and rush sensations is direct (Figure 3). Discomfort feelings take more time to develop. The influence of density is mediated by pleasure and perceived control. Progressively, consumers’ pleasure and perceived control decrease, which produces discomfort feelings development (Figure 4).

**Coping**
Four factors were identified: avoidance, aggressiveness, opportunism and self–blame. That is to say, in a crowded store, some do not fulfill their purchase plan in order to leave the store quicker. Others force their way through the crowd and do not hesitate to rush others. Some try to take advantage of the situation. They look for promotions and good deals. As for the last group, consumers are angry with themselves about coming in rush hours. They blame themselves. This coping structure provides richer information than approach–avoidance behavior in Hui and Bateson studies (1991) for instance. Next, high density in retail environment produces the same withdrawal and aggressive behaviors like those observed in prisons, dormitories, laboratories, residential settings, etc. (Lepore, 1994). Finally, three copings are problem–focused and one is emotion–focused. Relations between some few adjustments (self–blame, aggressiveness, opportunism) and density related variables (perceived density and crowding) are direct (Figure 3). Other copings such as avoidance behaviors take more time to develop. They are mediated by pleasure and perceived control (Figure 4).

**Coping processes: spontaneous and chronic reactions**
Two kinds of influence processes were isolated (Figure 5): spontaneous and chronic reactions.

**Spontaneous reactions:** When shoppers face a momentary difficulty, they react instantly. They are angry with themselves (self–blame) or with others (aggressiveness). They limit approach behaviors.

**Chronic reactions:** When difficulties multiply and goal–environment incompatibility increases, consumers’ pleasure and perceived control decrease, which provokes discomfort feelings and avoidance behaviors.

This process is amplified by positive relations between control possibilities and avoidance through pleasure on one hand, per-
ceived control and discomfort feelings on the other hand. Indeed, when control possibilities are limited, shoppers feel less satisfied, less free, not at ease and lost. Furthermore, they do not fulfill their purchase plan. These avoidance behaviors have something in common with learned helplessness reactions studied by Seligman (1967). Indeed, when shoppers face repetitive difficulties in which they perceive a chronic absence of control over the situation, they believe events are uncontrollable and they prefer to leave.

LIMITATIONS

This research provides an interesting picture of in-store buyer behavior under conditions of crowding. However, few limitations are reported. Because of obligations to carry out studies over a short period of time and short during rush hours, the number of interviews was limited. We were not able to develop a context-specific scale for each construct. The field study was undertaken over a few weeks. Atmosphere variables may have not been perfectly constant over the test period. The experimentation was conducted in a hypermarket in Niort (France)—a town of 70,000 inhabitants. Before generalizing findings, the study should be replicated in other places. Finally, this research is based on declared behaviors. Affective dimensions are difficult to measure that way (Filser, 1996).

THEORETICAL, METHODOLOGICAL AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Theoretical contributions

First, this research explores a theme that is not much approached in marketing. Findings increase knowledge on shoppers’ reactions under conditions of crowding and confirm the importance of atmosphere factors.

Second, this research validates the analysis of the person-environment relationships when subjects are confronted to enduring events. Results completed the analysis in distinguishing reactions to a temporary event (immediate and direct responses) and reactions to a chronic event (responses mediated by cognitive and affective factors). This extension is attractive because the analysis was essentially evoked to explain stress reactions related to chronic diseases (cancer, HIV, etc.) (Thompson and al., 1996) and not to study reactions related to temporary events.

Methodological contributions

There are two methodological contributions. The scales measuring perceived density, crowding and coping were developed. The innovative methodology allowed a deep study of coping processes.

Managerial implications

Several practical implications follow from these findings. Besides, classical actions aimed at spreading out density (yield management, flows management, etc.), actions on shoppers reactions and perceptions can be conducted.

Store environment: agoraphile and agoraphobe zones. Marketplaces should be considered as an antic agora that is to say a meeting point. They are not exclusively a commercial area, but also an entertainment and relaxing place. In that perspective, it is important to implicate shoppers (for instance Virgin stores multiplied self-service computers, comfortable lecture areas, dedications, expositions, etc.). Shoppers participation is also a sensory implication (Hetzel, 1996). It is also important to satisfy their discovery and distraction wants. This explains the development of thematic stores such as Disney or Nature and discovery stores which allow shoppers to evade from their daily routine and to experiment new sensations (Gottdiener, 1998).

Task-oriented shoppers look for efficacy. To help them, it is necessary to facilitate circulation, to space out counters, to improve counters “legibility,” etc. To satisfy recreational and task-oriented shoppers, stores can be organized through agoraphobe zones for non-recreational activities and many agoraphile zones organized with thematic areas for distraction and discovery activities.

\textit{Incertitude reduction, choice and control possibilities increase.} This research emphasizes the importance of control. It is a powerful concept in explaining consumers’ reactions to density in a commercial environment. Indeed, control variables influence density perceptions, shoppers’ pleasure and coping to crowding situations. In a cramped store, shoppers react less negatively when incertitude is limited and when they can anticipate and control their environment.

Actions which limit incertitude, increase anticipation and control possibilities allow shoppers to anticipate events and so, to prepare themselves as well as to adopt efficient coping strategies. Furthermore, control feelings give them a better image of themselves. They feel competent, which reinforces their pleasure. Finally, perceived density is reduced when incertitude is limited. However, control may not be appropriate in every case. For instance, standardization—personalization choice depends on services’ nature, circumstances and shoppers.

Reorganizing space in agoraphile and agoraphobe zones, limiting incertitude and increasing control sources make it possible to conciliate crowd and satisfaction.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Several other directions for future research are suggested by the study. First, similar studies should be carried out in various commercial areas (luxury stores, restaurants, discount stores, etc.), and in specific crowding period (sales and Christmas purchases), and off-peak hours. Second, multigroup analyses would allow to develop a specific model for each group and so, to identify more precise structures. Third, a longitudinal analysis should be undertaken in order to validate consumers behavior under conditions of crowding. Fourth, others factors should be introduced in the model: personal factors (crowding sensibility, desired control, implication, instruction, causal attributions, etc.) and atmospheric factors (luminosity, music, odors, ...). Furthermore, because of control factors’ importance, it might be relevant to concentrate attention on this notion. Control possibilities should not be restricted to density related issues. It should be extended to purchase. That way, we could know if target control compensate that is to say if a loss of control provoked by the crowd is counterbalanced by an increase in purchase control. Desire of control (Burger, 1985) should be introduced. A context-specific control perceived scale should be developed based on gregariousness. It should be evaluated to what extend buyers feel carried away by the crowd, guided by others, etc. Finally, an ethnography could be conducted. On one hand, rich information on consumers’ behavior under conditions of crowding and on coping processes would be gathered. On the other hand, an ethnography would allow to study density on psychological and sociological stand point, that is to say to analyze individuals’ behaviors in the crowd and mass movements, crowd attractiveness power, mimetic behaviors, in the same time.

CONCLUSION

Results identified density influences on consumers and the processes underlying crowding–related phenomena. The social and the spatial dimensions of density were differentiated and each one influences were analyzed. The crowding concept was clarified. Consumers’ coping and coping processes were identified. Managerial suggestions to face the crowding dilemma were proposed.
Market places should not be considered exclusively as a commercial environment, and also, as a physical and social environment which exerts an important effect on buyers behaviors.

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Play That One Again: The Effect of Music Tempo on Consumer Behaviour in a Restaurant
Clare Caldwell, University of Strathclyde, Scotland
Sally A. Hibbert, University of Strathclyde, Scotland

ABSTRACT
The paper reports research into the effects of music tempo on consumer behaviour. A field experiment involving consumers dining at a restaurant was carried out to investigate the extent to which music tempo influences actual and perceived time spent dining and the amount of money spent. The results show that when slow music is playing, customers spend a significantly greater amount of time dining than when fast music is playing. There was some evidence that perceptions of time spent dining were influenced by the music, but not to a significant level. Finally, the music tempo was found to have a significant effect on money spent on both food and drink at the restaurant.

INTRODUCTION
Service providers have shown growing interest in atmospherics as a means of enhancing the appeal of service environments and influencing consumer behaviour in service settings. Academic interest in this area has grown following Kotler’s (1972/3) article emphasising the importance of atmospherics in the field of marketing and, moreso, since Donovan and Rossiter’s (1982) application of Mehrabian andRussel’s (1974) model of environmental psychology to the retail context.

The research reported in this paper focuses on music as an element of the service environment. The influence of music on consumer behaviour within service environments has been studied by a variety of scholars (Milliman, 1982; 1986; Yalch and Spangenberg, 1990; North and Hargreaves, 1996). Understanding of the effects of music is particularly useful to service managers, as this element of the environment is relatively inexpensive and easy to control. Specifically, the paper examines the effects of music tempo on perceived and actual time spent in a restaurant and the amount of money spent.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES
Atmospherics and Environmental Psychology
The influence of atmospherics in marketing contexts is based on the premise that the design of an environment through a variety of means, including lighting, layout, sound, colour, and perceived temperature, is related to the arousal potential of the stimuli. Highly arousing music is defined as loud, erratic and difficult to predict with a quick tempo, while music with low arousal qualities is soft, monotonous, very predictable and with a slow tempo (Berlyn, 1971).

A dominant model adopted to develop understanding of how the service environment affects consumer behaviour is the Mehrabian and Russel (1974) model of environmental psychology (Baker and Grewel, 1992; Foxall, 1997; Kenhove and Desrumaux, 1997; Tai and Fung, 1997). This model adopts the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) paradigm and proposes that perceptions of stimuli in the environment (S) lead to emotional responses in individuals (O) which, in turn, produce approach-avoidance behaviour (R). Although this model is widely accepted as a valid explanation of the processes underlying individuals’ responses to built environments, other explanations have been offered. For example, East (1997) advances the idea that the effects of service environments on consumer behaviour are not necessarily mediated by emotional states. Instead, it may be that service atmospherics directly stimulate behaviour and that emotional responses are incidental and not part of the causal sequence affecting behaviour.

The Role of Music
The amount of literature on the effects of music on consumer behaviour is relatively limited but has steadily grown over the last two decades. Bruner II (1990) provides a review of the literature up to the beginning of the 1990s and continued interest in the topic is demonstrated by more recent work by authors such as North and Hargreaves (1996a, b, c), Areni and Kim (1993) and Kellaris and Aliesch (1992).

The two main domains in which the effects of music have been explored are advertising (Tom, 1990; Alpert and Alpert, 1989; Gorn, 1982) and service environments (Areni and Kim, 1993; Yalch and Spangenberg, 1990; Milliman, 1986; 1982). Of the research that focuses on service environments, the majority has investigated the effects of music in retail stores or shopping malls. To the authors’ knowledge, only Milliman (1986) and North and Hargreaves (1996a, b) have considered alternative service settings, which in these cases were restaurants and cafeterias. It was, therefore, decided that the present research would build on these latter studies, further exploring the effects of music in the context of a restaurant.

Bruner II (1990) notes that “Music is not a generic sonic mass, but rather a complex chemistry of controllable elements” (p 95). Music can vary along various dimensions including timbre (the texture of the music, which incorporates volume), rhythm (the pattern of accents given to notes) and tempo (the speed or rate at which the rhythm progresses). The effect of music on behaviour has been suggested to operate via its effect on cognitive and emotional processes (Seidman, 1981). Much of the research that has considered the effects of music on individuals’ emotional states draws on Berlyn’s (1971) arousal hypothesis that preference, and thus pleasure for aesthetic stimuli such as music, is related to the arousal potential of the stimuli. Highly arousing music is defined as loud, erratic and difficult to predict with a quick tempo, while music with low arousal qualities is soft, monotonous, very predictable and with a slow tempo (Berlyn, 1971).

One of the more consistent findings of research into the effects of particular components of music on behaviour is that music that is more arousing leads to individuals spending less time on activities. Smith and Cunrow (1966) revealed that when loud music was played in a supermarket customers spent less time shopping and Milliman (1982) demonstrated that music tempo affects the speed with which consumers moved around a store. Milliman (1986) later showed that the tempo of music in a restaurant affected the time that people spent in the restaurant, such that individuals dining under the fast music condition spent less time at their tables than individuals dining under the slow tempo condition. Similar evidence of the effects of music tempo includes research by Robaley et al. (1985).
who found that it affected the number of bites taken per minute in a university cafeteria and McElrea and Standing (1992) who recorded that music tempo influenced the speed with which drinks were consumed at a bar. The first hypothesis for this research is therefore:

\[
H_1: \text{Music tempo will affect actual time spent in the restaurant such that individuals dining under the slow tempo condition will spend more time in the restaurant than individuals dining under the fast tempo condition.}
\]

Although there are now several studies that have examined the effects of music on actual time spent in stores (Milliman, 1982; Smith and Cunrow, 1966) and restaurants (Milliman, 1986), little research has investigated the effects of music on consumer time perceptions. Kellaris and Kent (1991) illustrated that individuals judged the duration of fast tempo music to be longer than slow tempo music. Similarly, Kellaris and Altech (1992) have shown that loud music, which has similar arousal properties to fast music, is perceived as longer in duration that quiet music. These studies provide some evidence that time tends to be over-estimated when people are exposed to music with higher arousal properties. Both of these studies were conducted under laboratory conditions, however, which raises questions about the external validity of the findings. In particular, it is questionable whether the same effects would be observed when people are passively rather than actively listening to music. The second hypothesis sought to explore these issues by testing the effects of music tempo in the naturalistic setting of the restaurant.

\[
H_2: \text{Music tempo will influence perceived time spent in the restaurant. Individuals dining under the slow tempo condition will under-estimate time spent in the restaurant and individuals dining under the fast tempo condition will over-estimate time spent there.}
\]

An additional point of interest is the effect of music on money spent. There is, as yet, limited evidence of these effects. Milliman (1982) carried out research in a supermarket and reported a 38% increase in gross sales when the store played slow music rather than fast music. In a later study, Milliman (1986) found that, in the restaurant context, although there was no significant effect of music tempo on money spent on food, there was a marked difference when it came to the bar bill. Milliman found that groups dining under the slow music condition spent, on average, 40% more on drinks than groups dining under the fast tempo condition. The effect of music tempo on consumer spending is tested in the third hypothesis of this study:

\[
H_3: \text{Music tempo will influence money the amount of money spent on drinks but will not influence the amount of money spent on food.}
\]

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design**

The service context chosen for the study was a restaurant. Restaurants face the same problem as other service organisations in that their offering is "perishable" and during quiet periods resources are under-used. On the other hand, the number of tables in the restaurant represents a finite capacity that is quickly filled during busy periods and increasing the turnover of tables is the way only to increase the number of customers. Therefore, regulating the flow of customers in this service context is of paramount importance. The fieldwork was carried out at a popular Italian restaurant in a relatively affluent area of Glasgow. One important feature of the restaurant was that it does not take reservations, which avoided the problem of diners’ behaviour being influenced by awareness of the time allocated to a particular sitting.

Because the research aimed to investigate the causal relationship between music tempo and the behaviour of restaurant patrons, an experimental research design was adopted to test the research hypotheses. Two music tempo conditions were created based on the criteria used by Milliman (1986): music with 94 or more beats per minute was used for the fast tempo condition, while music with 72 or less beats per minute was used for the slow tempo condition. Data was gathered on Thursdays and Sundays, from customers entering the restaurant between seven and ten o’clock in the evening, and the music conditions were varied over the two days on consecutive weeks. These days were chosen (as opposed to the Friday and Saturday chosen by Milliman) in order to avoid respondents dining at peak times being pressurised by other diners waiting to be seated. Attempts were made to hold other environmental variables constant such that the music used for both conditions was Jazz (the type of music typically played in this restaurant), sung by Ella Fitzgerald, and other environmental features such as the loudness of the music, the temperature and the lighting were controlled.

**Data collection**

In order to test the hypotheses the following data was required:

- actual time spent at the restaurant
- perceived time spent at the restaurant
- amount of money spent on food and drinks

The data was gathered by means of observations and a self-completion questionnaire. The researcher recorded the time at which customers were seated and left their table1 and the amount spent on food and drink. In addition, individuals were requested to complete a questionnaire just prior to their departure, noting a number of personal details and asking them to estimate time spent in the restaurant. The questionnaire also included a filter question that served to establish whether respondents were under any time constraints.

**Sample**

The two-seater tables in the restaurant were selected and only patrons sat at those tables over the data collection period were included in the research. The final sample (excluding 8 individuals who declined to participate in the research or who were under time pressures) consisted of 62 customers, 30 of whom had dined under the slow music condition and 32 who had dined under the fast music condition. The majority (77%) of the sample was dining at mixed-sex tables, while the remainder was dining at single-sex tables, which in all cases were two females dining together. For the most part, the respondents were repeat patrons (79%) but 21% were first time visitors to the restaurant.

**RESULTS**

This section presents the results of the analyses performed to test each of the research hypotheses. The first hypothesis was concerned with the effects of music tempo on time spent in the

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1Respondents were only made aware that the researcher had made these observations after completing the questionnaire.
restaurant. The average time spent dining in the restaurant was 89 minutes (s.d. 27.65 minutes). To assess whether time spent dining differed depending on music tempo, the sample was divided on the basis of the two music tempo conditions. The descriptive statistics calculated for each condition are presented in Table 1.

The figures show that customers dining under the slow music condition, on average, spent 13.56 minutes longer in the restaurant than individuals dining under the fast music condition. A t-test was performed to examine whether or not the difference between the two groups was significant. Despite relatively large standard deviations within each group, the t-test revealed that the difference was significant (t=-1.98, d.f. 60, p≤0.05). This indicates that the hypothesis can be accepted and that playing slow tempo music in a restaurant does result in customers taking a greater amount of time to dine.

The second hypothesis regarded individuals' perceptions of time. To investigate the effects of music on consumer perceptions of the duration of the service encounter, comparison was made between the actual time spent and perceptions of time spent in the restaurant. Specifically, the hypothesis proposed that customers dining under the slow music condition would under-estimate time spent in the restaurant. Conversely time spent dining would be over-estimated by customers in the fast tempo condition. Before assessing how estimates of dining time differed across the two groups, consideration was given to the distribution of the responses for perceived minus actual time spent. This revealed four respondents, three dining under the fast tempo music condition and one under slow music condition whose estimations of the time spent dining were far in excess of the actual time spent dining. These respondents were excluded from the analysis performed to test hypothesis 2 on the grounds that their responses skewed the results. The descriptive statistics for the remaining respondents dining under the two music tempo conditions are presented in Table 2.

The figures show that customers dining under the slow music condition had relatively high standard deviations. Despite finding a pattern of results that are in line with that proposed in the hypothesis the relatively high standard deviations demonstrate that estimates varied substantially within each group. A t-test was performed and revealed that the difference between groups' time estimates was not significant (t=1.20, d.f. 55, p>0.05). On the basis of these results the hypothesis regarding time perceptions is rejected, as there is insufficient evidence to suggest that music tempo affects restaurant customers time perceptions.

The final research hypothesis tested in this paper regards the effects of music tempo on amounts of money spent at the restaurant. Analyses conducted to test this hypothesis considered the total amount spent as well as the breakdown between money spent on food and drinks. The total amount spent, on average, was £24.82 (s.d. £6.56), which could be broken down in to £17.17 (s.d. £4.01) on food and £7.63 (s.d. £3.75) on drinks. Table 3 details how these figures varied across the two experimental groups.

Despite finding a pattern of results that are in line with that proposed in the hypothesis the relatively high standard deviations demonstrate that estimates varied substantially within each group. A t-test was performed and revealed that the difference between groups’ time estimates was not significant (t=1.20, d.f. 55, p>0.05). On the basis of these results the hypothesis regarding time perceptions is rejected, as there is insufficient evidence to suggest that music tempo affects restaurant customers time perceptions.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS
The results of the analysis performed to test hypothesis 1 indicated that music tempo did have an effect on the amount of time that customers spent in the restaurant. This outcome is consistent with previous research into the effects of music tempo, both in the restaurant setting (Milliman, 1986) and in retail contexts (Milliman, 1982). The theoretical positions summarised at the beginning of the paper suggest two possible explanations for this effect: on the one hand, the outcome can be explained on the basis of the S-O-R models (Mehrabian and Russel, 1974; Berlyn, 1971). These models propose that the structural properties of music influence the level of
arousal experienced by individuals and that the behavioural effects are a consequence of this arousal. Alternatively, the amount of time that customers spend in the restaurant may, as East (1997) suggests, be due to the direct effects of the music of behaviour, rather than as a consequence of its emotional arousal properties. There are clearly opportunities for further research to retest the effects of music on time spent in restaurants and other service settings. In addition, research is required to build understanding of the mechanisms by which music influences behaviour.

With regard to hypothesis 2, there was some evidence to suggest that music tempo influenced time perceptions in the restaurant. The results were not, however, significant contrary to what has been found in previous studies (Kellaris and Kent, 1991). This discrepancy may be because, as suggested earlier, in cases where individuals are passively exposed to music, its effects are different than in experimental situations where they are actively listening to it. Alternatively, the contrasting findings might be due to problems of measurement in a naturalistic setting. In particular, one cannot be sure that people have not referred to their watches when getting ready to leave the restaurant or at other times throughout the meal. However, the results showed that respondents’ estimates of time spent in the restaurant were frequently inaccurate. This indicates that measurement problems could only have been partly responsible for the lack of evidence of the effects of music tempo. There are likely to be additional influences, including social factors, the purpose of the event or affective states such as fatigue, that affected individuals’ time perceptions in the restaurant setting and there is scope for further research into this domain.

Finally, the analyses performed to test hypothesis 3 revealed that when slow music was playing, customers spent significantly more on food and drink than when fast music was playing. Here there is some discrepancy with Milliman’s (1986) study, which only found music tempo to affect the amount spent on drinks. In the discussion of his results Milliman argues that it is reasonable to expect people to have a limit to what they eat but to continue to order more drinks. However, personal experience suggests that additional orders of both food (especially deserts) and drink are often placed when a party remains at a restaurant for any length of time. Closer scrutiny of bills and behaviour is necessary to gain a clearer understanding of differences in expenditure. The inconsistencies between the two studies are not necessarily indicative of poor reliability, but may be due to any one of a number of differences in research design (e.g. nature of the restaurants, the service systems, days of the week on which data was gathered).
There are various limitations of this research that should be borne in mind when interpreting the results reported here and that leave scope for further research to provide a more complete picture of the effects of music on behaviour in restaurants. First, data was only gathered from customers at one restaurant. This has implications for the generalisability of the findings, in particular, the results reported here cannot be considered to be generalisable to all restaurants when there is substantial variation between competitors in terms of the type of occasion for which they cater. Secondly, only individuals dining at tables for two were included in the research and their behaviour may differ substantially from customers dining in larger groups. Finally, the liking of fast versus slow music was not assessed in this research and this factor may be an important determinant of the behavioural effects observed in this research.

These findings have obvious implications for restaurant managers attempting to maximise income at both busy and quiet times of the day and week. At quiet times, playing music with a slow tempo is preferable, faster music can be played to reduce the average amount of time that customers spend at a table. One issue that is not assessed in this research and this factor may be an important determinant of the behaviour of restaurant patrons. First, data was only gathered from customers at one restaurant. This has implications for the generalisability of the findings, in particular, the results reported here cannot be considered to be generalisable to all restaurants when there is substantial variation between competitors in terms of the type of occasion for which they cater. Secondly, only individuals dining at tables for two were included in the research and their behaviour may differ substantially from customers dining in larger groups. Finally, the liking of fast versus slow music was not assessed in this research and this factor may be an important determinant of the effects of music on behaviour in restaurants.

REFERENCES


The Impact of Shopping Motives on Store-Assessment
Andrea Groeppel-Klein, European University Viadrina, Frankfurt
Eva Thelen, Leopold Franz University, Innsbruck
Christoph Antretter, Leopold Franz University, Innsbruck

ABSTRACT
In this article the question will be analyzed as to whether different shopping motives influence expectations from a store and whether these shopping motives affect consumers’ in-store behavior. We assume that the point-of-sale assessment depends on the consumer’s perceived shopping motives before entering the store. A thorough review of the literature shows that shopping motivations represent a fairly mature area of research. However, in previous studies one aspect is missing or has been considered insufficiently: the idea of “smart shopping.” Many retailers consider “smart shopping” as a remarkable trend of the late 90s. “Smart shopping” comprises high sensitivity on prices; smart shoppers are always keen on getting a discount. In this study, we paid special attention to this shopping motive. The empirical investigation was conducted in an Austrian furniture store. Customers were interviewed on several shopping interests and their impressions of the store. Using Cluster Analysis, homogeneous groups with different emphases on specific shopping motives were found. One cluster can be characterized as very price-oriented. Further results show that there is a significant difference between the clusters concerning emotional and cognitive evaluation of the store. We also discuss whether the furniture store meets the different consumer needs in an appropriate way, and to which extent our method can be used to detect strong and weak points in a retail setting.

THE RELEVANCE OF SHOPPING-MOTIVES FOR IN-STORE-MARKETING
In 1972, Tauber was one of the first to ask the question of “Why do people shop?” and declared: ‘The most obvious answer, because they need to purchase something’ can be a most deceptive one and reflects a marketing myopia which management has been cautioned to avoid—a product orientation. This answer considers only the products which people may purchase and is but a partial and insufficient basis for behavioral explanations. It implicitly assumes that the shopping motive is a simple function of the buying process” (Tauber, 1972, p.46).

To test this “simple function,” Tauber carried out an explorative study using in-depth interviews. Thirty Americans from Los Angeles were asked to describe their last shopping trip and to talk about their activities, feelings and experiences. Tauber identified various types of consumers with different shopping motives. Four of these are of particular interest. Self-gratifying consumers, as a first group, try to alleviate depression by spending money. The shopping process is motivated not by the utility of consumption but by the buying process itself. Secondly, those people living in a congested urban environment welcome the opportunity to walk in spacious and appealingly laid-out centers and malls. Members of the third category “sensory-stimulation-seekers” enjoy the physical sensation of handling merchandise, the pleasant background music and the scents. Finally, the motive “pleasure of bargaining” is recognized. These consumers enjoy negotiating (“bazaar atmosphere”).

Although Tauber’s investigation was based on a very small sample and although in-depth interviews belong to the criticized methods concerning reliability and validity, Tauber was able to show that consumers also buy products for other than supply motives. Tauber inspired many researchers to analyze shopping motives. Furthermore, Tauber’s 25 year-old idea is still relevant: “Retailers may find that these hypothesized shopping motives offer additional opportunities for market segmentation and store differentiation.” The following article deals with this hypothesis. However, we will first present an overview on important empirical studies based upon Tauber’s typology.

Taking Tauber’s findings into consideration, Westbrook and Black (1985) define seven major dimensions of shopping motives for an empirical study. These dimensions vary substantially across individuals and shopping situations. Westbrook and Black describe motives as “hypothetical and unobservable psychological constructs postulated to explain both the energized and directive aspects of human behavior.” Accordingly, motives are “forces instigating behavior to satisfy internal need states” (Westbrook and Black, 1985, p. 89). Thus, shopping motives are fundamental, target-oriented forces occurring in the organism, which can be satisfied by shopping activities. In addition, Westbrook and Black emphasize that shopping motives can be independent of the product to be purchased, representing “enduring characteristics of individuals” (p. 87). Hence, shopping motives can also be interpreted as person-specific causes of involvement. Westbrook and Black differentiate the following seven shopping motives:

- “anticipated utility”
- “role enactment”
- “negotiation”
- “choice optimization”
- “affiliation”
- “power and authority”
- “stimulation”

Westbrook and Black (1985) developed a statement-battery to register the shopping motives mentioned above and interviewed 203 adult female shoppers, who were classified into six groups by means of a cluster analysis. With regard to demographic criteria, these groups were identical— with regard to their attitude toward the shopping motives, the groups were different. Thus, following Westbrook and Black, one can identify highly-involved consumers, who try to satisfy all kinds of shopping motives, as well as...
apathetic, indifferent consumers who regard shopping as a “necessary evil” to be conducted as quickly as possible. Two additional clusters are characterized by the fact that they especially stress one of the described motives. Westbrook and Black call these two “choice optimizers” and “economic shoppers,” according to their preferences.

Against the background of the environmental psychology-based behavior-model of Mehrabian and Russell (1974)1 and of Westbrook’s and Black’s shopping motives, Dawson et al. (1990) conducted an empirical study to investigate the connection between pre-existing shopping motives on the one hand and reactions (retail choice and preference) and emotional states at the point of sale on the other hand. The largest American arts and crafts market was chosen for data collection. At this market only original, hand crafted items are sold. Furthermore, entertainment such as live-music and live-shows is offered.

Dawson et al. (1990) interviewed nearly 300 visitors of this spectacular market concerning their shopping motives and their emotional impressions and cognitive evaluations. An exploratory Factor Analysis applied to the statements used to measure the shopping motives revealed two dimensions. The first factor comprises statements representing product motivations such as finding a variety of new products, unique crafts and food at reasonable prices. The second can be described as the “stimulation” factor according to Westbrook and Black (1995). This factor captures experiential motives such as watching other people, enjoying the crowds, seeing and hearing entertainment and experiencing interesting sights, sounds and smells. In a second step, Dawson et al. (1990) examined the impact of these two shopping motives on emotions and on retail preference and choice. Their results show that consumers who are strongly motivated by “stimulation” and “product interest” (the desire to obtain as much information about the product as possible) experience the most pleasure and the highest level of activation in the marketplace. Likewise, shopping motives influence the duration of staying in the store as well as the desire to explore the shopping environment. Examining the influence of the two shopping motives on the dependent variables shows that those consumers who had high scores on the “stimulation factor” above all enjoy the overall atmosphere of the market. Whereas those consumers who primarily focused the product-oriented factor appreciated by the quality of the crafts. They bought more items than those who only wanted to be stimulated by the market atmosphere. These results suggest that consumers focus on different aspects of the shopping environment according to their pre-existing shopping motives.

The investigation by Babin et al. (1994) can also be cited in this context. The authors investigated whether consumers evaluate shopping as “work” or “fun.” They developed a comprehensive scale to measure these two diametric point of view. The main study was conducted in a shopping mall delivering more than 400 respondents. Using a confirmatory factor analysis, Babin et al. were able to show that it is useful to distinguish between utilitarian and hedonic shopping motives. The first factor describes a particular consumption need and is called “utilitarian shopping value” comparable to the “product interest” dimension in Dawson’s (1990) study. This factor comprises all functional aspects of shopping behavior and can be seen as task-related and rational. The second derived dimension, the so-called hedonic value, is similar to Dawson’s stimulation factor, but is more comprehensive. According to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) Babin et al. (1994, p. 646) define hedonic value as “more subjective and personal than its utilitarian counterpart and results more from fun and playfulness than from task completion. Thus, hedonic shopping value reflects shopping’s potential entertainment and emotional worth. ... Increased arousal, heightened involvement, perceived freedom, fantasy fulfillment, and escapism may all indicate a hedonistically valuable shopping experience.”

Babin et al (1990) emphasize that shopping trips can have a hedonic value irrespective of whether something is purchased or not. The results of Babin et al. reveal that consumer behavior does not always satisfy functional or economic needs (Sherry, 1990; Fischer and Arnold, 1990). Shopping motives and their impact on the perception of store atmosphere and merchandise concept should therefore be of major interest to both, retailers and researchers.

Groeppel (1995) examined whether shopping motives influence the acceptance of different retail categories. More than 500 consumers were interviewed as to their evaluation of diverse furniture retail categories as well as possible furniture shopping motives. The shopping motives were operationalised according to Westbrook and Black (1994). However, Groeppel stresses the importance of “price orientation.” Groeppel’s study revealed that the diverse furniture retail categories satisfy different shopping motives. The “specialty store” is mainly preferred by consumers who are not price-oriented but strongly emphasize the importance of counseling and the stimulating shopping atmosphere. With increasing price orientation, the practical aspect also becomes more important. At the same time such consumers lower their choice-optimization. In this case the discount store will be preferred.

If consumers are purely price-oriented they are willing to take the trouble to shop (e.g., stand in line in front of the cash register, in a narrow store or shop out of cardboard boxes) in order to satisfy their shopping motive. These consumers usually neither demand high quality assortment nor are they interested in checking the quality carefully. It can be summarized that successful retail categories specialize in different shopping motives.

Conclusion: All quoted empirical investigations prove the relevance of shopping motives for understanding consumer behavior at the point-of-sale. Shopping motives can influence perceived emotions at the point-of-sale, cognitive assessment of the merchandise, as well as the desire to stay in order to explore the store and purchase products. Furthermore, these studies show that consumers have different requirements of and expectations from the store depending on their pre-existing shopping motive. However, in most empirical investigations, price-orientation as a motivational factor was disregarded, except for Groeppel’s (1995) study, which included the idea of “smart shopping.” Nonetheless, Groeppel did not analyze the problem that may arise for a store with customer groups with different pre-existing shopping motives. The following research questions therefore arise:

1. Is it possible in one store to identify different consumer groups which are either interested in an utilitarian or in a hedonic shopping value (Babin et al. 1990) or are more or less price-oriented?

2. Will the perception of a retailer differ significantly among these clusters?

3. Do members of the diverse clusters have different expectations?

According to the empirical studies which were discussed above, the following hypothesis can be derived:

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1For more details, see Groeppel (1991).
H1a: If in one single store, different customer segments with different shopping motives can be identified, we can assume that these clusters will evaluate the store differently and that the perceived mood at the point-of-sale will also differ.

Hypothesis 1b is to establish why the store evaluation might differ among the clusters. From research in consumer satisfaction, it is clear that customer satisfaction can be measured as the gap between pre-existing expectations of a product or service and its actual evaluation.

H1b: If customer segments with emphasis on different shopping motives can be identified, the store assessment of the segments will depend on the fulfillment of each customer group’s expectations.

In order to analyze this thesis, the pre-existing shopping motives, expectations of customers concerning the store before entering it and the evaluation of perceived performance at the point of sale need to be measured. Before examining these hypotheses, the shopping motive "price orientation" will be discussed from a theoretical point of view so as to explain the relevance of this construct.

**CONSUMERS’ PRICE INTEREST**

As mentioned in the first chapter, there seems to be an increasing tendency towards price-oriented strategies in retailing. In many industrialized countries discount stores are the winners of the century. For example, discount food stores in Germany were able to increase their market share from 8.9 to 15.5% within ten years (1983-1993). According to Nielsen, a market share of about 20% is likely for the year 2000. The triumph of the discount stores, being not only restricted to the food branch, is achieved particularly at the cost of the traditional specialist stores. During the past years, the latter lost much of their market share (1980: 55.4%–1995: 35.4% in former West Germany). One possible explanation for the success of discount stores is the so called "smart-shopping" phenomenon.

“To shop for clever bargains” is a shopping slogan which can be observed internationally and is relevant for all income classes. Compared to the ’80s, consumers are more price-oriented, also when it comes to branded products. “Bargain-guides” with addresses of factory-outlets that sell branded products with massive price reductions find a ready market. A representative, empirical study on German consumer behavior has shown that 34% of the interviewed persons go for special offers and regard themselves as “smart shoppers.” Many practitioners believe that smart shopping will be the predominant consumption trend. To explain the background of this phenomenon the “price interest” construct should be analyzed in detail.

Diller (1991, p.86) defines price interest as consumers’ motivation to search for price cues and to consider these cues in their buying decisions. According to this definition, “price interest” consists of three components:

- Intensity of searching for price information (intensity dimension)
- Objects, accuracy, and extent of price interest (content dimension)
- Manifestation of price interest (consequences of the price interest).

Whereas Diller considers visible consequences of price interest, Müller-Hagedorn (1983, p.994) emphasizes the intensity dimension and defines “price interest” as a consumer’s desire to gain information about prices. From both definitions, a common motivational character of the price interest-construct can be derived. This is also the topic of this paper. Price interest is not regarded as an innate, but as a secondary, motive depending on learning processes. The origin of price interest may lay in:

- the desire to be supplied with goods
- desire to fulfill social expectations (e.g., the role of the well-informed consumer)
- performance-oriented causes (cleverness, consumers’ pride in being efficient)

However, the searching for relief is contradictory, especially when price-oriented behavior requires enormous effort in information seeking.

The intensity of the price-interest differs from situation to situation, and from person to person. There are many empirical investigations attempting to find out variables influencing this behavior. Although the results are indeed inconsistent, they show however the general importance of the price-interest construct. Earlier empirical studies most often investigated only demographic and product oriented features as possible determinants of price interest. Wimmer (1982) established that, in Germany, elderly people and those of lower social status showed less price interest than expected. By contrast, American studies show that the lower the social class, the higher is the price interest (except for the lowest social class; Simon, 1992, p. 594). Kroebber-Riel (1980, p. 522) remarks that at the beginning of the ’80s especially members of the social middle class showed strong price interest. This is deduced from their achievement motivation. In the late ’80s and at the beginning of the ’90s this attitude changed in favor of an emotional benefit oriented consumer and a higher demand on quality (Kroebber-Riel, Weinberg, 1996). Today “value-for-money” assessment becomes more and more important, since an increasing number of consumers are willing to buy high quality brands without higher expenditures. Karmasin (1994) reports that “price interest” has become a new dimension to characterize a new life style. Such consumers are regarded as clever and trendy, having an excellent price knowledge, and being able to use special discounts.

Furthermore, studies of the ’70s (Diller 1991) showed that the level of price interest depends on the possibility to get price information on a particular market. Price interest was higher on markets with great transparency. If this thesis holds today, price interest should increase during the following years through greater availability of price information via Internet.

Another explanatory variable for the intensity of price interest could be product involvement. Diller (1991, p.89) found that products affecting the ego of a person do not gain as much price interest as convenience goods. However, this result is only valid under the assumption that price interest is defined as a construct encompassing the motivation to buy the cheapest product. Nonetheless, we recommend a characterization of the price interest-construct by the intensity and content dimensions only. A high-involvement consumer will be interested in the prices of interesting products anyway, since the price is one remarkable product feature.

Yet, that does not imply the consumer’s desire to buy the cheapest product. According to Diller’s definition, such consumer behavior would not be regarded as “price interested,” though the high-involvement consumer might know many prices. Therefore,
in this article, price interest is defined as the desire to gain price information. For instance, it can be achieved by reading leaflets or by searching for value-for-money cues. The consequences of this search for information, e.g., the wish to buy products at a reasonable price ("price orientation"), are not covered by this definition. Although price interest and price orientation might be correlated, we still operationalise both dimensions separately for customer segmentation. In the following, price interest is considered as a shopping motive. We examine whether consumers who describe themselves as being highly interested in furniture prices make better estimations of such prices than those with low price interest. At this point the second hypothesis can be deduced:

H2: If consumers regard themselves as very interested in prices, they have a significantly more realistic price awareness than consumers with low price interest.

EXPLORATORY STUDY: METHOD AND SAMPLE

The data base for the present study was generated in 1997 by graduate participants in a market research class at the Department of Marketing and Retailing (Leopold Franz University Innsbruck). The study was conducted in one of Innsbruck’s largest furniture stores which offers a broad product assortment of medium to high quality level. All students attended a training session. Four students interviewed customers just before they entered the store and gave each one a personal ID-number identical to the number on the questionnaire. All interviewed shoppers were asked to present themselves again after shopping, behind the cashiers’ zone for further questions. They were identified by their ID-number. Both pre- and post-shopping interview lasted about 15 minutes. 150 valid questionnaires were finally analyzed.

In the pre-shopping interview customers were asked some initial questions such as: whether they already knew the store and if so, whether they come to that store more or less frequently; whether they search for something special; how they became first aware of the store. The persons were also asked standardized questions about their shopping motives and price interest. In addition they were asked to rate several statements on their expectations of the store concerning the assortment, store design, service, advice offered by sales personnel, and price level. Picture scales were used to derive insight into preferred furniture and living-style. Shoppers also participated in a “price-test” before entering the store: a photograph of a seating furniture of the retailer’s assortment was presented to estimate the price. It was of the type that is often found in Austrian kitchens. To finish the pre-shopping part of the interview, the time upon entering the shop was recorded.

At the beginning of the post-shopping interview, the time was noted in order to calculate how long the customer had stayed in the store. All statements on the marketing-mix of the retail outlet were presented again to determine the extent of agreement. In the pre-shopping interview, the customers’ expectations on certain criteria were checked. However, in the post-shopping part, evaluation of the same criteria was of special interest. Also, the “price-test” about the corner bench was repeated. Furthermore, the candidates were asked about their mood during shopping, and which products they had bought. Finally, demographic data was recorded.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

All statements concerning shopping motives were first examined by means of Factor Analysis in order to exclude implicit weighing and to extract dimensions on a higher level. With a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy of 0.50953 the

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**TABLE 1**

Factor Analysis on Shopping Motive-Statements
(Principle Component Method, Quartimax Rotation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Price-orientation</th>
<th>Stimulation seeking</th>
<th>Actual Buying Intention</th>
<th>Desire for advice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interested in cheap offers</td>
<td>0.79084</td>
<td>0.10767</td>
<td>-0.00967</td>
<td>0.09188</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special price offer</td>
<td>0.62998</td>
<td>-0.15950</td>
<td>0.35799</td>
<td>-0.19721</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escape from home</td>
<td>0.58766</td>
<td>0.13063</td>
<td>-0.02188</td>
<td>-0.00295</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browsing through the store</td>
<td>0.33755</td>
<td>0.74061</td>
<td>-0.05574</td>
<td>-0.16758</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas for home decoration</td>
<td>-0.22702</td>
<td>0.73127</td>
<td>0.22659</td>
<td>0.23285</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have close look at products</td>
<td>-0.15776</td>
<td>-0.16114</td>
<td>0.79488</td>
<td>-0.13746</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention to buy</td>
<td>0.13771</td>
<td>0.18330</td>
<td>0.58597</td>
<td>0.11821</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search for s.h. special</td>
<td>0.27618</td>
<td>0.12616</td>
<td>0.47678</td>
<td>0.28818</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice by retail merchants</td>
<td>0.03272</td>
<td>0.04484</td>
<td>0.07198</td>
<td>0.85736</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping is a burden</td>
<td>-0.16744</td>
<td>-0.50991</td>
<td>0.04658</td>
<td>0.54259</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue</td>
<td>1.942</td>
<td>1.504</td>
<td>1.297</td>
<td>1.069</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor Variance</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.0 %</td>
<td>13.0 %</td>
<td>10.7 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Σ 58.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1Statements in tables are abbreviations.
The analysis because of its low factor loading. The third factor is marked
as well as

The results after Quartimax Rotation can be interpreted as follows: the first factor explaining 19.4% of total variance comprises statements on price-oriented shopping motives. Particularly the statement “I am above all interested in low budget offers” as well as “I am searching for a special price offer” load extremely high on that dimension. The factor is therefore labeled “Price-orientation.” The statements “I like the fascinating atmosphere of furniture stores and enjoy browsing furniture outlets just for fun” and “I am looking for some new ideas for the decoration in my flat/house” show high values on the second factor. It is thus labeled “Stimulation Seeking.” The third factor still explains 13% of variance. It comprises “I am intending to have a close look at certain products” and also “I definitely want to buy something.” The third statement of that factor “I am searching for something special that I could not find in other stores” needs to be excluded from further analysis because of its low factor loading. The third factor is marked “Actual Buying Intention.” The last factor with high loading on “I expect detailed advice by the retail merchants” represents the desire for advice.

Three further statements on the subjective price interest have also been examined by Factor Analysis:

- “I gain most of my perceptions on product prices from leaflets.”
- “I can make a pretty good guess on the price from how the product is finished and from the material.”
- “I am very interested in furniture prices.”

Analysis of Variance showed that the first and the second statement each load on a separate factor. “I am very interested in furniture prices,” however, loads extremely high on both other factors. It is thus excluded from further analysis. To summarize the results drawn from Factor Analysis, six dimensions can be named: price-orientation, desire for stimulation, actual buying intention, desire for advice, interest in prices of leaflets, as well as price knowledge based upon quality.

Subsequently, a Quick Cluster Analysis was conducted over the factor values derived from the six dimensions stated above. Of the 149 interviewed persons 141 were classified into three groups. The remaining 8 questionnaires could not be used for missing values. Table 2 shows the final cluster centers.

The Cluster Analysis reveals three groups that differ in desire and need with respect to the furniture outlet. Members of the first cluster can be described as stimulation seekers. These consumers especially seek an animated atmosphere and enjoy browsing through furniture stores in order to get ideas for home decoration. They prefer “sneaking” through the shop without necessarily seeking advice from sales personnel. The second cluster emphasizes qualified advice and can therefore be called “advice-oriented consumers.” It is remarkable that both characteristics “search for a special price offer” as well as “interest in prices stated in leaflets” show negative values. The latter has a diametrical outcome in the third group. These customers are extremely interested in prices and thus similar to the “Smart Shopper” described above. In their own opinion, they also have a thorough knowledge of prices. Since they are always looking for special price offers, they are interested mainly in the prices stated in leaflets. As for the rest, it seems that the remarkable price interest of this cluster does not depend on total household income, number, or age of household members. Analysis of Variance on these demographic variables does not show a significant difference. These persons are not interested in prices.

---

TABLE 2
Results of the Cluster Analysis (Final Cluster Centers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Cluster1</th>
<th>Cluster2</th>
<th>Cluster3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stimulation-oriented consumers</td>
<td>Advice-oriented consumers</td>
<td>Price-oriented consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number in cluster</td>
<td>n=69 (48.9 %)</td>
<td>N=32 (22.7 %)</td>
<td>n=40 (28.4 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price-orientation</td>
<td>-0.2604</td>
<td>-0.8197</td>
<td>+1.0876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulation seeking</td>
<td>+0.5242</td>
<td>+0.7803</td>
<td>-0.2411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying intention</td>
<td>-0.0531</td>
<td>+0.0645</td>
<td>-0.0018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wish for advice</td>
<td>-0.3684</td>
<td>+0.8739</td>
<td>-0.1036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested in prices of leaflets</td>
<td>-0.0113</td>
<td>-0.8687</td>
<td>+0.6155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price knowledge based upon</td>
<td>-0.1161</td>
<td>-0.0334</td>
<td>+0.2499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fabrication quality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: 0 = Cluster center of average intensity
- = Cluster centers between -0.1 and -0.4
— = Cluster centers below -0.4
+ = Cluster centers between +0.1 and +0.4
++ = Cluster centers above +0.4

1The diverse furniture styles of the three segments might also be of interest. Five photographs of different furniture styles were shown to each interviewed person. He/she was asked to rank all five according to individual preferences. Experience oriented consumers and those searching for advice clearly voted for modern and stylish furniture (in both groups over 45% put this style on the top position). Yet, preferences of price-oriented consumers were less clear. Almost as many members of that group ranked the modern style, the plain style, and the landhouse-style in first place.
The Impact of Shopping Motives on Store-Assessment

because they need to save money, rather, they want to save money. We will show later how close their price estimation conforms to the actual prices. However, we will first examine whether members of these groups differ in their evaluation of the store.

Hypothesis 1a: If in one single store, different customer segments with different shopping motives can be identified, we can assume that these clusters will evaluate the store differently and that the perceived mood at the point-of-sale will also differ.

First, the scales measuring the store-performance were standardized in order to test this hypothesis first. Obtained standardized values were then used as dependent variables and the previously extracted clusters were used as independent variables. The SPSS procedure was “oneway” with the extra command to compare the group mean values of the three clusters by t-tests (SPSS-Procedure: Contrast) (Table 3).

The results show that the price-oriented consumers assess the furniture store significantly more positively than members of the other two consumer groups. It thus seems that the furniture store meets especially the expectations of this cluster. With regard to stimulation and advice-oriented consumers, no significant differ-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Mean value stimulation-oriented consumers (SO)</th>
<th>Mean value advice-oriented consumers (AO)</th>
<th>Mean value price-oriented consumers (PO)</th>
<th>Num ber SO</th>
<th>Num ber AO</th>
<th>Num ber PO</th>
<th>Signifi cance SO-AO</th>
<th>Signifi cance SO-PO</th>
<th>Signifi cance AO-PO</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Homogeneity of Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Furniture store presenting different living styles</td>
<td>-0.0028</td>
<td>-0.5453</td>
<td>0.3007</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courteous service</td>
<td>-0.1124</td>
<td>-0.0836</td>
<td>0.2453</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.895</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>0.169</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheaper price</td>
<td>-0.1342</td>
<td>-0.2073</td>
<td>0.4532</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.729</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling as if at an architect</td>
<td>-0.1671</td>
<td>-0.1030</td>
<td>0.3788</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.762</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>0.066</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good quality</td>
<td>-0.1599</td>
<td>-0.0982</td>
<td>0.2894</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.772</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good brands</td>
<td>-0.2246</td>
<td>-0.2211</td>
<td>0.4897</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.978</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecologically beneficial products</td>
<td>-0.0529</td>
<td>-0.1489</td>
<td>0.1520</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.662</td>
<td>0.316</td>
<td>0.207</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of the “do it yourself” section</td>
<td>-0.0656</td>
<td>-0.2954</td>
<td>0.3877</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.281</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest prices</td>
<td>-0.0706</td>
<td>-0.4184</td>
<td>0.4182</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overpriced</td>
<td>-0.0053</td>
<td>0.0676</td>
<td>0.0191</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.711</td>
<td>0.913</td>
<td>0.851</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good orientation</td>
<td>0.0060</td>
<td>-0.0994</td>
<td>0.1081</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.613</td>
<td>0.598</td>
<td>0.369</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair prices</td>
<td>-0.0838</td>
<td>-0.1304</td>
<td>0.2752</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.824</td>
<td>0.070</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent product decoration</td>
<td>-0.0165</td>
<td>-0.4388</td>
<td>0.3056</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales force with good specialist knowledge</td>
<td>0.0355</td>
<td>-0.1549</td>
<td>0.0212</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.408</td>
<td>0.948</td>
<td>0.495</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The store decoration represents diverse life styles</td>
<td>-0.0222</td>
<td>-0.4620</td>
<td>0.2481</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>0.177</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete room furnishing</td>
<td>-0.1030</td>
<td>-0.4227</td>
<td>0.3889</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.199</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture is affordable</td>
<td>-0.0808</td>
<td>-0.3468</td>
<td>0.4635</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.201</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ence in store assessment was found. Also, contrary to the other two clusters, the positive store image among the price-oriented consumers influences their willingness to spend more money. The following average price was stated in answer to the question “Can you remember roughly how much money you spent last time you came here to shop?” - Price-oriented consumers spent an average of ATS 15,489; whereby advice searchers and experience-oriented consumers only spent ATS 10,888 and ATS 12,265, respectively.

At this point, the question emerges as to whether price-oriented consumers experience a better mood at the point-of-sale than others (see Table 5). To find the answer, Explorative Factor Analysis was run on items used to operationalise mood. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (0.844) was positive and the Barlett-Test of Sphericity showed high significance. After Quartimax Rotation, two factors remained. These two factors explain 51.8% of total variance. Table 4 shows the rotated factor loadings.

The results of the Analysis of Variance show that price-oriented consumers experience a significantly better mood at the point-of-sale than members of the other clusters. They feel more amused, cheerful, relaxed and also more dominant. The secure, free, and superior items were used to operationalise the dominance construct. Concerning the price image, particular interest should be paid to the dominance dimension. An empirical investigation (Groeppe, 1998) has showed that dominance in extremely exclusive shop surroundings has a strong influence on the value-for-money assessment. When consumers feel dominant at the point of sale, they rate the store higher on value-for-money than those who feel inferior. In the current study, Analysis of Variance shows that price-oriented customers perceive themselves as dominant at the point-of-sale. These customers also have the most positive value-for-money image of the Innsbruck furniture store. Table 6 shows how the three clusters perceive the furniture store in general.

**Conclusion:**

The customers of the Innsbruck furniture store can be divided into three groups, each with different shopping motives. Our first hypothesis stated that the customers’ store assessment depends on their shopping motives. Concerning demographic indicators, no significant difference among the obtained three clusters was found. Analysis of Variance shows that price-oriented customers appraise the store more positively, and that they experience a better mood at the point-of-sale than members of the other groups.

Hypothesis 1b tries to explain why there may be different evaluations among different clusters.

H1b: If customer segments with emphasis on different shopping motives can be identified, the store assessment of the segments will depend on the fulfillment of each customer group’s expectations.

In order to analyze hypothesis 1b, we need to examine the extent to which the furniture store meets the customers’ expectations through pre- and post-shopping interviews. A pre- and post-shopping design might sensitize the respondents and thus lead to biased results. Since respondents spent an average of more than one hour in the store prior to the second interview, we believe that such bias can be neglected for our purposes.

It is important to note that visitors had a relatively clear picture in their mind of what they can expect at the point-of-sale. This fact might be due to the high number of regular customers in the sample (almost 95% had been visiting the furniture store within the last six months prior to our investigation). Nonetheless, there were still some significant differences between the “before entering” and the “after leaving” values. These differences may explain the poor ratings among the advice-oriented consumers and the most positive judgements among the price-oriented ones (Table 7).

The results of the T-Test show that statements referring to special knowledge, courtesy of sales personnel and quality of the assortment do not fulfill the customers’ requirements. The assortment’s quality and the specialist knowledge of the sales personnel was rated significantly lower after leaving the point-of-sale than before entering it. This negative result might explain the poor store assessment among the advice-oriented consumers. Concerning the store design, the results of the comparison have a positive outcome. Also, the most important expectations of price-oriented consumers (affordable furniture, cheap articles, and “do it yourself” furniture) were met. This fact might explain why price-

---

**TABLE 4**

Factor loadings “Mood”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>positive mood</td>
<td>dominance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cheerful</td>
<td>0.80077</td>
<td>0.21873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amused</td>
<td>0.72187</td>
<td>0.36965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tired</td>
<td>-0.66017</td>
<td>0.22299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good mood</td>
<td>0.65320</td>
<td>0.46012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>joyful excited</td>
<td>0.64624</td>
<td>-0.03547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relaxed</td>
<td>0.57334</td>
<td>0.24465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frantic</td>
<td>-0.44450</td>
<td>-0.06826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>free</td>
<td>0.20684</td>
<td>0.78441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secure</td>
<td>0.32315</td>
<td>0.72275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>superior</td>
<td>0.25710</td>
<td>0.58849</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Eigenvalue**

| 4.01 |

**Factor Variance**

| 40.1% | 11.7% |
### TABLE 5
Perceived mood at the point-of-sale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Mean value stimulation-oriented consumers (SO)</th>
<th>Mean value advice-oriented consumers (AO)</th>
<th>Mean value price-oriented consumers (PO)</th>
<th>Numb PO</th>
<th>Numb AO</th>
<th>Significance SO-AO</th>
<th>Significance SO-PO</th>
<th>Significance AO-PO</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Homogenity of Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>positive mood</td>
<td>-0.0418</td>
<td>0.2632</td>
<td>0.329</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0.117</td>
<td><strong>0.031</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>142</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominance</td>
<td>-0.0681</td>
<td>0.2954</td>
<td>0.445</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td><strong>0.027</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>142</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 6
The three groups’ store evaluation in general

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Mean value stimulation-oriented consumers (SO)</th>
<th>Mean value advice-oriented consumers (AO)</th>
<th>Mean value price-oriented consumers (PO)</th>
<th>Numb PO</th>
<th>Numb AO</th>
<th>Significance SO-AO</th>
<th>Significance SO-PO</th>
<th>Significance AO-PO</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Homogenity of Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like the furniture store in general</td>
<td>-0.0990</td>
<td>+0.3683</td>
<td>0.463</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>33</td>
<td><strong>0.015</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.007</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>145</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 7
“Before entering” expectations vs. “after leaving” assessment (results of 2-tailed T-Test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean value “before entering”</th>
<th>Mean value “after leaving”</th>
<th>T-Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Significance (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question before entering the store: “For me it is very important that…”</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question after leaving the store: “I believe that…”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the store I can find products which I can afford</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can find cheaper products in other stores</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can buy ”do it yourself” furniture</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can see furniture arrangements symbolizing particular life styles</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there will be not only single furniture presented but complete room examples</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>-3.87</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sales personnel has good specialist knowledge</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>-2.10</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>0.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be served in a very courteous manner</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>-4.45</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will find high-quality furniture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
oriented consumers assessed the store more positively than the others.

At this point we refer again to our second hypothesis as to whether price-oriented consumers have a more realistic awareness of prices. For this purpose, the mentioned price test was used. Consumers were supposed to estimate the price for a typical Austrian seating furniture, which you can find in many kitchens (L-formed bench with a table) before entering and after leaving the store. The real price for this “corner bench” was ATS 9,998. Table 8 shows the average price estimation of each cluster.

The results reveal that only the price-oriented-customers were able to make the best estimation of the price. This result has especially implications for marketing recommendations that will be discussed below.

### RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE RESULTS

To measure the reliability of the survey, it was determined whether the answers from the shoppers depend on the student responsible for the interview, on the date of the survey (Friday and Saturday), or on the time when the questionnaire was administered (morning or afternoon). There were no significant differences between the groups or, in other words, neither the interviewer nor day, nor time influenced the answer behavior. So we can assume that the results can be characterized as reliable.

Discriminant Analysis was applied to the cluster solution for test validity. The previously established clusters were taken as dependent variables. In order to achieve a three-group case division, two discriminant functions were necessary. The clarity with which the three groups can be divided is the point at issue. High validity for these functions means that people within the groups are very similar (homogeneous), whereas between the groups they are highly differentiated (heterogeneous). The Canonical correlation coefficients had values of 0.818 for the first function and 0.736 for the second function. The transformed Wilk’s Lambda values showed high significance (0.000). The Eigenvalue of each Discriminant function was greater than 1. The percentage of “grouped” cases was correctly classified at 95%. These results show that the validity of the discriminant functions, and therefore the validity of the cluster solution, may be regarded as a given.

### SUMMARY AND SOME MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FURNITURE STORE

To a large extent, Tauber’s (1972) 25-year-old advice to consider shopping motives for customer and retail market segmentation is still of considerable importance. This is especially true in the case of tough competition.

The analysis supports the thesis that consumers differ in their assessment of a particular store, according to their shopping motives. The retail setting analyzed in this study, will appeal mainly to price-oriented consumers who have a strong interest in prices. These group members are also best informed about prices. As the study shows, the group’s satisfaction arises from the fact that consumers expectations are met. To keep these customers satisfied in the future, the retailer should place particular emphasis on price policy or – as seen from the customer’s viewpoint – a positive value-for-money image should be emphasized. This competitive advantage must be anchored in the price-oriented customers. The more difficult question is, whether the retailer should target the other two clusters to gain more customers. In the present case the retailer should aim at gaining additional advantage by differentiating either in competent counseling or in stimulating furniture presentation without sacrificing the positive price image. However, the retailer needs to keep an eye on the fact that price-oriented customers with a thorough awareness of prices would quickly notice any change in prices for trading-up activities.

With respect to aiming for additional advantages through targeting additional consumers expectations, the outpacing strategy towards stimulation-oriented customers can be recommended. As the study shows, the hedonistic customers not only deliver the group members are also best informed about prices. As the study shows, the group’s satisfaction arises from the fact that consumers expectations are met. To keep these customers satisfied in the future, the retailer should place particular emphasis on price policy or – as seen from the customer’s viewpoint – a positive value-for-money image should be emphasized. This competitive advantage must be anchored in the price-oriented customers. The more difficult question is, whether the retailer should target the other two clusters to gain more customers. In the present case the retailer should aim at gaining additional advantage by differentiating either in competent counseling or in stimulating furniture presentation without sacrificing the positive price image. However, the retailer needs to keep an eye on the fact that price-oriented customers with a thorough awareness of prices would quickly notice any change in prices for trading-up activities.

With respect to aiming for additional advantages through targeting additional consumers expectations, the outpacing strategy towards stimulation-oriented customers can be recommended. As the study shows, the hedonistic customers not only deliver the larger cluster, but already assess the store more positively than advice-oriented ones.

### REFERENCES


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**TABLE 8**

Results of the price test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Mean value of the buying motive</th>
<th>Mean value of the buying motive</th>
<th>Mean value of the buying motive</th>
<th>Num. of respondents</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Homogeneity of Variance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Estimated price before entering the store</td>
<td>14.538.</td>
<td>18.009.</td>
<td>12.407.</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>0.108</td>
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<td>0.020</td>
<td>145</td>
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<td>Estimated price after leaving the store</td>
<td>14.596.</td>
<td>15.376.</td>
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<td>72</td>
<td>0.633</td>
<td>0.097</td>
<td>0.070</td>
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<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Impact of Shopping Motives on Store-Assessment


SESSION OVERVIEW

Researchers have long recognized the influence of consumers’ emotional states on consumption behavior. More recently, consumers’ self-regulation of their emotional states through shopping behaviors has been a subject of interest. Anecdotal evidence about consumers’ use of shopping as an emotional coping response is widespread (e.g., Langer 1983; Lehman 1994).

Yet empirical investigations of consumers’ mood- and emotion-driven consumption behaviors remain underrepresented in the literature. While it is widely accepted that consumers’ moods and emotions play a key role in many consumer purchase decisions and a variety of consumption behaviors (e.g., Babin, Darden, and Griffen 1994; Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Weinberg and Gothwald 1982), a better conceptual understanding of the process by which consumers’ emotional states influence consumption is needed. Furthermore, key questions concerning what is consumed, and how various situational factors impact the consumption decision remain unanswered.

The three papers in this session explain how moods and emotions are regulated through consumption behavior. The authors focus on current conceptual approaches to the regulation of emotional states through consumption and empirical investigations of consumers’ self-regulating behaviors both in the U.S. and in Germany. Our research is intended to stimulate researchers’ interest in emotion-regulating behavior and to foster a better understanding of consumers’ consumption behaviors.

The first paper presents a conceptual overview of the emotion-regulation process that leads to consumers’ use of products to regulate their emotional states. Drawing on insights from schema and script theory (Graumann and Sommer 1984; Rumelhart and Ortony 1977; Schank and Abelson 1977), Beckmann describes the process by which emotional consumption behavior is initiated via automatic and strategic cognitive processes. Her schematic conceptualization explains how automatic (unconscious) adaptation mechanisms and strategic (conscious, intentional) stabilization processes lead to the instantiation of an emotion schema, which in turn generates behavioral change scripts. One common behavioral script in consumer societies is shopping. It is used as a way to compensate for negative mood states or to elevate and maintain a positive arousal level. Therefore, a likely outcome of this emotion-regulation process is the purchase of self-gifts. From the model proposed by Beckmann, it is hypothesized that conscious, intentional stabilization processes are more likely to result in true self-gifts, whereas automatic adaptation mechanisms are unlikely to offer real satisfaction because of the lack of mediation that takes place. An additional negative effect of automatic adaptation processes is that consumers lose sight of other behavioral options. Over time they may come to rely on just one regulation process which creates a possible danger of consumers becoming addicted to the behavior.

With this “blueprint” of the emotional regulation process in mind, the second paper provides an empirical investigation of consumers’ emotion-regulating consumption behaviors. Kacen and Friese explore the influence of negative moods on German and American consumers’ buying behavior. Adopting Mehrabian and Russell’s (1974) Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance paradigm, Kacen and Friese show that buying something results in a significant change in consumers’ felt pleasure, arousal, and control (dominance). They find that consumers are in more pleasurable, less aroused, and more dominant mood states after making a purchase indicating that the purchase has fulfilled its intended purpose. In other words, it has been a true self-gift. Furthermore, measures of satisfaction with the purchase remained high some time after the purchase. This is expected in a sample of “normal” consumers because it can be assumed that buying behavior is for them a strategic option that they will choose only occasionally. Furthermore, situational factors such as special (i.e., sale) prices or cash on hand were not found to be significant factors in the purchase decision because the main purpose of engaging in buying at this moment is to regulate a negative mood state. Therefore, all other concerns are secondary. The findings for the two country sample illustrate that the prevalence of consumers’ engagement in shopping behaviors in order to manage a negative mood state is not limited to U.S. consumers but is a more global phenomenon for Western-style consumer societies.

While engaging in buying behaviors in order to manage a negative mood state can lead to a positive change in mood, such behavior can also have more serious implications as has already been implicated in the Beckmann paper. The third paper by Reisch explores potential negative consequences of consumers’ self-regulation of their emotional states through consumption behavior. Special emphasis is given to the question of why some consumers are more likely to use automatic rather than strategic regulation mechanisms, and why women seem to be more likely to rely on buying rather than on other compensation mechanisms. The author presents the findings from her investigation of addictive buying behavior among German consumers.

Overall, the three papers in this session seek to unravel the mystery of how consumers’ emotional states influence their buying behaviors and more importantly, how buying behaviors effect a change in consumers’ emotional states. The topic is approached both through a theoretical exploration of emotion-regulation processes, and two empirical studies of consumer buying behavior in both the U.S. and Germany. It is hoped that these studies provide useful insights for consumer researchers by broadening our understanding of the role that moods and emotions play in consumer purchase decisions.

Schemas and Scripts for the Self-Regulation of Emotions Through the Consumption of Goods

Suzanne C. Beckmann, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

This paper is concerned with the emotional aspects of consumer experience. More precisely, it attempts to answer the question of why consumers use products, experiences, and services to regulate their emotions. This self-regulatory behavioral process often results in self-gifts and can, under certain circumstances, turn into compulsive/addictive consumption patterns.

In this paper, a schema-theoretical approach to explain self-regulation of emotions through consumption behavior is presented. The model starts from the assumption that emotions and cognitions are inseparably intertwined memory units (Grunert 1993), and as such subject to automatic and strategic processing in an interdependent manner. It is suggested that the interaction structure between affective and cognitive computations consists of memory units...
such as schemas and scripts (Graumann and Sommer 1984; Rumelhart and Ortony 1977) activated by emotional arousal and containing proposals for action. Two principal inference processes are discussed: automatic adaptation mechanisms and strategic stabilization processes (Burgh 1984; Posner and Snyder 1975). The differentiation between these inference processes allows for the prediction of behavioral differences in response to emotional arousal.

The model developed is called the cognitive representation of emotions. The starting point is a person-environment encounter that provides data from events, persons, objects, and/or mental imagery. The type of schema sought is an appraisal schema containing factual knowledge whose instantiation permits an evaluation of the situation as being irrelevant-neutral, beneficial-positive or harmful-negative for the individual. If the encounter is appraised as irrelevant-neutral, no further inference processes will follow as neither the emotional state nor the individual’s “action readiness” (Frijda 1988) is changed. The two other appraisals lead to the instantiation of an emotion schema. As soon as the emotion schema is instantiated, scripts will be accessed that contain procedural knowledge about how to handle the corresponding emotion. In the case where a schema of negative emotion is instantiated, one or more regulation schemas in the form of change scripts will be accessed which include guidelines for action with the objective of changing the unpleasant state. The instantiation of a schema of positive emotion invokes the access of one or more regulation schemas in the form of maintenance or enhancement scripts which comprise corresponding behavioral routines that uphold or increase the pleasant state.

In the context of consumption behavior, the distinction between schematic and aschematic individuals (Markus 1982; Markus, Hamill, and Sentis 1987) helps to clarify which type of regulation schemas and thereby which choice of action will occur. Schematics have highly elaborated and often-utilized schemas for emotions which often contain only a few possible courses of action. Because schemas provide criteria for evaluation, it is assumed that individuals with highly developed schemas make more confident and extreme evaluations more quickly than do individuals without schemas relevant to the actual encounter. On the other hand, aschematic individuals have less elaborated regulation schemas comprised of several alternative actions, thus their emotionally induced behavior will vary considerably.

An Exploration of Mood-Regulating Consumer Buying Behavior
Jacqueline J. Kacen, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.
Susanne Friese, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

Consumers’ use of shopping as an emotional coping response has been discussed in the impulse shopping literature (e.g., Dittmar, Beattie, and Friese 1995; Gardner and Rook 1988; Weinberg and Gothwald 1982), the compulsive buying literature (e.g., Friese and Koenig 1993; O’Guinn and Faber 1989; Pirie 1997), the self-gift literature (Mick and DeMoss 1990; Sherry, McGrath, and Levy 1995), and in the popular press (e.g., Lehman 1994). Previous research has revealed that consumers’ moods and emotions play a key role in many consumer purchases (e.g., Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1990), but how a purchase occasion effects a change in a consumer’s mood or emotional state remains unclear.

This study explores the influence of negative moods on consumers’ buying behavior. We examine consumer purchases that were made in order to relieve a negative mood. Two surveys were conducted among students in the U.S. (n=155) and in Germany (n=155). Overall mean age was 22 years (range 18–46 years). The characteristic nature of the bad mood experienced by these consumers, and the change in mood effected by the purchase, was measured using Mehrabian and Russell’s (1974) Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance paradigm. The findings indicate that following the purchase consumers felt significantly more pleasure, less arousal, and more control (dominance). This suggests that consumers do use buying behaviors to regulate their mood states and that such behavior is effective in changing aversive mood states.

Furthermore, we investigated several situational factors related to the buying occasion (e.g., credit card use, attention to sale prices, whether the purchase is bought for oneself or for someone else), the impulsive versus planned nature of the shopping behavior, and the degree of satisfaction with the purchase. Situational factors like price or cash at hand did not have a significant influence on consumers’ purchasing behavior, because the foremost need demanding satisfaction is the regulation of the negative mood state. U.S. consumers did purchase items on sale more, and were more likely to use a credit card than were German consumers. These differences are likely due to the more widespread availability and use of credit cards in the U.S., and U.S. retailing practices that allow sales at all times of the year.

In addition, the majority of the purchases (over 90%) were self-gifts, i.e., purchased for personal use, consistent with the mood management hypothesis and self-gift literature. Most consumers were satisfied immediately after making the purchase, with U.S. females being the most satisfied. Satisfaction with the purchase remained high after time had elapsed, with the greatest shift towards dissatisfaction among U.S. consumers.

The influence of consumers’ moods and emotions on behavior has long been recognized (e.g., Maslow 1968; Tompkins 1970). Buying is one of the preferred mechanisms by which consumers in both the U.S. and Germany regulate their negative mood states because both countries are advanced capitalistic societies. In a previous study of West German consumers, Scherhorn, Reich, and Raab (1992) showed that 25% use buying as a regular means of compensation. The study presented here expands upon the findings from the self-gift, impulse, and compulsive buying literatures by illustrating how purchasing behaviors help consumers manage their mood states.

Gender and Compensatory Consumer Behavior: The Case of Addictive Buying
Lucia A. Reisch, Universität Hohenheim, Denmark

The self-help book press (e.g., Damon 1988; Wesson 1990; Witkin 1988) as well as scientific investigations of addictive buying behavior suggest that this type of compensatory, dysfunctional consumer behavior is typically a female issue (e.g., Glatt and Cook 1987; Krueger 1988; Lawrence 1990; O’Guinn and Faber 1989). Empirical research has regularly found more women in groups of self-identified “shopaholics” (e.g., Elliott 1994; Faber and O’Guinn 1989; Haubl 1996; Scherhorn, Reisch, and Raab 1990). Moreover, in different studies, women generally scored higher on scales that measure addictive buying tendencies (e.g., d’Astous 1990; Lange 1997; Valence, d’Astous, and Fortier 1988; Roberts 1998; Scherhorn et al. 1990) which was interpreted as a higher propensity to compensatory buying (Scherhorn et al. 1990).

Even taking into account the experience of therapists that women in general feel less resistance in reflecting and reporting unfavorable behaviors, this cannot explain the results of the representative studies that have been carried out. Research into sex-role socialization as well as research concerning the diverse functions of buying such as self-gifts (Mick and DeMoss 1990), identity build-
ing (Friese forthcoming), and mood management (Kacen 1998) offers a range of arguments to support the plausibility of the assumption that addictive buying is a “female addiction.”

Earlier research (Reisch and Scherhorn 1996) put this view into perspective. Two representative surveys carried out in Germany in 1991 had shown no significant gender differences in a group of heavily at-risk addictive buyers. It was argued that once buying changes into an addiction, gender differences in perceptions and attitudes towards buying become very small. This blurring of gender differences in consumption-relevant personality traits such as materialism in groups of buying addicts was also reported by other authors (e.g., Friese forthcoming). Yet, in buyer groups less disposed to becoming addicted, significant gender differences remained. Moreover, the group of heavily at-risk addictive buyers was too small in absolute terms to be used for further statistical analyses. Hence, to rule out the possibility of a methodological artifact, the data of the representative survey carried out in Germany in 1991 (Scherhorn et al. 1992) was reassessed. In contrast to the earlier approach, cut-off points between groups of respondents with different propensities to addictive buying were now specified using confidence intervals. The analysis resulted in three distinctly different buyer groups.

Statistical analysis revealed the following: First, the mean values of men and women on the German Addictive Buying Scale (GABS) differed significantly. For all but four items, men’s and women’s mean values per item also showed significant differences. The mean value of women generally was higher. As the four items for which no gender difference was found also did not discriminate significantly between “normal” buyers and people at-risk of becoming addicted to buying, it can be concluded that these items also did not influence the gender question. Second, the reliability of the scale proved again to be very high and showed no gender differences. Third, frequency analysis of the three buyer groups revealed that women were underrepresented in the group with mean values significantly below the mean on the GABS and over-represented in the group with mean values significantly above the mean. These findings were further supported by the results of two meta-analyses comprising about ten years of empirical research on addictive buying. As to the gender question, the assumption of a stronger female than male propensity to addictive buying was shown (Neuner and Reisch 1999). Possible reasons and implications as well as limitations of the study are discussed.

REFERENCES


Time and Preference: Assessing Future Utility
Eloise Coupey, Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, U.S.A.
Erin Sandgate, Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT
In many purchase situations, a delay may exist between the transaction and consumption (e.g., catalog or Internet shopping). We examine consumers’ evaluations of future consumption relative to immediate consumption in situations when the delay is not under their control. The results of a study to assess purchase behavior and the form of discount rates indicate that, in contrast to findings from research in economics about discount rates for monetary amounts, consumers appear to discount product outcomes at an increasing rate over time. We also demonstrate that location influences the pattern of discounting; consumers discount expensive, Web-based purchases more rapidly than comparable, locally consummated purchases.

INTRODUCTION
One characteristic of many purchases is the delay between the transaction and the delivery and consumption of the product, as for purchases where items are not in stock, catalog orders, and Internet purchases. Consumers’ evaluations of the desirability of such purchases may be affected by their reactions to the delay of consumption, an act which may require consumers to exercise adequate self-control to forego a more immediate opportunity to consume with a potentially more expensive local purchase than with a time-distinct purchase.

This characteristic of many shopping situations underscores a need for research to examine how people assess the value of an item that may be purchased, depending on when they actually receive the product. In economic literature, issues of valuation over time have been the focus of research on intertemporal choice. Very simply, intertemporal choice involves the tradeoffs that consumers make between costs and benefits of consumption at different points in time (Loewenstein and Elster 1992). These tradeoffs, and the factors that influence them, may have implications for developing effective pricing strategies for delayed consumption purchases.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND
Decisions that involve weighing the consequences of waiting to consume may be generally characterized as decisions involving tradeoffs. For instance, deciding to order a product from the Internet may invoke economic concerns of trading off the value of having the money available for other consumption—hence, a cost in terms of liquidity—against the anticipated benefits to be experienced when the product is obtained. A large literature on self-control has tackled issues associated with the psychological formulation of these tradeoffs, such as, “If I eat this third piece of cheesecake tonight, I’ll have to jog fifty extra miles next week” (c.f., Ainslie 1975). These researchers have attempted to determine whether there are factors that systematically influence preference for outcomes at different points in time (e.g., Mowen 1992: present v. future outcome framing and risk preference; Werttenbroch 1998: perceptions of products as vices or virtues). For example, research on self-control indicates that the decisions of pigeons and of people exhibit predictable, adaptive tendencies (Mazur and Logue 1978, and Hoch and Loewenstein 1991, respectively).

Intertemporal choice as described by economists often relies on the notion of discounting; that people exponentially discount the utility of consuming at later points in time (Rabin 1998). A normative approach to intertemporal choice (e.g., Fisher 1930; Fishburn 1970) generally assumes that people exhibit positive time preference, underweighting, or discounting, the utility of consumption in the future relative to consumption in the present. The exponential aspect of the models implies that people are time-consistent in their preferences; one would feel just as favorably toward a consumption tradeoff now as in a year from now.

Tradeoffs over time are often reflected as discount rates (e.g., Thaler 1981). Among early descriptions of discounting is the discounted utility model (DU) developed by Samuelson (1937). In DU, a high discount rate indicates rapidly diminishing utility, and a low discount rate indicates slowly diminishing utility. A discount rate is the ratio between one unit of consumption later as in a year from now; that is, the marginal rate of substitution between now and later.

Evidence from economics, combined with a growing literature in marketing (e.g., Hoch and Loewenstein 1991; Marshall, Mowen and Stone 1995; Mowen and Mowen 1991; Wathieu 1997), suggests that while DU may often provide a summary view of choices across time, it may not adequately describe the patterns of discount rates often observed in economics (cf. Loewenstein 1992). Several economists have suggested that non-constant changes in discount rates are ubiquitous, and that they reflect psychological rather than economic influences on discounting behaviors. For example, Strotz (1955) speculated that psychological perceptions of time result in the heightened valuation of proximal outcomes relative to distal outcomes, an expectation borne out by the appearance of high implicit discount rates in purchases of durables (e.g., Hausman 1979). Strotz’ intuition has also been empirically supported by research that demonstrates a non-linear discount rate for the valuation of an outcome’s utility at different points in time (e.g., Thaler 1981; Benzon, Rapoport and Yagil 1989).

Outcomes as Products v. Dollars
Consistent with Strotz’ intuition, economists have tended to find that people’s discount rates are larger earlier in a time span and that the rates decrease as time progresses. The tendency to overweight the present in terms of outcome evaluation is indicated by research in self-control across a variety of behaviors (e.g., reward v. punishment effects on choice (Mischel and Grusec 1967) and savings behavior (Thaler and Shefrin 1981)). A similar result has been observed in the health domain, in which both magnitude and delay effects have been observed (Chapman 1996).

For decisions about product outcomes, the emphasis on the present may be particularly pronounced. Although a consumer’s utility for receiving a monetary amount at different points in the future may vary, the desire to have the money is unlikely to disappear. Thus, patterns of discount rates for money tend to similarly exhibit decreasing rates over time, characterized as decreasing impatience (Ainslie 1975), often in the form of hyperbolic discounting. In contrast, a consumer’s utility for a product may be time-dependent; the rate of discounting may increase to reflect the disappearance of the desire or need to consume the product. In essence, we would expect to observe discounting consistent with increasing impatience when product utility diminishes; that is, when the reward effectiveness (Ainslie 1975) declines with time. We can look at willingness to wait for the product as a function of
the differential valuation placed on the product via discount rates. In this sense, differential valuation reflects changes to perceptions of reward effectiveness—itself a function of comparisons between the present situation and the anticipated situation.

A second difference between monetary outcomes and product outcomes is that for products, the value of future consumption may be the result of many factors. For example, Loewenstein (1987) suggests that people may place value on outcomes by integrating not only the outcome itself, but also the utility associated with being able to anticipate (or dread) the outcome. Although his reasoning is focused on the added utility of the time until consumption and may also be pertinent to monetary outcomes (e.g., income taxes and refunds), it suggests that outcome assessment is an accumulation of concerns beyond mere asset position evaluation. Hoch and Loewenstein (1991) develop a model of consumer self-control in which they consider factors that may account for time-inconsistent preferences. Several of the factors that they propose may influence choices over time may also lead to an increasing pattern of discount rates for products (e.g., temporal proximity and social comparison).

For example, buying a pair of athletic shoes of the brand owned by all of your friends may only retain the status of a prepotent need as long as your friends are still wearing their shoes.

**Situational Characteristics and Discount Rates**

Nonlinear changes in discount rates over time may reflect individual differences due to individual utilities, rather than interest rate computations. These individual differences may reflect perceptions of the situation, perhaps combined with an attitude toward risk. While Fisher (1930) suggested that time introduced risk into a decision, with more distant times regarded as riskier, more tangible aspects of a purchase situation may also be related to risk perception.

Dodds, Monroe and Grewal (1991) examine the use of extrinsic cues to guide behavior in different contexts. The researchers demonstrate that perceptions and behaviors regarding products are influenced by information about price, store, and brand. For example, they present results which indicate that available information about the store and the brand exerts a greater influence on consumers’ perceptions of quality, value, and willingness to buy when the store and brand are viewed as of higher quality, rather than lower quality. Their results suggest that the store and brand characteristics serve as risk-inducing or risk-reducing aspects of the decision.

**RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

The preceding discussion may be summarized as a series of hypotheses intended to provide insights into consumers’ perceptions of the utility of product consumption, and how these perceptions, reflected as discount rates, are predicted to change as a function of time, cost, and location. For instance, similar to the findings of numerous researchers of intertemporal choice, we anticipate that discount rates for products will exhibit some similarities to discount rate patterns for money outcomes. More specifically, we expect to observe non-constant discounting, with a higher mean rate of discounting for cheaper products than for expensive products.

Based on our reasoning that reward effectiveness for products diminishes as the time horizon increases, we also predict—contrary to typical findings using outcomes in terms of money—that discount rates for product outcomes will increase over time. That is, the products will lose value to consumers at a faster rate as time passes.

Tying the previous research on time discounting to marketing research on extrinsic cues, we propose that differences in the patterns and sizes of discount rates may be observed as a function of location. In choice over time, location may reflect consumers’ concerns about implicit risk; that is, some locations may increase the probability of undesirable outcomes (e.g., product not received; product not as anticipated).

**METHOD**

**Subjects and Procedure**

One hundred and thirty-eight business students in a large, southeastern university completed the pencil and paper questionnaire for course extra credit.

The questionnaire contained a training problem to familiarize subjects with the concept of discount rates, two scenarios with accompanying requests for discount rate information, and several manipulation checks. Subjects completed the study, on average, in fewer than thirty minutes.

**Stimuli**

The stimuli were brief descriptions of hypothetical purchases. Subjects were asked to assume that they were contemplating the purchase of one of two products and to provide information about how much they would pay for the focal product, given that they would not receive it until one of seven points in the future. They were given a present value for the product, and they were told that the payment was immediate, although delivery was not.

**Design**

The study was a mixed design, with two factors manipulated within-subjects and two factors manipulated between-subjects.

**Independent Variables**. The within-subjects factors were cost and time. Each subject received two scenarios. In one scenario the product was valued at $15, while in the other scenario the product was valued at $300. The selection of these values was based on previous research conducted to examine the effect of cost on discounting (e.g., Thaler (1981); Benzion, Rapoport and Yagil (1989). The second within-subjects factor, time, was included to assess the pattern of discount rates. Based on previous studies of rates and on the types of products used in this study, a time span of 64 weeks was used. In addition to the present time, subjects were asked about the value of the product to them at each of seven points within the time span (1 week, 2 weeks, 4 weeks, 8 weeks, 16 weeks, 32 weeks, and 64 weeks).

The between-subjects factors were location (WWW or local) and product (wine or compact disc (cd)). Internet purchases may be viewed as risky, in the sense that the Internet provides a novel context for consumption (Coupey 1999). Costs to set up shop may be lower, thus decreasing barriers to entering the market and creating consumer fear of here-today, gone-tomorrow businesses. Additional concerns include security and privacy, each of which may heighten implicit risk in purchasing via the Internet.

Subjects were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions. Within each condition, the order of the cost (i.e., cheap or expensive) was counterbalanced across subjects.

**Dependent measures**. The primary dependent measures are the discount rates for each time period. Seven discount rates were calculated for each scenario, for each subject (i.e., 14 rates per subject). The discount rate was inferred from the value data provided by each subject, using the following formula:

\[ R = (F/P)^{1/t} - 1, \]

where \( R \) is the inferred discount rate, and \( F \) and \( P \) are the future and present values, respectively. In the study, \( t \) is measured in weeks.
RESULTS

To assess sample characteristics, we obtained information from each subject about his/her age, experience (number of purchases), and comfort with the Internet (-5: very uncomfortable to +5: very comfortable).

Ages ranged from 19 to 40, with a modal age of 20. Sixty-two percent of the subjects were under 21. Fifty-five percent of the subjects were male. Subjects indicated greater levels of comfort with the Internet than discomfort, with an overall mean of 2.6 on a −5 to +5 scale. Over half of the sample claimed to have made purchases from the Internet (53%).

In the following section, we tested hypotheses about the outcome valuation over time, casting time as one factor that may influence the decision to purchase (or not to purchase) products through the Internet.

Hypothesis Testing

Manipulation checks. Several analyses were conducted in order to determine whether the manipulations were effective. For the within-subjects factors, cost and time, subjects were asked to indicate the longest amount of time they would be willing to wait before they would not be willing to pay anything. If the waiting times differ significantly, we can infer that the perceptions of costs also differ.

Comparing the mean numbers of weeks that subjects were willing to wait for both a cheap and an expensive product, the results of a paired samples t-test suggest that subjects did view the costs differently. The comparison for the times before the product was willing to wait for both a cheap and an expensive product, the results also differ.

Next, we examined the effect of cost on the expressed discount rates. Recall that previous research has demonstrated higher discount rates for lower monetary amounts than for higher monetary amounts. We sought to determine whether this result would be replicated using products, rather than monetary outcomes. We anticipated that for outcome magnitude, products would be similar to money; that is, cost differences would result in greater discounting for cheaper products, relative to more expensive products, suggesting a significant main effect of cost.

Using the analysis and model described previously, we obtained a significant effect of cost (F(1, 134) = 84.38, p < .0001). Subjects tended to discount the cheaper product more than they discounted the more expensive product. The average discount rate for the cheap product was -.35. For the expensive product, the mean rate was -.17.

We also examined the interaction effect of cost and time to determine whether the effect of cost was manifest at different points in time. The interaction was significant (F(6, 129) = 3.80, p < .002). Expensive products were discounted at a lower rate than cheaper products, thus providing a replication of previous research (e.g., Thaler 1981) with a statistical test of the differences in discount rates as a function of cost and time. The means and standard deviations for the cheap and expensive products are provided for each time period in Table 1.

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Week</th>
<th>2 Weeks</th>
<th>4 Weeks</th>
<th>8 Weeks</th>
<th>16 Weeks</th>
<th>32 Weeks</th>
<th>64 Weeks</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cheaper Product ($15)</td>
<td>-03</td>
<td>-05</td>
<td>-08</td>
<td>-12</td>
<td>-20</td>
<td>-32</td>
<td>-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expensive Product ($300)</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td>-.35</td>
<td>-.44</td>
<td>-.51</td>
<td>-.58</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
We also tested the prediction that while outcome valuation might be significantly affected by cost and time factors—consistent with previous research in economics (e.g., Benzion, Rapoport and Yagil 1989)—the pattern of discounting would differ. More specifically, while economists predict a pattern of discount rates that diminish at a decreasing rate (i.e., the discount rate varies inversely with the time to be waited), we proposed that for products, discounting would occur at an increasing rate (i.e., the longer consumers wait, the greater the discount rate). The mean discount rates for each time period, presented in Table 1, clearly demonstrate increases in the rate of discounting with increases in the consumption horizon.

We also predicted an effect of location, such that the patterns of rates observed as a function of cost and time would differ, depending on the source of the purchase. The pattern of rates for expensive Internet purchases was expected to resemble the pattern of rates for cheap purchases, regardless of their location. A three-way interaction of cost, time, and location was observed ($F_{(6, 129)}=2.63, p<.02$). Again, inspection of the mean discount rates as a function of cost and location, over time, indicates a steeper rate of discounting earlier in the time frame for expensive Internet purchases, a tendency less evident in expensive, but local, purchases. The means are presented in Table 2.

**CONCLUSION**

**Summary and Discussion**

A study was conducted to examine how consumers discount product outcomes as the time to consumption increases. We applied theories of intertemporal choice to examine how subjects discounted several types of consumption opportunities as a function of cost, time to delivery, and location.

We demonstrate that outcome valuation for products differs across time, consistent with the results of research on intertemporal choice in behavioral economics. This conceptual result adds to the extant literature by providing an application of discounting using a non-monetary outcome. More importantly, however, we predicted that the pattern of discount rates for product would differ from the pattern typically observed in studies with monetary outcomes as stimuli. Discount rates for money amounts tend to decrease over time, suggesting decreasing impatience. In contrast, discount rates for the products we examined tended to increase over time, indicating increasing impatience.

The rate of increase in the discount rates has implications for policy makers and for marketers. For example, the rapid devaluation of expensive products purchased through the Internet suggests that consumers are generally unwilling to trade off the anticipated gratification of consumption against the perceived risks associated with a distant consumption horizon of unknown reliability.

Our results also suggest that attempts to influence purchase by manipulating price should take into account consumers’ discount rates whenever there is a likely delay between payment and delivery/consumption. For example, in developing an effective Internet pricing strategy, marketers should be cautious about the effect of the Internet on consumers’ willingness to accept a price. The results depicted in Figure 3 suggest that consumers will be willing to accept a product at a particular price for a shorter length of time to delivery when the product is expensive and—regardless of price—sold through an Internet source.

**Limitations**

As with most studies of temporal discounting, we are limited in generalizability by the use of hypothetical scenarios. This limitation is tempered, however, by the use of products readily available and presumably familiar to the majority of our subjects.

The use of only two products, however, also limits our ability to generalize these results. Although the effect of the product factor did not significantly influence the other effects of interest (i.e., cost, time, or location), the products do share several characteristics. For example, the products are comparable in cost and are often used for entertainment. A wider variety of products would be desirable for assessing the external validity of our findings.

**Future Research**

These results provide insights into how consumers evaluate the utility of product outcomes over time, making tradeoffs between the present value of the product and the time to be waited before consumption. Additional research is needed to elucidate the factors that influence these tradeoffs. For example, the product outcomes we examine are discounted quite differently from money outcomes. While we demonstrate the form of the discount rates,
further research is needed to determine why product value decreases at such high rates. Although economists have traditionally speculated that time introduces an element of risk that may influence rates (e.g., Strotz 1955), a pure risk explanation does not explain why products should be discounted differently from money.

Hoch and Loewenstein (1991) develop a reference point model of deprivation, in which consumers who adapt to the idea of owning a product, but who do not yet possess it, may experience deprivation. The desire to alleviate deprivation may result in time-inconsistent choices, in which the value of the outcome decreases at an increasing rate. Product outcomes, in contrast to monetary outcomes, entail a transaction of money for an item. When the payment is made, the consumer must trade off the “loss” of the money against the future “gain” of the product. If the consumer is experiencing deprivation, then the time the consumer is willing to wait may be relatively short. Whether such a reference point approach adequately reflects the reasons for which tradeoffs differ over time is a matter for future research.

On an applied level, marketers who sell through the Internet would be benefited by research to delimit factors and conditions under which time will influence the amount and rate of discounting. Thus, research on situational characteristics that affect consumers’ perceptions of transaction tradeoffs in Internet environments is needed.

Pricing is a fundamental concern for marketers and for consumers. Although issues of price are sometimes overshadowed by other concerns, such as brand or self-image, the answer to the basic question of “what does it cost and how much am I willing to pay for it?” influences many consumer decisions. When consumers make purchases in different market environments (e.g., traditional versus Internet) other factors, such as time, may interact with price in ways that are peculiar to that particular environment. When new market environments evolve, public policy concerns may provide the impetus to examine old relationships within new contexts, such as that found with the use of the Internet and World Wide Web for consumer-oriented retailing.

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ABSTRACT

Contrary to the findings of behavioral science and decision-making theory, many market researchers assume that the customer satisfaction rating depends solely on the quality of the product that is actually consumed. The consumer’s conception of the fitness of alternative products is mostly neglected. The “regret” theory delivers an explanation for the phenomenon that alternative choices are re-evaluated during the post purchase phase and thus influence the satisfaction rating. Hence the confirmation/disconfirmation model of customer satisfaction has to be enlarged by the expectations about the alternative choices. This causal model of satisfaction is verified by means of an empirical study in the travel industry.

ASSESSING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WHEN ALTERNATIVES ARE CONSIDERED

Marketing—defined as a market-oriented management concept—places the problems and wishes of actual and potential customers at the centre of all considerations. According to this principle, the satisfaction of consumers’ wants is what lays the foundation for market success. The requirements of the buyers must form the basis for a supplier’s marketing activities, since it is the response of the market that in the final analysis determines a firm’s success or failure (Urban, Hauser 1993).

Following this line of argument, the challenge facing any company is thus to achieve the highest possible level of customer satisfaction. The significance of the satisfaction rating is that it can serve as an indicator of future sales. Empirical studies have proved that customers who are satisfied with a purchased product will buy the same product again, and often also practise word-of-mouth advertising—a form considered to be particularly credible. The costs of doing business with a buyer with whom a relationship has already been built up are moreover significantly lower than those entailed by canvassing a new customer (Fornell 1992, Anderson, Fornell 1994). Furthermore, a study by Anderson (1996) reveals that sensitivity towards price rises declines the more satisfied the customer is (Krishnamurthi, Raj 1991).

In view of the considerable relevance of customer satisfaction for the success of a company, it comes as no surprise to find that a large number of marketing studies are devoted to measuring customers’ ratings of the fitness (quality) of corporate performance. The scope of these analyses ranges from simple mean-value calculations and variance analyses to complex causal models based on the notion that customer satisfaction must always be interpreted as a multidimensional phenomenon, linked upstream and downstream to hypothetical constructs, such as the perceived quality of a performance and customer retention (Anderson, Fornell, Lehmann 1994, Johnson 1998).

The following problem is encountered by practically all studies, regardless of the approach adopted for measuring customer satisfaction ratings: contrary to the findings of both behavioural-science and decision-making theory, many market researchers assume that the customer satisfaction rating depends solely on the quality of the commodity or service that is actually consumed (Fornell, Johnson, Anderson, Cha, Everitt Bryant 1996). The individual’s conception of the fitness of alternative products for their intended purpose merely plays a subordinate role in analyses of the satisfaction ratings accorded to products that have actually been purchased and consumed. On the other hand, we know from empirical studies that expectations regarding the fitness of alternatives are most definitely capable of influencing consumers’ judgements of purchased products. Taylor (1997, p. 230) has a very succinct description for this state of affairs: “...specifically we posit that the expectations about the unchosen alternatives affect satisfaction with one’s choice ...”. Two examples serve to illustrate this idea (Gilovich, Medvec 1995):

- A car owner is requested to rate his satisfaction with regard to the quality of a recently purchased vehicle (e.g. Mercedes C Class). Although the automobile in question is unrestrictedly operational, the buyer considers the unpurchased alternative (e.g. BMW 3 Series) to have significant advantages. When formulating his satisfaction rating, he will therefore also take account of this rival car which he did not purchase, but which he nevertheless finds attractive. It thus appears an almost impossible task for the car manufacturer concerned to satisfy the customer completely, despite offering an impressive range of products and services.
- An individual decides to spend his annual holiday at a particular location (e.g. Majorca). Before reaching his final decision, he also considered another destination (e.g. Crete) as an equivalent alternative in every respect. When he actually arrives in Majorca, the quality of the accommodation leaves something to be desired, though all the other services come up to his expectations without reservation. After his return, the holiday-maker sends an extremely forthright letter of complaint to the travel operator and is annoyed with himself for not having chosen Crete as his holiday destination instead.

In the first example, the expectations concerning the unpurchased car exert a considerable influence on the satisfaction rating given to the purchased car. The buyer’s—possibly highly exaggerated—conceptions with regard to the fitness of the other option for its intended purpose evidently play a central role. There are consequently grounds for supposing that satisfaction with the consumed product declines the higher the expectations placed in the alternative. The second example describes a defective service, which moves the holiday-maker to issue a protest and to enter into a dispute on the basis of what he subjectively feels to be a wrong decision. In the eyes of this consumer the perceived shortcoming in the performance appears to enhance the presumed fitness of the unchosen option. We can thus reasonably assume that the expectations regarding the alternative exert an especially great influence on the satisfaction rating accorded to the purchased product in the event that this product exhibits a performance deficit (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, Berry 1990, Herrmann, Huber, Gustafsson 1997).

In the following we shall attempt to discuss the implications for marketing policy that result from this empirical phenomenon. In

A Regret Theory Approach to Assessing Customer Satisfaction When Alternatives are Considered

Andreas Herrmann, University of Mainz, Germany
Frank Huber, University of Mainz, Germany
Christine Braunstein, University of Mainz, Germany
Finally, the implications of the study findings for marketing policy are then verified by means of an empirical study, whereby our rating when alternatives are considered. The formulated hypotheses derived for describing the formation of a customer satisfaction rating when alternatives are considered. The formulated hypotheses are then verified by means of an empirical study, whereby our attention is concentrated above all on the relevance of alternative products to the fitness rating given to the consumed product. Finally, the implications of the study findings for marketing policy and for research into purchasing patterns are discussed.

**AN APPROACH FOR ASSESSING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WHEN ALTERNATIVES ARE CONSIDERED**

Socio-psychological theories provide an explanation, among other things, for the formation of judgements about experiences with consumed products on the basis of various cognitive processes. Interest is focused on what a person actually experiences when purchasing and consuming a product. The cognitive dissonance theory, which is concerned with evaluating product consumption events, provides particularly helpful clues. In his cognitive dissonance theory, Festinger (1957) postulates the existence of cognitive tensions that develop as a result of striving to achieve harmony and consistency. A system founded on individual psychological forfeits its stability because doubt is cast on the relationships that exist between certain system elements as a result of contradictory information or unfulfilled expectations. Immediately following the purchase or consumption act, the alternative choice that was originally considered is re-evaluated to the detriment of the rejected products. If these rejected products also exhibit important merits, cognitive tensions will be produced in the consumer. They are expressed in the individual’s misgiving that it might have been better to plump for one of the alternatives instead. This is especially true if the decision entailed a substantial amount of effort, in other words if it had a certain uniqueness about it. In addition, cognitive tensions are particularly common following the purchase of a very expensive or difficult-to-obtain product. Empirical studies have moreover shown that the likelihood of cognitive dissonances increases the greater the number of alternatives, the greater the attractiveness of the rejected options and the greater the similarity between the alternative commodities (Peter, Olson 1990). Since tensions of this kind occur at various stages in the purchase and consumption process, the approach developed by Festinger represents a universal theory for describing, explaining and predicting cognitive dissonances.

This work concentrates, however, on one specific anomaly in the formation of customer satisfaction ratings when alternatives are considered during the post-purchase phase. The “regret” theory, an approach derived from general utility expectation theory, is a suitable instrument for examining this phenomenon (Bell 1982, Loomes, Sugden 1982). Compared with the cognitive dissonance theory, the regret approach enables the phenomenon in question to be comprehended more thoroughly and simplifies the process of deriving recommendations for action (Loomes/Sugden 1987a).

The basic idea of the regret approach, which was developed by Bell and by Loomes/Sugden independently of one another, is described by Loomes (1988, p. 464) as follows: “The psychological intuition behind regret theory is that if an individual chooses A (and therefore rejects B) and state joccurs, the overall level of satisfaction he experiences will depend not simply upon x Aj, but also upon how x Aj compares with x Bj. If what he gets is worse than what he might have had, it is suggested that the satisfaction associated with x Aj will be reduced by a decrement of utility due to regret ...”. By this principle, an individual compares the consequences associated with the various options before choosing a particular alternative (Loomes, Sugden 1987b, Harless 1992). According to the postulate of the utility expectation theory, he chooses the product he anticipates will bring him the greatest utility. After he has experienced the product, this person then evaluates the consequences that have resulted from its purchase and consumption. In order to arrive at this judgement, he undertakes a comparison of his actual experience and the consequences that, in his view, would have arisen from purchasing and consuming the alternative instead. If his experience with the actually purchased commodity surpasses the presumed consequences of consuming the alternative, the individual will be satisfied with his decision. If, on the other hand, he believes that the consequences he has actually experienced are inferior to those that would have resulted from purchasing and consuming the rejected options, he will regret his decision (Bell 1983). In this case, the feeling will set in that to have chosen one of the other alternatives would probably have been a better option.

This approach is taken as a basis in the following for explaining the formation of a satisfaction rating when alternatives are considered. Before we can attempt to analyse the formation of the satisfaction rating in detail, however, with particular emphasis on the consideration of alternatives, we must expound the concept of satisfaction a little further: according to Anderson (1994, p. 20), a satisfaction rating can be described as a decision regarding the fitness of a chosen product for its intended purpose. He postulates that “... consumer satisfaction is generally construed to be a postconsumption evaluation dependent on perceived quality or value, expectations, and confirmation/disconfirmation—the degree (if any) of discrepancy between actual and expected quality ...”. It thus follows that (dis)satisfaction is the result of a complex information-processing process, which essentially consists of a desired/actual comparison of a consumer’s perception of a product or service (actual) and his expectations with regard to its fitness for its intended purpose (desired). The congruence or divergence yielded by this comparison between the perceived product quality and the anticipated quality is expressed as (dis)confirmation (Anderson, Sullivan 1993). Since this construct is directly linked to the target variable, confirmation of these expectations results in satisfaction, while their disconfirmation leads to dissatisfaction (Oliver, DeSarbo 1988).

Whether or not an individual considers his expectations to have been confirmed by a purchase—and thus whether or not he is satisfied with the performance of the supplier—is dependent above all on perceived quality (Johnson, Gustafsson 1997, Zeithaml 1988). Quality perception is directly linked to the purchase and consumption experience, and can be characterised as a consumer’s global judgement regarding the fitness of a product for its proper purpose. The person concerned evaluates each of the attributes of the purchased product he considers to be relevant in relation to their intended application, and then combines the partial ratings in accordance with a defined rule to form an overall quality judgement. The buyer’s expectations represent a specific quality standard he hopes to find in a particular commodity. He uses them as a yardstick for assessing the fitness (quality) of the perceived performance. The level of expectation is determined firstly by previous consumption experiences, in other words by past encounters with the product in question. Secondly—and this is especially true if the product is being purchased and consumed for the first time—the consumer derives his conception of the product’s quality from the price of the available alternatives, as well as from various other kinds of advance information.
If we accept this view, satisfaction can be interpreted as the result of a comparative process, in which the “desired” component serves as a measure for evaluating perceptions of a given situation. In addition, there are grounds for presuming the existence of an asymmetrical relationship between (dis)confirmation and (dis)satisfaction with a particular performance (Simonson 1992). This means that, in the event of his expectations being disconfirmed, a customer’s dissatisfaction is considerably greater than his satisfaction should the anticipated product quality be confirmed to exactly the hoped-for degree.

This generally accepted customer satisfaction concept can be extended with the aid of the regret theory. The central idea of this modified approach is that satisfaction with a product or service is dependent not only on its fitness for its intended purpose, but also on the anticipated quality of the rejected alternative. Consequently, an individual will be satisfied with a consumed product, providing its perceived quality corresponds to the expected quality and his experience with it surpasses the consequences he presumes would have arisen had he purchased and consumed the rejected option (Ritov, Baron 1995). If, on the other hand, the person concerned considers his experience with the consumed commodity to be inferior to the consequences he associates with purchasing and consuming the alternative, he will end up dissatisfied regardless of his judgement about the fitness of the purchased and consumed product (Imman, Dayer, Jia 1997). This applies equally if the product proves to be fully functional and coincides with his preconceptions. The first hypothesis can thus be formulated as follows:

- The higher the expectations placed in the alternative, the lower the level of satisfaction with the consumed product, assuming the product quality to be identical.

A glance at the example described earlier is sufficient to illustrate this hypothesis. To recapitulate, the buyer of the Mercedes C Class believes that the unpurchased alternative (the BMW 3 Series) has significant advantages. When formulating his satisfaction rating, he therefore also takes account of the BMW car he did not purchase, but which in his estimation is extremely attractive. If this alternative did not exist, the customer would base his rating solely on the fitness of the Mercedes for its intended purpose and proclaim his satisfaction with this vehicle.

In addition, Ritov and Baron (1995) postulate the existence of an asymmetry in the formation of customer satisfaction ratings when alternatives are considered. It is their view that presumed superior or inferior consequences of rejected options do not influence satisfaction to the same extent as actual experience with the consumed product. If a person’s experience with a consumed product matches his expectations of it, the consequences that are presumed to arise from purchasing and consuming the alternative are unlikely to play a central role in the formation of his satisfaction rating. On the other hand, the expectations regarding the fitness of the rejected option for its intended purpose will be crucial to the formation of a judgement if the buyer’s conceptions of the actually purchased and consumed product are not fulfilled. This brings us to the second hypothesis:

- If the expectations placed in the consumed product are (not) confirmed, the expectations with regard to the alternatives will have a moderately strong (very strong) influence on satisfaction.

The second of our two examples illustrates this hypothesis effectively. It centres around an individual who chooses Majorca as his holiday destination and rejects the other option (Crete). Since it emerges during the course of his holiday that the quality of the accommodation does not come up to his expectations, this customer regrets his wrong decision and proclaims the excellence of Crete as a travel destination. If he had not been so disappointed with the quality of the accommodation in Majorca, the holiday-maker would probably not have been annoyed about his choice of destination, nor would he have stressed the benefits of Crete in this way.

**EMPIRICAL STUDY**

The hypotheses deduced above on the basis of the regret theory concerning the formation of a satisfaction rating when alternatives are considered must now be verified by means of an empirical analysis. The central aim of the study conducted for this purpose in the travel industry was to determine the effect of the presumed attractiveness of a rejected alternative on satisfaction with the actual holiday destination. According to the findings of behavioural science, whereby the correlation between the two alternative choices can only be determined by studying them in relation to other relevant variables, a role is also played by expectations regarding the chosen travel destination, previous experience with this resort and the confirmation/disconfirmation of these expectations.

The work carried out by Anderson (1994) gives us grounds for supposing that the expectations placed in a travel destination have a negative influence on their confirmation. The higher a consumer’s expectations about the individual dimensions of a product or service, the more difficult it is for the supplier to meet them. Previous experience with the chosen holiday resort, on the other hand, has a positive effect on the confirmation of expectations. The fitter the individual dimensions of the consumed product or service, the more likely the customer is to consider his expectations fulfilled. According to the confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm discussed above, the confirmation of expectations about the chosen travel destination has a positive effect on satisfaction with this resort. The more closely the offered product or service corresponds to the holiday-maker’s expectations, the better will be his satisfaction rating. Finally, the regret theory asserts the existence of a negative correlation between expectations about the alternative travel destination and satisfaction with the resort that is actually chosen (Larrick, Boles 1995). The higher the expectations placed in the individual dimensions of the chosen offer, the lower will be the level of satisfaction with the product or service that is actually consumed.

Empirical studies have shown that the multitude of variants of the attribute levels render it extremely difficult to operationalise and measure these constructs. As far as the object of our investigation is concerned, the aim was to determine which feature dimensions provide the basis for the formation of the satisfaction rating. The preliminary study which was conducted for this purpose revealed that the expectations placed both in the chosen holiday destination and in the alternative refer above all to the accommodation, the catering and the surrounding programme of activities. When modelling the hypothetical ‘experience’ construct, it seemed reasonable to use the same indicators (i.e. accommodation, catering and programme of activities). The ‘satisfaction’ construct was operationalised by means of two indicators—global satisfaction and plans to visit the same resort again. The latent ‘confirmation of expectations’ variable, on the other hand, was defined identically to its indicator.

The data was collected by a German travel operator in collaboration with a firm of marketing consultants. A total of 408 customers in the Munich area were interviewed between July and September 1996, both before and after their holiday. All the respondents had booked a package trip to a tourist island in southern
Europe. Directly prior to their departure, the interviewees were asked to formulate their expectations concerning the chosen travel destination and the alternative resort. ‘Accommodation’, ‘catering’ and ‘programme of activities’ were used as the indicators, each on a scale from 1 to 8. Directly following their return from holiday, the respondents then had to provide information about their experience with the chosen travel destination, the extent to which their expectations had been confirmed and their satisfaction. The same indicators were used again for this part of the survey, once more on a scale from 1 to 8.

The causal model of satisfaction with the chosen travel destination takes account of the explanatory variables ‘expectations about the chosen travel destination’, ‘expectations about the alternative travel destination’, ‘experience with the chosen travel destination’ and ‘confirmation of expectations about the chosen travel destination’. The relationships that exist between these dimensions can only be analysed using a method which allows account to be taken of such hypothetical constructs in the form of latent variables (Bagozzi 1995, Bagozzi, Baumgartner 1995). This requirement is met by linear structural equation models such as LISREL and EQS (Bollen 1989, Bentler 1993), which in addition allow us to verify an entire system of hypotheses based on theoretical and objective/logical observations. Such methods also have the advantage that they enable measurement errors to be modelled explicitly and do not presuppose any mutual independence of the explanatory variables (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, Black 1995).

Version 8 of the LISREL software enables the parameters to be estimated with the aid of the Maximum Likelihood method. This method is held to be particularly effective whenever (as in our case) only a small sample is available and there is no indication of any values with a normal frequency distribution (Fornell, Tellis, Zinkhan 1982, Bagozzi, Phillips 1991). Beside the Goodness of Fit-Index and the Adjusted Goodness of Fit-Index (Kaufman, Dant 1992), with a value of 0.96 and 0.92 respectively, the following fit measures are considered: The Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (Steiger 1990) of 0.067 was determined for our study, what Browne and Cudeck (1993) and Jöreskog and Sörbom (1993) consider as a fairly good model. Some reference works also recommend the Normed Fit Index (NFI) (Bentler, Bonett 1980). Since our study yielded a value of 0.95, we can claim a satisfactory approximation (Bollen 1989). In addition to the overall model, the approach was also verified with regard to the reliability of its indicators and the validity of its convergence. In the case of the first of these detailed criteria, all the values exceeded the level of 0.4 suggested by market researchers. The calculation of the convergence validity yielded results higher than the value of 0.5 considered to be adequate for each individual construct.

Figure 1 shows the results of the parameter estimate. The greatest influence on satisfaction with the chosen travel destination is exerted by the confirmation of expectations about this resort (0.48), whereby experience with the actual destination in turn has the greatest effect on the confirmation of expectations (0.47). In the opposite direction, however, the expectations placed in the chosen holiday resort also influence the consumption experience (-0.20), a correlation which has already been backed up by numerous empirical studies. Furthermore, the expectations regarding the chosen resort have a negative effect on their confirmation (-0.35). It is moreover striking to note that the expectations about the alternative travel destination exert both a direct and an indirect influence on satisfaction with the chosen resort. ‘Direct’ means that an increase of one unit in the expectations placed in the alternative leads to a decrease of 0.14 units in satisfaction, assuming that all other factors remain unchanged. The fact that the expectations regarding the chosen option also have an effect on the expectations about the alternative destination, and consequently an indirect influence on satisfaction, has however proved to be significant (0.01; -2.39). An increase of one unit in the expectations placed in the alternative travel destination leads to a rise of 0.16 units in the expectations regarding the chosen resort, assuming that all other factors remain unchanged. This positive correlation expresses a facet of individual behaviour that has also been revealed by other empirical studies: after deciding in favour of a particular commodity, people adhere to their conviction of having chosen the best of all possible options, at least until they come to use or consume it. If expectations about the rejected alternative are increased as a result of new information, the expectations regarding the chosen commodity will also rise. It is not until the commodity has been used or consumed that the individual begins to believe he would have been better off choosing the other product instead. As one can see, there is a relationship between these two constructs, nevertheless based on computations of the discriminant validity the constructs discriminate very well. So, as one could think, the total effect we measured is not an artifact.

The direct and indirect effects together make up the total influencing effect exerted by expectations about the alternative on satisfaction with the chosen travel destination. In our case the direct effect amounts to -0.14, while the indirect effect is -0.03 (-0.16 • (-0.35) • 0.48 + 0.16 • (-0.20) • 0.47 • 0.48). The total effect is thus -0.17 (=-0.14 + (-0.03)). Hypothesis 1, which postulates a negative correlation between the expectations placed in the alternative and satisfaction with the actual travel destination, is evidently confirmed.

The most obvious method of analysing hypothesis 2, which asserts that the intensity with which expectations about the alternative influence satisfaction with the chosen travel destination is dependent on the extent to which the performance is considered to have been accomplished, is to make use of the data collected for the survey. The respondents were subdivided into two groups based on the degree to which they claimed their expectations about the chosen travel destination had been fulfilled. The first group comprised all those who stated a level between 1 and 4 for this indicator. This group of 134 persons is characterised by the fact that their expectations regarding the holiday resort were on the whole not satisfied. The second group is made up of all the respondents who specified a level between 5 and 8 for the same indicator. The expectations of these 274 interviewees concerning their travel destination were basically fulfilled.

The extent to which the asymmetry that is presumed in the formation of satisfaction ratings when alternatives are considered actually exists can be established by means of a group-specific analysis. Once again, the LISREL approach was used for both studies to estimate the relationships between the relevant variables. Although the number of cases per study was considerably lower (134 respondents in group 1 and 274 in group 2), the values obtained for the various fitness indices are satisfactory. The stipulated threshold values were exceeded in both cases for all the examined quality yardsticks. We can therefore assume that the two models fit the real situation accurately.

The following results were obtained: in the case of group 1, in other words those holiday-makers whose expectations were not confirmed, the total effect of expectations about the alternative travel destination on satisfaction with the chosen resort was -0.26. There is a conspicuously sharp increase in the direct effect from -0.14 (in the overall model) to -0.21. The indirect effect rose only slightly from -0.03 (in the overall model) to -0.05. The total effect for group 2, comprising those respondents whose expectations were confirmed, was a mere -0.10. The significant drop in the direct effect from -0.14 (in the overall model) to -0.08 is noticeable here. The indirect effect was only slightly lower, namely -0.02 instead of -0.03 (in the overall model). Hypothesis 2, which claims that if
FIGURE 1
Results of the Parameters Estimate
expectations about the consumed product are (not) confirmed, the expectations regarding the alternative will exert a moderately strong (very strong) influence on satisfaction, is thus correct. The asymmetry that is presumed in the formation of customer satisfaction ratings when alternatives are considered is confirmed.

**IMPLICATIONS**

The central aim of this work was to derive an approach for analysing the formation of satisfaction ratings when alternatives are considered. An empirical study conducted in the hotel business served to verify the hypotheses formulated for this phenomenon on the basis of theoretical observations. The outcome was as follows: the higher the expectations about the unpurchased alternative, the lower the level of satisfaction with the product that is actually consumed. If, moreover, the expectations placed in the chosen product are (not) confirmed, expectations about the alternative will exert a moderately strong (very strong) influence on satisfaction.

A more detailed examination of the formation of satisfaction ratings would be of little significance for marketing managers were it not for the fact that the majority of them view the information gathered from their customers as an important starting point for specifying marketing activities. Account is taken of satisfaction ratings, for instance, when agreements on targets are fixed within the framework of employment contracts, when the variable components of payment systems are defined and when whole divisions of a company are controlled according to market-oriented principles. A major role is also played by customer satisfaction ratings in the concrete design of marketing mixes (Hauser, Simester, Wernerfeldt 1994).

It is on the basis of such data, for example, that companies decide whether or not to extend their set of services, develop new products or reposition existing products. The far-reaching implications of customer feedback of the kind described here explain why a careful analysis of the processes involved in the formation of satisfaction ratings is indispensable. The task of market researchers is to identify the influence of respondents’ expectations about an alternative on their satisfaction with the actually purchased commodity. This is essential if recommendations for action that are meaningful for marketing practice are to be derived from the information gathered about satisfaction. The following measures are also worthy of consideration.

To begin with, a supplier can lessen the regret effect by mentioning the shortcomings and problems associated with the purchased commodity, for instance. An empirical study conducted in the hotel business, for example, has been conducted in the hotel business, determined and the make-up of the evoked set could be of characteristic attributes of these types, a segment-specific explanation of their evaluation behaviour can be attempted.

**LITERATURE**


The Evaluation of Consumers’ Product Assortments

Erica van Herpen, Tilburg University, The Netherlands
Rik Pieters, Tilburg University, The Netherlands

SUMMARY

Consumers’ product assortments are assortments of substitute products, such as c.d.’s, shoes or hats, that are owned by consumers themselves. Consumers can evaluate these assortments of products, and this study examines assortment evaluation by introducing assortment properties. Besides item evaluation, which has been used in previous research, size and variety evaluations can impact on assortment evaluation. Size of subgroups based on important attributes appears to be important as well. The properties do not directly affect evaluations, but are compared with individual ideal points.

INTRODUCTION

Consumers own various assortments of products, i.e. sets of items that satisfy a similar desire. Examples of such product assortments are sets of c.d.’s, books, trousers, shirts, or earrings. Products in an assortment have the same usage goal, but are imperfect substitutes of each other (Walsh 1995). In other words, they are distinct alternatives from the same product category. Interest in this area stems from an expected effect that products owned by a consumer have on his/her subsequent buying decisions, a relation that was already proposed by Alderson (1965). Green, Wind and Jain (1972) also argue that: “...The purchase of many products is conditioned, to some extent, by ... what products she [the purchaser] currently has in inventory....”

An assortment is a specific type of product set. A set is any grouping of products or items, and an assortment is a product set in which the items come from the same product category. Although consumers’ product assortments are claimed to be important for understanding consumer behavior, they have rarely been studied. There are some related but quite different areas of study, such as stockpiling behavior. Both stocks and assortments are sets of products from the same product category that are owned by a consumer. However, while stocks consist of items that have not yet been used, and which are perfect substitutes (e.g. stocks of sugar or paperclips), assortments consist of heterogeneous products, which have the same overall usage goal but different specific applications and which are used on and off. Assortments can exist for both durables and nondurables (e.g. assortments of soft drinks or biscuits), and although this study will focus on durable product assortments, it can be easily extended to nondurable assortments.

For assortments to have an effect on subsequent buying behavior, they need to be evaluated by their owners. The objective of this study is to develop a conceptual framework of the evaluation process of consumers’ product assortments, and to provide a first test of it.

Evaluation of Consumers’ Product Assortments

Consumers actively manage their assortments by supplementing, replacing, or removing products. To make these types of decisions, they need to evaluate the content and structure of the assortments. A negative assortment evaluation could, for instance, stimulate intentions to buy in the category. This raises the question of what assortment evaluations are based on.

Identifying Assortment Properties. Previous literature on set evaluation, primarily in the context of product bundling, considered the integration of product evaluations (e.g. Gaeth, Levin, Chakraborty & Levin 1990; Yadav 1994). Set evaluation here is derived from a (weighted) average of the item evaluations. So if a set contains items that are liked better, the total set will be liked better.

In research on product bundling, subjects have been typically presented with a set of fixed size, so effects of set size could not be examined. Yet, for consumers’ assortments, differences between the number of products in each set are very important as they can influence overall set evaluations: more products may be better than less. This means that both the individual items and the size of the assortment might influence consumer evaluations of assortments.

Besides items and size, other properties of the assortment may also be influential. A set may not be valued highest when it contains duplicates of the most preferred item, but consumers are willing to trade in items for lesser preferred ones as this produces a more varied set. To clarify the influence of attributes and variety on set evaluation, an overview of a hypothetical assortment is presented in Table 1. The assortment, say for instance shirts, contains the items and their attributes and usage situations. The attributes vary from the concrete to the abstract (Johnson, Lehmann, Fornell & Horne 1992). Abstract attributes, such as fashionability or quality, need to be inferred from concrete attribute information, while concrete, perceptual, attributes such as size, are directly associated with the product (Bettman & Sujan 1987).

When considering the content and structure of an assortment, consumers could focus on items or on attributes. If consumers focus on items, mean item evaluations will influence assortment evaluations. A focus on attributes introduces other assortment properties, such as the size of product subgroups with certain attributes (e.g. number of small products), or for certain usage situations. Besides these subgroup evaluations, variety in the assortment can be important as well. Variety is related to the degree of similarity, which can exist at multiple levels: concrete or abstract attribute overlap, or usage. High concrete attribute overlap indicates that the products ‘look alike’, while high abstract attribute overlap indicates that the products have the same benefits. Usage related aspects of products do not necessarily match the physical properties, or product attributes (Lefkoff-Hagius & Mason 1993).

Several assortment properties have now been identified whose evaluation could influence overall assortment evaluation: mean item evaluation, assortment size, attribute and usage situation evaluations, and variety. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Overall assortment evaluation is influenced by:
(a) mean item evaluation
(b) assortment size evaluation
(c) evaluation of the number of items with specific attributes
(d) evaluation of the number of items for usage situations
(e) assortment variety evaluation

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1We are thankful to Hoogenbosch Retail Group, E.I.M. and NIPO for their help in the data collection and for many stimulating discussions.
The relation between property evaluation and assortment evaluation. After having introduced assortment properties, their relation with assortment evaluation will now be discussed. In general, evaluations are not made in absolute terms, but by comparison to some standard or norm (Kahneman & Miller 1986). Assortment evaluations are assumed to be based on evaluations of the assortment properties, which result from a comparison between content and structure properties and norms for these properties. A conceptual framework of the evaluation process is presented in Figure 1. The role of norms in this framework is comparable to their role in the disconfirmation paradigm regarding consumer satisfaction. Experiences are compared with norms, and the resulting (dis)confirmation leads to satisfaction (Cadotte, Woodruff & Jenkins 1987).

In the satisfaction literature, the relation is assumed to be linear and positive, as negative disconfirmation leads to dissatisfaction, while positive disconfirmation leads to satisfaction. A similar relation can also be expected for item evaluations. If consumers like the items in an assortment (high item evaluation), the evaluation of the total assortment is likely to be high as well. For the other assortment properties consumers are likely to have ideal points for property levels as more is not always better. In this case deviations in both directions result in less satisfaction. First, consider the size of an assortment. When assortment size is lower than optimal, items fall short of the needs with respect to (expected) usage situations. On the other hand, when assortment size is high, space restrictions, budget considerations, and the possibility of fashion changes become important (Naddor 1961). A similar reasoning is applicable to the size of subgroups. This means that the hypothesized relationship in these cases is an inverted U. The same form of the relationship is assumed for variety evaluation. Irrespective of which concept of variety is used, very high variety between items may not be desirable as this means that there are few alternatives in the assortment in case of product breakdown. Very low item variety on the other hand means low differentiation between the items, which in case of attribute satiation is not optimal either.

H2: The relationship between property evaluation and overall assortment evaluation
(a) is positive and linear for mean item evaluation
(b) has the form of an inverted U for assortment size evaluation
(c) has the form of an inverted U for the evaluation of the number of items with specific attributes
(d) has the form of an inverted U for the evaluation of the number of items for usage situations
(e) has the form of an inverted U for assortment variety evaluation

Property evaluation. Property evaluation is assumed to be based on norms and properties. As item evaluations have been discussed in previous literature, we will focus on the other assort-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Item 1</th>
<th>Item 2</th>
<th>…</th>
<th>Item n</th>
<th>Attribute evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concrete attributes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- color</td>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>red</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>black</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- …</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract attributes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- quality</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- …</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usage situations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- at home</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- …</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>Set evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 1**
Conceptual framework of assortment evaluation
ment properties here. Assortment properties can be expected to have a direct positive effect on property evaluations; i.e. if an assortment has more items, people can be expected to evaluate it as having a large number of items. The ideals that consumers have regarding assortment properties may be related to product involvement. Involvement has received considerable interest from consumer behaviorists (Mittal & Lee 1989), and has been shown to influence the number of items that consumers buy (Tigert, Ring & King 1976). We posit that ideal assortment size, and subgroup sizes, is higher for high-involved consumers. In addition, we propose that high-involved consumers have higher ideals regarding variety. They are likely to be more sensitive to the fit of products with diverse usage situations. A consumer with a high norm will evaluate an assortment with a certain property less positively than a consumer with a low norm, and therefore a negative effect of involvement is hypothesized.

H3: Property evaluation is influenced by the property (positively) and involvement (negatively) for:
(a) assortment size evaluation
(b) evaluation of the number of items with specific attributes
(c) evaluation of the number of items for usage situations
(d) assortment variety evaluation

Figure 1 introduced a conceptual model of assortment evaluation, based on assortment properties. Although previous research generally used an integration of item evaluations, several other assortment properties were also identified. Size, subgroups based on attributes and usage situations, and variety can influence assortment evaluations as well. With an exception of mean item evaluations, ideal points are used for assortment property evaluations. After having introduced a conceptual model of consumers’ product assortment evaluation, we offer an empirical exploration and first test of the hypotheses.

METHOD
A product category needs to be chosen that can provide meaningful data regarding consumers’ assortments. Preferably this should be one in which many individual product differences occur, so that stockpiling of identical items is not likely. Since durable product assortments are expected to be more stable, durables are preferred over nondurables. We chose the product category of footwear. Duplication of products in relatively uncommon in this product category, as the prime characteristic of durables is that they can be used again, assuring product availability over multiple usage situations.

Sample and question timing
The data for the study were collected by a subsample of a computerized consumer panel (NIPO), that is representative of the Dutch population. Data collection has taken place over five consecutive weekends. As part of the study, subjects were asked to make photographs of their shoes. In the weekend of June 1 1996 (week number 2), panel members were asked for their willingness to photograph their shoes, to which 20.1% respond positively. Of these, 160 panel members were asked to photograph their shoes and to complete a computerized questionnaire. After excluding non-response (25), non-useable photos (29), and persons who bought shoes in the data collection period (25), the final sample size is 81. Table 2 provides an overview of the data collection period. As not all subjects have answered each question (either due to absence, or a “don’t know” answer), the final numbers of subjects are provided in the table.

Advantages of letting subjects take photos of their shoes are that researchers can judge concrete attributes from these photos, which will lessen subjects’ burden. In addition, the image that the photo represents remains detailed, insuring complete notation (Collier 1967). A small pretest among 30 different consumers was used to assure the ability of subjects to make clear and interpretable photos. Subjects used their own camera and film, for which they received the equivalence of US $15 as payment. They were instructed to photograph their shoes, up to a maximum of the 11 most frequently used shoes, and make one photo of the remaining shoes if they had more. They were asked not to include shoes that they wore only for sports, or shoes that they have not worn during the past year.

Table 2 provides an overview of the data collection period. As not all subjects have answered each question (either due to absence, or a “don’t know” answer), the final numbers of subjects are provided in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Number of subjects</th>
<th>Type of information acquired</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>Involvement (3 items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>≥74</td>
<td>Evaluations of assortment properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Evaluative judgment: assortment satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>Subjects are asked to take photographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Importances regarding attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Involvement (1 item)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>81</td>
<td>Content of assortment regarding attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 and on</td>
<td></td>
<td>Photographs received</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measures
Subjects viewed questions and numbered answer categories on their computer screen. They typed in the number of their response, at which time the next question appeared on the screen.

Assortment evaluation. Overall evaluative judgment of the assortment was asked by the question “To what degree are you overall satisfied with the shoes that you own?”. Answers were given on a five-point scale ranging from “totally not satisfied” to “very satisfied”.

Assortment properties. Subjects were asked to report the total size of their shoe assortment. Subjects indicated which shoes they used in five important usage situations. Variety of the items in the assortment is judged from the photos by use of four judges. Judges
directly coded the degree of similarity between the items in the assortment on a 5-point scale. Each assortment was coded by two judges, and correlation between these judges was .65 (significant at 1%). Item similarity was also measured by means of similarity calculations based on comparisons of item attributes. The judges coded concrete attributes with an average interjudge reliability of 0.88. Alternatively, similarity was measured by the overlap between abstract attributes or usage situations, both of which were provided by the subjects themselves. A score of zero or one is allocated to each attribute depending on whether the two items are the same on this attribute; the scores are subsequently averaged to give the similarity coefficient between two items (Gower 1971; Everitt 1993, p.43). By averaging similarity coefficients for every possible combination of two items from an assortment, overall similarity in the assortment can be measured. This measure can be reformulated so that the only information needed is the number of items with a particular attribute level. In an assortment, if $m$ items have a specific attribute $k$ this equals $m \cdot (m-1)/2$ item pairs which share the attribute. By summing over all attributes, and dividing by the total number of item combinations and the total number of attributes, assortment level measures of similarity can be obtained. The resulting measure will equal 1 when all attributes are common, and 0 when all attributes are distinct.

$$SIM = \frac{\sum_{k} \sum_{l} [m_{kl} - (m_{kl} - 1)]}{K \cdot n \cdot (n - 1)}$$

$m_{kl} = \text{number of items with attribute level } l \text{ for attribute } k$

$K = \text{total number of attributes included}$

$n = \text{total assortment size}$

Hoch, Bradlow and Wansink (1998) propose a different, but related measure for variety. Their measure is based on dissimilarities between pairs of items. They introduce, among others, the Hamming distance, which is perfectly negatively correlated with the $SIM$ measure, after adjusting for the number of item pairs present ($=n(n-1)/2$).

**Assortment property evaluation.** Item evaluations were constructed by a composite measure consisting of the sum of attribute evaluation multiplied by its importance. This was done for three abstract attributes: quality, comfort and fashionability. By averaging the item evaluations, the mean item evaluation of the assortment was obtained. Attribute evaluations were measured by having subjects sort the numbered shoe photos into three piles, representing low, medium and high levels of the attribute, for instance low quality, neither low nor high quality, and high quality. Subjects were asked to type in the numbers of the photos in each of the piles. Attribute importance was acquired by letting subjects choose between pairs of the abstract attributes and price. A prime advantage of this method is that it reduces halo effects, in which all aspects are indicated as being important (Green, Carmone & Smith 1989). As an example, subjects would be asked to choose between “(1) My shoes have to be of good quality, even if this means that they are not completely in fashion” and “(2) It is important for me that my shoes are in fashion, even if the quality is a little less”. The four attributes that were used for the paired comparisons are assumed to be located on one latent dimension that is the same for each person. Individual subjects have their own ideal points, and the scale is folded in this point to determine the attribute importance by their distance to this ideal point.

An evaluation measure for assortment size was included by the question: “When you give a close look to the shoes you own, then the number of shoes you own is ...”. Answers were provided on a five-point scale, featuring: (1) too high, (2) high, but not too high, (3) exactly enough, (4) low, but not too low, (5) too low. A “no response” option was also included. In a similar fashion, and with identical answer categories, questions were asked related to the evaluation of the number of items with high levels for the attributes and the evaluation of the number of items for important usage situations, for instance “When you give a close look to the shoes you own, then the number of high quality shoes you own is...”. Regarding assortment variety, the question was formulated as “When you give a close look to the shoes you own, then the number of different kind of shoes that you own is...”.

**Involvement.** Product involvement was assessed on a 4 item scale with response alternatives: (1) totally disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither disagree nor agree, (4) agree, and (5) totally agree. Four statements were used for this construct, an example being “I am very involved with shoes”. Items are similar to the ones used by Mittal and Lee (1989). Cronbach’s alpha equals .79.

**Analysis method**

Regression analysis will be used to test the hypotheses. Several of the independent variables involve evaluations of subgroups of the assortment, which will partly overlap. Also, the hypothesized U-curved effects lead to the inclusion of squared terms in the regression model. Therefore, multicollinearity between explanatory variables is likely to occur, which may cause unreliable regression estimates. Therefore, we will not focus on the regression estimates, but on alternative nested models for testing hypotheses (Dougherty 1992).

**RESULTS**

A general overview with respect to assortment properties is provided in Table 3. The composite measure of item evaluation requires the calculation of attribute importance by determining an underlying unidimensional scale. To accomplish this we perform unfolding using the program UNFOLD (van Blokland-Vogelesang 1990). Three subjects provided intransitive choices, leaving a total of 71 subjects. UNFOLD examines all possible unidimensional orderings and determines the best scale as the one with the minimum number of inversions from individuals’ rankings. The scale that was selected has the highest number of perfect fitted individual ranges (54 out of 71), and a $\chi^2$ of 0.16 ($df=2, p=0.923$), which is an almost perfect fit. The final scale is given in Figure 2, with the four attributes, and six ideal points which are presented by the number of subjects between brackets. For instance, the four subjects with the ideal point located most to the left, find price the most important, followed by comfort, quality, and finally fashionability. The distances between ideal points and attributes need to be transformed into relative attribute importance. Large distances represent low importance, and therefore we apply: $(TOT-A)/(2\cdot TOT)$ where $TOT$=total distance from ideal point to the three attributes, and $A$=distance ideal point-attribute.

2 Coded attributes are: shoe type, primary color, secondary color, primary material, secondary material, shoe fastening, stitching, appearance, shoe height, openness of shoe, prints, accessories, heel height and type, sole height, and shoe nose.

3 Item evaluations can also be constructed without taking attribute importance into account, by averaging attribute evaluations. The resulting average item evaluation of the assortment has a correlation of .887 with the measure including attribute importance, and leads to similar conclusions regarding the evaluation model.
Hypothesis testing

Our hypotheses were tested by stepwise introduction of variables into the model. Table 4 presents the relevant models, and their regression results. The first model introduces mean item evaluation into the regression model. This is the basic model, in which assortments are evaluated higher if they consist of higher evaluated items. The regression coefficient for mean item evaluation is indeed positive, consistent with hypothesis 2a, and significant at \( p = .06 \).

Assortment size evaluation is first added, and it significantly improves the model, which is in support of the hypothesis 1b (models 1 versus 2 in Table 4). Comparing models in which the squared term is present and absent (models 2 versus 3) shows a significant curvilinear effect for size evaluation. Figure 3 indicates that an inverted U shape between the two variables can be found, as was hypothesized (2b).

As indicated in Table 4 by comparing models 1, 4 and 5, adding abstract attribute evaluations and squared terms of these significantly adds to the basic model with only mean item evaluation, confirming hypothesis 1c. Non-linear effects are found, and for quality and comfort this is an inverted U effect, as was hypothesized. For fashionability no inverted U curve could be found, as no respondents answered ‘high’ or ‘too high’ to this question. Assortment size evaluations no longer add to the model once attribute evaluations are introduced. This means that attribute evaluations and size evaluations offer a different explanation of the same variance component in overall assortment evaluations. This may be partly due to question wording, as the subjects were asked to evaluate the number of items with specific attributes. In further extension models, size evaluations are no longer incorporated. Evaluations of the number of items for specific usage situations and their squared terms are added to the model, and provide additional explanatory power (models 7 through 9). The proposed inverted U curve of hypothesis 2d is not present.

Table 4 shows that variety evaluations add to the model, consistent with hypothesis 1e, also after mean item and attribute evaluations are included. Comparison of models 7 and 8 shows a curvilinear effect of variety evaluations at 10% significance. Figure 4 reveals the hypothesized inverted U relation between variety evaluations and assortment evaluations.

Model 12 is the final regression model of assortment evaluation, and figures 3 and 4 are based on the estimates of this model.

Property evaluation. Property evaluation is hypothesized to be based on the property level and involvement in hypothesis 3. With respect to total assortment size, the number of shoes indeed has a significant positive effect on assortment size evaluation, but involvement does not have a significant effect (total regression model: \( F_{2/77} = 7.1; p\text{-value} = .00 \)). For the evaluation of the number of items with attributes, only the model for quality is significant (\( F_{2/ \text{df}} \))

---

**TABLE 3**
Overview of shoe assortment properties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.e.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assortment evaluation</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assortment size</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of comfortable shoes</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of high quality shoes</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of fashionable shoes</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete attribute overlap</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract attribute overlap</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usage situation overlap</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Assortment evaluation is measured on a 5-point scale (range 1-5), with higher numbers indicating a more positive evaluation. Assortment size and size of subgroups can range between 0 and 11, the maximum number of shoes that are included. The overlap measures range between 0 and 1.

**FIGURE 2**
Unidimensional scale for attribute importances

(price) (comfort) (quality) (fashionability)

(4) (24) (28) (8) (4) (3) ideal points

Concrete attribute overlap 0.4 0.1
Abstract attribute overlap 0.5 0.2
Usage situation overlap 0.1 0.1
TABLE 4  
Impact of property evaluations on assortment evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nr</th>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Adj. $R^2$</th>
<th>$F$-value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$p$-value</th>
<th>models</th>
<th>$F$-change</th>
<th>$p$-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>MIE</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1/68</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>MIE, ESIZE</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2/67</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>2–1</td>
<td>4.7 .03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>MIE, ESIZE, ESIZE?</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3/66</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>3–2</td>
<td>7.9 .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>MIE, EATTR</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4/60</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>4–1</td>
<td>4.7 .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>MIE, EATTR, EATTR$^2$</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>7/57</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>5–4</td>
<td>3.3 .03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>MIE, EATTR, EATTR$^2$, ESIZE, ESIZE$^2$</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>9/55</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>6–5</td>
<td>1.7 .19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6–3</td>
<td>2.5 .04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>MIE, EUSE</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5/54</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>7–1</td>
<td>3.9 .01</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>MIE, EUSE, EUSE$^2$</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>9/50</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>8–7</td>
<td>0.4 .84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>MIE, EUSE, EATTR, EATTR$^2$</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>11/48</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>9–7</td>
<td>2.6 .03</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9–5</td>
<td>2.9 .03</td>
<td></td>
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<td>MIE, EVAR</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2/62</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>10–1</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>MIE, EVAR, EVAR$^2$</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>3/61</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>11–10</td>
<td>3.9 .05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>MIE, EVAR, EVAR$^2$, EATTR, EATTR$^2$, EUSE</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>13/46</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>12–11</td>
<td>2.6 .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12–9</td>
<td>3.4 .04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MIE  = Mean item evaluation (average of item evaluations; composed measure)  
ESIZE = Evaluation of assortment size (by owner, 5-point scale)  
EATTR = Evaluation of the number of items with abstract attributes (by owner, 5-point scale); this block includes comfort, quality and fashionability  
EUSE  = Evaluation of the number of items that can be used in specific situations (by owner, 5-point scale); this block includes variables related to four usage situations  
EVAR  = Evaluation of assortment variety (by owner, 5-point scale)

FIGURE 3  
Assortment size evaluation effects

![Assortment size evaluation effects](image_url)
due to a positive effect of involvement. None of the models for the evaluations of items for important usage situations are significant. Variety evaluation can be based on item similarities with respect to concrete and abstract attributes, and usage situations. Correlations between these SIM measures are not significantly larger than 0, indicating that they measure different aspects. Coded similarity based on the photos has a significant correlation of .69 with concrete attribute overlap, indicating that important attributes were included, and that the overlap measures are valid. A regression model including the three SIM measures and involvement as explanatory variables for variety evaluation was not significant ($F_{4/72} = 0.7; p\text{-value}=.57$).

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Consumers’ product assortments have been introduced as sets of heterogeneous items, which have the same overall usage goal but different specific applications. Assortment evaluation is assumed to be based on property evaluations, which entails more than just an integration of item evaluations. The present study provides an initial empirical exploration of assortment evaluation.

The five assortment properties of (1) mean item, (2) size, (3) attributes, (4) variety, and (5) usage situation were shown to be related to assortment evaluations, consistent with our first hypothesis. The addition of attribute evaluations to the model eliminated the need for assortment size evaluations. Therefore, size evaluations split into attributes (resulting in evaluations of the number of items with an attribute) outperformed overall size evaluations. The regression models have shown that item evaluations, evaluation of subgroup sizes, and variety evaluations all add to the explanation of assortment evaluations.

The form of the relationship was hypothesized as positive linear for mean item evaluation, and inverted U for the other assortment properties. The positive relation between mean item evaluation and assortment evaluation has indeed been found, as well as inverted U curves for assortment size evaluations, attribute evaluations, and variety evaluations. No inverted U curves were found for the usage situations, which is an unexpected result that we can not easily explain. Possibly, upper boundaries such as space restrictions and budget considerations are not operating in this case.

Property evaluations seem to be made through comparisons with ideal points, but the exact process is not clear from the present study. Size evaluations were shown to be based on the objective size of the assortment, but an attempt to introduce norms by including involvement failed. As several evaluations show a clear inverted U with assortment evaluations, the proposition of ideal points remains.

FIGURE 4
Assortment variety evaluation effects

**Discussion.** Previous research regarding set evaluation has examined the integration of item evaluations (e.g. Yadav, 1994), or attribute satiation (e.g. McAlister, 1979). To date, no studies have focused on the use of different assortment properties in set evaluation. Although the process of integration is left for future research, this study shows that item, subgroup and variety evaluations all are important for assortment evaluation, and have an effect independent of each other. This means that to explain assortment evaluation, item evaluations alone are insufficient, and the structure between the items needs to be taken into consideration. This structure can be measured in the sense of subgroups or variety. Another important point from the study is that property evaluations are based on individual ideal points. Not assortment properties as such determine assortment evaluation, but the perception of these properties by the consumer. The present study shows that individual perceptions are important, and we propose that the process will be influenced by property norms.

**Limitations.** There are several limitations of the study. No direct investigation of the evaluation process was undertaken. Instead, tentative conclusions were reached, based on consumer assortment and property evaluations. Future research could use direct process measures to further investigate the evaluation process. In this study, the assortment evaluation questions focused on the number of items with specific attributes or usage situations.
Subjects were asked to indicate their evaluation of the number of items with high quality, or the number of items that can be used for parties, and so on. Evaluation of assortments needs not focus on number of items alone, however, and more qualitative aspects might also be important for assortment satisfaction.

Future research. The present study offers an exploration of the evaluation process regarding consumers’ product assortments, an area that has received little research attention. Future research should take into consideration the different properties that can influence assortment satisfaction, and the concept of ideal points. Property evaluations that incorporate consumers’ ideal points have been shown to relate to assortment satisfaction. The relationship with objective assortment properties is less clear, due to these individual ideal points. Regression of objective assortment properties, such as counts of items in subgroups, would not have provided with an explanation of assortment satisfaction in the present study.

Future research should also be directed towards the consequences of assortment (dis)satisfaction. How does it influence buying intentions and purchases in the product category? To what extent do people consider their current product assortment when they make new purchases?

Extensions of the present study can also be found in the area of retail assortments. The exact process of property evaluation is likely to differ for retail assortments, but retail assortment evaluations may very likely be based on the same properties as are consumers’ product evaluations. As relatively little is known about retail assortment evaluation processes, this warrants further research in this area. Knowledge of consumers’ assortments can also provide assistance in building a retail assortment strategy. This is not to say that retail assortment need to match consumers’ assortments. For instance, retail assortments could focus on specific parts of consumers’ assortments (e.g. related to a specific usage situation).

A second possible extension is to include consumer interactions. There are many situations in which assortments are not owned by single consumers, but rather by a household as a whole (e.g. videotapes). Individual preferences of different household members will influence the content and structure of such an assortment.

The empirical investigation only provided with a first understanding of what may be happening when people make assortment evaluations. This gives an indication of possible underlying processes, but these processes warrant further investigation. Especially when it comes to property evaluations, the underlying processes are not clear in the present results. Interesting issues are not only the identification of these processes, but also possible individual differences, and potential influential factors.

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Product Conspicuousness and Buying Motives As Determinants of Reference Group Influences

Pamela E. Grimm, Kent State University, U.S.A.
Jagdish Agrawal, California State University, Hayward, U.S.A.
Paul S. Richardson, Loyola University of Chicago, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT

Reference group influence is an important concept in consumer behavior. An empirical examination of reference group influence reveals two underlying dimensions: informational and normative components. Results suggest that the role of product conspicuousness in determining consumers’ susceptibility to reference group influence depends on whether affective or cognitive buying motives are aroused in purchase decisions. Normative social influence is pronounced when affective buying motives are aroused for conspicuous products. Informational social influence, on the other hand, is dominant when buying motives are cognitive in nature regardless of product conspicuousness.

OVERVIEW

A reference group is an individual or a group of individuals to whom a person refers for information or the transmission of social norms and values. Several studies in marketing have documented the effect of reference group influence on consumers’ evaluations of products and choice behavior (Bearden and Etzel, 1982; Childers and Rao, 1992; Park and Lessig, 1977; Stafford, 1966; Venkatesan, 1966). The two approaches used most frequently in advertising are image (also referred to as symbolic or value expressive) and functional or utilitarian appeals (Johar and Sirgy, 1991). Reference groups have been used for both of these approaches. Millions of dollars are spent annually on compensation to celebrities or other admired spokespersons to recommend the purchase of particular brands. The portrayal of products as symbols of membership in esteemed reference groups is also a common advertising strategy (McCracken, 1989).

Reference group influence has been conceptualized as a multidimensional construct (Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel, 1989; Burnkrant and Cousineau, 1975; Deutsch and Gerard, 1955; Kelman, 1961; McGuire, 1985). The two dominant influences recognized in the literature are informational and normative. Informational social influence refers to the tendency to accept information from others as evidence about reality. Normative social influence refers to the tendency to conform with the expectations of others (Deutsch and Gerard, 1955). These two influences operate through different mechanisms. Message content, source credibility, and trustworthiness are the major determinants of informational social influence whereas characteristics of the referent, such as appearance and social status, determine the degree of normative social influence.

Park and Lessig (1977) proposed further decomposition of normative influence into two distinct dimensions: value expressive and utilitarian influences. In addition, these researchers proposed a scale to measure consumers’ susceptibility to different kinds of reference group influence. Park and Lessig’s scale provided the impetus for survey-based research on reference group influences in a marketing context. Researchers have used these scales to examine the effect of product conspicuousness on consumers’ susceptibility to informational, utilitarian, and value expressive reference group influences (Bearden and Etzel, 1982; Childers and Rao, 1992).

The primary contribution of this paper is the examination of consumers’ susceptibility to reference group influences. We also examine the dimensionality of Park and Lessig’s scale of reference group influence which has been used in past studies. In the following section we discuss the dimensions of reference group influence identified in the literature.

DIMENSIONS OF REFERENCE GROUP INFLUENCE

Informational Social Influence

Informational social influence is the tendency to accept information from others as evidence about reality (Deutsch and Gerard, 1955). When making purchase decisions, consumers tend to seek others’ evaluations of different alternatives or derive inferences from the brands reference group members own (Park and Lessig, 1977). Individuals acting as referents may provide new information instrumental to the solution of a problem or add to what the individual already believes (Burnkrant and Cousineau, 1975). The referent’s influence is based on his or her credibility (Kelman, 1961; McGuire, 1969). In an advertising context, perceived experts are often employed for product endorsements.

Normative Social Influence

Normative social influence is defined as an influence to conform to the perceived expectations of another person, group, or one’s self (Deutsch and Gerard, 1955). The study of this social influence dominated the early research on reference group effects in social psychology and marketing. For example, Venkatesan (1986) studied subjects’ choice of a “best suit” and argued that a strong normative effect determined subjects’ evaluations. In a similar study, Stafford (1966) reported group members’ tendencies to conform with the group leader in brand selection.

Some researchers have argued that the nature of normative social influences may differ according to whether compliance with group norms is voluntary or involuntary (Burnkrant and Cousineau, 1975; Park and Lessig, 1977). For example, an individual may involuntarily comply with group norms because of the group’s power to administer punishment or withhold rewards. Park and Lessig call this type of influence utilitarian. In this case, the individual is concerned with the social effect of behavior that can be monitored by reference group members. Utilitarian influence is used in advertising by showing how the usage of particular products/brands protects consumers from embarrassment or rejection by reference group members in social settings.

On the other hand, voluntary compliance may stem from an individual’s desire to enhance his or her image or self concept by identifying with the norms or practices of an esteemed group (McGuire, 1969; Park and Lessig, 1977; Park and Mittal, 1985). This influence is called value expressive by Park and Lessig. One way to attain this goal is to psychologically associate or identify with a referent by adopting the referent’s opinions and/or behavior (Kelman, 1961). Psychological association with respected referents enhances self esteem and self concept by providing a model on which to base one’s own behavior (Burnkrant and Cousineau, 1975;
Determinants of Reference Group Influence

Despite the frequent use of reference group influences in advertising, it is unclear under what conditions marketers should attempt to utilize one type of influence instead of another. In this section we identify some determinants of reference group influences.

Product Conspicuousness

Bourne (1957) proposed that susceptibility to reference group influence in product and brand choice depends on product conspicuousness. At the product level, conspicuousness refers to the extent to which a product “stands out” or is noticeable by consumers. At the brand level, conspicuousness refers to the ease with which people can identify a specific brand of a product that another is using. Goods that can be easily identified are designated public goods, whereas products whose brand names are less easily identified are termed private goods (Bourne, 1957).

Park and Lessig (1977) argue that informational social influence is analogous to Kelman’s (1961) concept of internalization. Kelman contends that this kind of influence operates regardless of the degree to which the referent is able to observe or monitor behavior. Kelman’s position is supported by Cohen and Golden (1972). These researchers found no significant difference in evaluations of a “new” coffee between high and low visibility conditions when information regarding others’ evaluations was held constant. Thus, some evidence suggests that informational social influence operates independent of product conspicuousness.

Normative influence, however, is expected to be greater under conditions of high rather than low product visibility. Some consumer behavior studies show that product conspicuousness is positively related to value expressiveness (Bearden and Etzel, 1982; Sirgy, Johar and Wood, 1986). Johar and Sirgy (1991) describe the theoretical underpinning of these findings in the following way: public products can be associated with characteristics of users to a greater extent than private products. Thus, consensual beliefs about the stereotypical user can be more readily formed. Those seeking self enhancement or expression refer to the stereotypical user in their search for self defining relationships. Therefore, both theory and empirical evidence seem to suggest that value expressive influence will be greater for public rather than for private products.

It logically follows from the preceding discussion that product conspicuousness induces greater susceptibility to normative rather than informational social influences in brand choice. Although the relative importance of informational versus normative influence has not been tested, theory indicates the dominance of normative over informational influence for public products (Johar and Sirgy, 1991; Kelman, 1961).

Affective Versus Cognitive Buying Motives

Researchers have identified a number of different motives that may underlie purchase behaviors. A fundamental dichotomy used in the classification of motives is that of cognitive versus affective motives (Katz, 1960; McGuire, 1974). Cognitive motives describe the motivation behind the “economic man” who is guided by issues such as quality, price, or the functional performance of products. Affective buying motives are those associated with the need for self expression, social belonging, or ego gratification (McGuire, 1974; Vaughn, 1980).

The extent to which purchase decisions are accompanied by affective or cognitive buying motives may partly explain consumers’ susceptibility to reference group influences. Cognitively motivated purchases entail information search to learn about products that are superior in terms of attributes such as price, quality, and value (Ratchford, 1987). For such products, informational social influence is likely to dominate normative social influence since referents are mediators of facts relating to product attributes. Affectively motivated purchases are characterized by the desire to satisfy social belonging, ego gratification, or self expression needs. For such products, normative influences, whether they be utilitarian or value expressive in nature, are likely to dominate informational influences because of the underlying affective motives associated with product choice. Based upon this discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Informational social influence in purchase decisions is greater for cognitive buying motives than for affective buying motives.

H1: Susceptibility to informational social influence is not significantly influenced by product conspicuousness.

H2: Normative social influence in purchase decisions is more pronounced when the product under consideration is conspicuous and buying motives are affective in nature.

H3: When buying motives are affective in nature, informational social influence is greater than normative social influence in purchase decisions regardless of product conspicuousness.

H3: When buying motives are affective in nature and the product under consideration is conspicuous, normative social influence is greater than informational social influence in purchase decisions.

No hypotheses are developed regarding the following situations:

1. Relative dominance of informational or normative influence for cognitive-inconspicuous products; and

Method

Measurement of Variables

Product conspicuousness is measured using Bearden and Etzel’s (1982) single-item scale in which products are classified according to whether they are public (conspicuous) or private (inconspicuous). No scales that directly measure buying motives are available. However, cognitive and affective buying motives result in differences in information processing. Information processing for cognitively motivated purchases focuses on the functional aspects of the product and economic appeals. Information processing for affectively motivated purchases focuses on image, symbols, and expression of personality (Johar and Sirgy, 1991; Park and Mittal, 1985; Snyder and Debeno, 1985).
Cognitive and affective modes of information processing provide the foundation for the FCB (Foote, Cone and Belding) Grid. The FCB Grid is an advertising planning tool first proposed by Vaughn (1980) and further developed by Ratchford (1987). The FCB Grid synthesizes a number of different theories on how advertising works. The three dimensions of the grid are (1) involvement, (2) “thinking” or cognitively based processing of advertising, and (3) “feeling” or affectively based processing of advertising.

The items developed by Ratchford (1987) to measure affective and cognitive processing of advertising are used as surrogate measures of buying motives. In Ratchford’s scale, two items measure cognitive (think) responses while three items measure affective (feel) responses. These items are used to arrive at a single overall measure of think-feel motives \[\rho = \frac{(\text{Think Mean} - \text{Feel Mean})}{2} + 8\] whereby a value approaching one indicates that cognitive motives dominate and a value approaching seven indicates that affective motives dominate. Ratchford’s scale was chosen because of its extensive development and testing, and its published application to a wide range of product categories.

Informational, utilitarian, and value expressive dimensions of reference group influence were measured using the items developed by Park and Lessig (1977). Similar to the approach taken by Bearden and Etzel (1982), items were slightly modified and responses were measured on a seven point highly agree–highly disagree scale. In each item, the word “individual” was replaced with the word “consumer” in order to relate the statements to a purchase context.

**Data**

In order to develop a list of products appropriate for inclusion in the study, a pre-test sample of twenty undergraduate students rated twelve products on perceived conspicuousness and the degree to which rational or affective buying motives are typically associated with product choice. The initial list of products was generated on the basis of the past literature and the degree to which the products might generate student interest. Based on subjects’ ratings of the products on the think-feel and conspicuousness dimensions in the pretest, four products were selected for the study. These products are: 35mm camera (Think-Public), calculators (Think-Private), running shoes (Feel-Public), and quilts (Feel-Private).

Questionnaires were distributed to 245 students enrolled in either undergraduate or graduate marketing classes of a large university in the northeast. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter asking the student to complete and return the survey to his or her instructor for extra credit points. Of the returned surveys, four were discarded because of missing values. The final sample consisted of 178 usable observations. The mean scores derived from the responses of our final sample confirm our initial hypothesis that four products were selected for the study. The mean scores on the think-feel scale (TF) and Public-Private scale (PP) are: Running Shoes (Think-Public product) 4.9 TF and 1.9 PP; 35 MM Camera (Think-Public product) 3.1 TF and 2.5 PP; Calculator (Think-Private product) 2.7 TF and 4.2 PP; Quilt (Feel-Private Product) 5.1 TF and 5.0 PP. Note that for the Think-Feel scale, a mean approaching “1” (“7”) indicates that thinking (feeling) motives dominate and that for the Public-Private scale, a mean approaching 6 indicates a private product.

**RESULTS**

Prior to conducting tests of hypotheses, the dimensionality of Park and Lessig’s scale of reference group influence was examined. A confirmatory factor analysis was performed on 13 of the 14 items proposed by Park and Lessig (1977). These 13 items are the ones most recently adopted in Bearden and Etzel’s study. The item dropped in both Bearden and Etzel (1982) and the present study was “The brand of (product name) which consumers select is influenced by observing a seal of approval by an independent testing agency (such as Good Housekeeping or Consumer Reports Ratings)”. This item was deleted because it was judged to be only marginally relevant to interpersonal influence.

Initially, a three-factor solution was specified for each of the four products. Examination of the reliability of each item, following the procedure outlined by Fornell and Larcker (1981), showed that the reliability of one item was poor ranging from 0.04 to 0.16 across the products (the item was “Consumers’ decision to purchase a particular brand of (product name) is influenced by the preferences of family members”). Therefore, a second factor analysis was performed without this item.

For the three-factor solution, the \(\chi^2\) statistic was 534.9 (df=51, \(p<0.001\)), and the adjusted goodness-of-fit index was 0.83. The estimates of reliabilities (\(\rho\)) of each dimension were .85, .74, and .91 for the informational, utilitarian, and value expressive dimensions, respectively. The variance extracted by each dimension (\(\rho_{VE}\)) was .60, .38, and .67, respectively. The correlation between the utilitarian and value expressive dimensions showed a much stronger association (\(r=.98\)) than that found between the utilitarian and informational dimensions (\(r=.42\)) and between the value expressive and informational dimensions (\(r=.38\)). Since the correlation between the utilitarian and value expressive dimensions plus twice its standard error includes 1.0, it is clear that there is little discriminant validity between these two components (Burnkrant and Page, 1982).

Since the utilitarian and value expressive components of normative influence were found to be highly correlated, another confirmatory factor analysis was performed hypothesizing a two-factor correlated model (informational and normative). In this model, the four items related to information seeking were expected to load on the informational dimension, and the three utilitarian and five value expressive items were expected to load on the normative dimension. This analysis revealed very low reliability (\(\rho=.30\)) for one of the items related to utilitarian influence (the item was, “The desire to satisfy the expectations which others have of him/her has an impact on consumers’ brand choice of (product name)”). Consequently, this item was deleted and the data were reanalyzed. The \(\chi^2\) for the two-factor correlated model was 322.8 (df=43, \(p<.001\)) with an adjusted goodness-of-fit index of .88. A one-factor model, hypothesizing an 11-item one dimensional construct was also tested. Its \(\chi^2\) value was 1269.2 (df=44, \(p<.001\)) with a goodness-of-fit index of .57. These statistics clearly indicate that the two-factor model shows a better fit to the data than the one-factor model.

Table 1 presents the factor loadings and t-values of the 11 items. All loadings are significant (\(p<.01\)). The reliabilities of the four-item informational and seven-item normative dimensions are .78 and .84, respectively. The variance extracted by each of these dimensions (60 for informational and .65 for normative) is greater than their shared variance \((\rho^2=.14\) reliability (\(\rho\)) and Variance extracted \((\rho_{VE})\) are computed using equations 10 and 11 of Fornell and Larcker (1981; 45–46). This test of the convergent validity of the two-factor model shows that although the two dimensions are correlated \((r=.37)\), they capture distinct components of the construct. These results suggest that Park and Lessig’s measures are able to capture informational and normative social influence. This result is empirically consistent with that reported by Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel (1989).

Based on the results of this analysis, two composite measures were developed. One was a measure of informational social influence based on the average of the four items that loaded on the first dimension of reference group influence. The second measure...
assessed normative social influence based on the average of the seven items that loaded on the second dimension. The average values of these two scales are 4.7 and 3.7 and show a correlation of .37.

The mean responses for informational and normative social influences for each of the four products are presented in Table 2. The pattern of means is generally as predicted. Informational social influence is greater for the “think” (cognitively motivated) products than for the “feel” (affectively motivated) products. Normative social influence is greater for the “public-feel” product than any other product type. Statistical tests of the hypotheses are presented below.

**H1: Informational Social Influence**

In order to examine the effect of buying motive and product conspicuousness on informational social influence, a repeated measure MANOVA was performed by using a 2 (Think-Feel) X 2 (Public-Private) factorial design. Results are presented in Table 3. As expected, no significant interaction between buying motive (Think-Feel) and product conspicuousness (Public-Private) emerged from the analysis (F=2.4, p<.12). Also as expected, the effect of Think-Feel is significant (F=404.2, p<.001). However, contrary to expectations, a significant Private-Public effect was also found (F=188.3, p<.001).

In order to test H1, simple effect tests were conducted (Keppel, 1992). Table 4 indicates that informational social influence is significantly greater for Think Products ($\bar{x}=5.4$) than for Feel products ($\bar{x}=3.9$; t=16.1, p<.01). These results support H1a. That is, cognitively motivated purchases induce greater reliance on informational social influence than do affectively motivated purchases.

However, contrary to H1b, informational social influence is significantly greater for public products ($\bar{x}=5.2$) than for private products ($\bar{x}=4.1$; t=10.8, p<.01). It is unclear why product conspicuousness should induce greater consumer susceptibility to this influence. One explanation may be that the four items used to assess informational influence do not indicate what type of information people seek. It is possible that information search includes eliciting opinions regarding the popularity of different products or brands. In this case, product conspicuousness may affect informa-

### TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Likelihood Parameter Estimates of Confirmatory Factor Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informational Social Influence:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Consumers seek information about various brands of (product) from an association of professional or independent group of experts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Consumers seek information from those who work with (product) as a profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Consumers seek brand related knowledge and experience from friends, relatives, or work associates who have reliable information about brands of (product).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Consumers’ observation of what brands of (product) experts use influence their choice of what band of (product) to buy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability (p); 0.783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Normative Social Influence:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Consumers’ decisions to purchase a particular brand of (product) are influenced by the preferences of people with whom he/she has social interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The desire to satisfy the expectations which others have of him/her has an impact on consumers’ brand choices of (product).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Consumers feel that the purchase or use of a particular brand of (product) will enhance the image which others have of them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Consumers feel that those who purchase or use a particular brand of (product) possess the characteristics which he/she would like to have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Consumers sometimes feel that it would be nice to be like the type of person advertisements show using a particular brand of (product).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Consumers feel that people who purchase a particular brand of (product) are admired or respected by others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Consumers feel that the purchase of a particular brand of (product) helps them show others what he/she is, or would like to be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability (p); 0.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
1. Product name was inserted in (product).
2. Response measured using seven-point scale from strongly agree (7) to strongly disagree (1).
## TABLE 2
Reference Group Influence on Purchase Decisions  Mean Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Mode of Information Processing</th>
<th>Thinking</th>
<th></th>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th></th>
<th>Overall Mean</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Informational influence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Normative influence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Informational influence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Thinking</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Table entries indicate mean response to composite scales of informational (4 items) and normative (7 items) influences on a 7-point scale where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree.

## TABLE 3
Results of Manova Analysis (Within Subjects Design)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informational Influence (n=175)</th>
<th>F-Value (df=1)</th>
<th>Normative Influence (n=177)</th>
<th>F-Value (df=1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Think-Feel</td>
<td>404.2 **</td>
<td>Think-Feel</td>
<td>16.9 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conspicuousness</td>
<td>188.3 **</td>
<td>Conspicuousness</td>
<td>284.7 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think-Feel x Conspicuousness</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Think-Feel x Conspicuousness</td>
<td>69.8 **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ** Indicates significant at p<.01

## TABLE 4
Means of Informational and Normative Social Influences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesized Relationship</th>
<th>Observed Relationship</th>
<th>T-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informational Social Influence:</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think &gt; Feel</td>
<td>5.4 &gt; 3.9</td>
<td>16.1 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private = Public</td>
<td>4.1 &lt; 5.2</td>
<td>10.8 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Social Influence:</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel-Public &gt; Think-Private</td>
<td>4.8 &gt; 3.2</td>
<td>-12.5 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel-Public &gt; Think-Private</td>
<td>4.8 &gt; 2.9</td>
<td>-14.6 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel-Public &gt; Think-Public</td>
<td>4.8 &gt; 4.0</td>
<td>-6.8 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think-Private &lt; Think-Public</td>
<td>3.2 &lt; 4.0</td>
<td>-6.1 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think-Private &lt; Think-Private</td>
<td>3.2 &gt; 2.9</td>
<td>2.1 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel-Private &lt; Think-Public</td>
<td>2.9 &lt; 4.0</td>
<td>-8.2 **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a indicates that no hypothesis regarding the relationship is made

** t-values are significant at p<.01.

* t-values are significant at p<.05.
tional reference group influence. However, comparing the magnitude of the Think-Feel versus Public-Private effects, it is apparent that the buying motive treatment accounts for significantly greater variance in the dependent measure (F(404.2/188.3)=2.15, p<.05).

**H2: Normative Social Influence**

To test H2, a second repeated measure MANOVA was conducted to observe buying motive and product conspicuousness effects on normative social influence (see Table 3). As expected, a significant buying motive by product conspicuousness interaction is evident from the analysis (F=69.8, p<.001). It can be observed from the table that whereas the buying motive treatment explains the greatest amount of variance in informational social influence (F=404.2), product conspicuousness explains the greatest amount of variance in normative social influence (F=284.7). Table 4 shows that, as hypothesized, normative social influence is significantly higher for the Feel-Public product (x=4.8) than for products in any other condition including Think-Public (x=4.0).

**H3: Dominance of Informational Versus Normative Social Influence**

In order to test the dominance of informational versus normative social influences, a series of pairwise comparisons were performed (Table 5). Results indicate that for cognitive buying motive, informational social influence is significantly greater than normative social influence for both private (x_{Info}=4.9, x_{Norm}=3.2) and public (x_{Info}=5.9, x_{Norm}=4.0) products. These results provide support for H3a.

Consistent with H3b, normative influence (x=4.8) dominates informational influence (x=4.5) for Feel-Public products (t=2.5, p<.05). It is interesting to note that normative influence (x=2.9) is significantly less than informational influence (x=3.3) for Feel-Private products (t=4.5, p<.01). Results provide strong evidence that normative social influence is pronounced only when affective buying motives are aroused for conspicuous (public) products.

However, our results provide a framework that advertisers may use when considering manipulation of reference group influences in advertising. We argue that the appropriate reference group influence to manipulate depends on buying motives and product conspicuousness. Advertising for products dominated by affective motives and which are publicly consumed may utilize normative social influence. For products in this category, the source attractiveness model of advertising might be an appropriate framework. According to this model, celebrities or spokespersons should be selected on the basis of likeability, popularity, status, or appearance. The importance of affective buying motives suggests that advertisers might show how the advertised brand satisfies self expression, social belonging, or ego gratification needs.

For products dominated by cognitive motives, regardless of whether they are consumed publicly or privately, advertisers might manipulate informational social influence. For these products, the source credibility model may provide an appropriate framework. According to this model, attitude change and persuasion are positively related to the perceived credibility of the source. Credibility is conceptualized as consisting of an expertise or knowledge component and a trustworthiness component. Therefore, referents used in advertising might be selected based on the degree to which they are perceived to be credible and trustworthy or have specialized knowledge concerning product attributes and function.

Based on a lack of theoretical or empirical work, we made no prediction concerning the relative impact of informational versus normative reference group influences for products dominated by affective motives which are consumed privately. However, results show that for products in this category, informational social influence had the greater impact.

**REFERENCES**


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**TABLE 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesized Relationship</th>
<th>Informational</th>
<th>Normative</th>
<th>T-value</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Think-Private:</td>
<td>Informational &gt; Normative</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think-Public:</td>
<td>Informational &gt; Normative</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel-Private:</td>
<td>Informational &gt;a Normative</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel-Public:</td>
<td>Informational &lt; Normative</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a* indicates that no hypothesis regarding the relationship is made  ** * t-values significant at p<.001,  t-values significant at p<.05


Investigating Situational Effects in Wine Consumption: A Means-End Approach
Jean Marie Aurifeille, Universite de la Reunion, Reunion
P.G. Quester, The University of Adelaide, Australia
John Hall, Victoria University, Australia
Larry Lockshin, University of South Australia, Australia

ABSTRACT
This study groups consumer’s means-end chains according to the consumption situation, rather than by consumer characteristics. It relies on a predictive clustering technique, learning vector quantization (LVQ), to form well differentiated clusters which could be used by marketers to position their product for different usage situations. 648 different means-end chains, corresponding to 356 different occasions, were collected from 223 respondents. Using LVQ, an initial 8-cluster solution was found which fit the data well. However, a better predictivity was obtained by increasing the number of clusters to 14. The implications of these results are discussed in the conclusion of this paper along with directions for future research.

INTRODUCTION
Recent use of the means-end chain methodology for predicting brand choice has shown some promise in grouping consumers based on linking their personal values to the desired product attributes (Aurifeille and Valette-Florence 1995; Reynolds and Gutman 1988). An alternative method for clustering markets, situation, was proposed earlier by Dickson (1982), but no empirical evidence was cited. A better understanding and more accurate prediction of behaviour in the marketplace may benefit from both a consumer means-end and situational perspective. Until now, the concept of situation was seldom operationalised, mostly because of its descriptive nature and its potentially unlimited range.

The goals of this paper are two-fold: first to investigate the suitability of means-end data for analysing situations, rather than products; second to assess the grouping of these chains using a new analytical technique, learning vector quantization. The paper first reviews the literature on situation or occasion-based behaviour and means-end analysis. A brief summary of the interview process for the data collected based on wine consumption occasions is provided before the analysis. A novel analytical approach is adopted in this paper, relying on the predictive clustering technique of learning vector quantization (LVQ). The results of this empirical study, along with their implications for both using means-end methods for situational analysis and for the LVQ approach, are presented in conclusion of this paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Situation
Situational influences have a theoretical foundation in Lewin’s field theory (1936) and the modern interactionism conception of human behaviour. These perspectives asserted that human motivations, intentions, and behaviour are a function of the interaction between consumers and situations. According to these theories, each individual views each physical and social setting somewhat differently.

A fairly limited number of researchers have investigated situational factors as a determinant of choice behaviour. Sandell (1968) presented subjects with an inventory of beverages and found that personal differences and differences in situations, considered separately, were poor predictors of product preference. Their interaction, however, provided a better predictor of beverage preference. This same type of interaction between product choice and usage situation was found by Green and Rao (1972), Belk (1974ab), and Srivastava, Shocker, and Day (1978). In a later study, Srivastava (1980) examined the appropriateness of financial services in a particular situation and found it to be relatively stable across situations, thus providing further support for using consumption situations as a basis for segmenting the market. Dubow (1992) compared occasion-based and user-based segmentation for the jug wine market in the US and concluded that the occasion-based segmentation was richer and more relevant for brand positioning and advertising strategy.

Clearly, there is merit in including product characteristics, consumer characteristics and specific situations in a combined analysis. Although little conclusive research has been reported in using consumption situation to group consumers, the above review indicates that adding situation to either product or consumer characteristics may improve the predictive nature of such market clustering techniques.

Values
Values are responsible for the selection and maintenance of the ends or goals toward which individuals strive (Vinson, Scott and Lamont 1977). A value is a centrally held, enduring belief which guides actions and judgements across specific situations and beyond immediate goals to more ultimate end states of existence (Kamakura and Mazzon 1991). Various combinations of values significantly differentiate individuals (Rokeach 1968). Personal values therefore have a major influence on a person’s lifestyle, interests, outlook and consumption priorities and therefore can play an important role in the development of strategies to understand markets (Muller 1991).

Studies using value orientations to enrich the segmentation process have become increasingly popular, (Boote 1981, Holman 1984, Kahle 1986, Muller 1989, 1991, Kamakura and Novak 1992, Blamey and Braithwaite 1997, Thrane 1997, Jago 1998). The most frequently used instrument for measuring values is the Rokeach Value Survey which consists of 18 instrumental values and 18 terminal values (Kamakura and Mazzon 1991). The List of Values (LOV) developed by Kahle (1983) modifies Rokeach’s scale of terminal values into a smaller set of nine primarily person-oriented terminal values more directly related to a person’s daily life roles and situations (Beatty, Homer, and Shekhar 1985, Kamakura and Mazzon 1991) and as such, it has been utilised in a variety of segmentation studies (Kahle 1986, Muller 1989, 1991, Kamakura and Mazzon 1991, Kamakura and Novak 1992, Blamey and Braithwaite 1997, Jago 1998). In order to identify values and value chains, means-end analysis (Gutman 1982, Reynolds and Gutman 1988) provides a methodological approach used for identifying values as well as the attributes, benefits and consequences related to these values.

Means End Chains
The means-end chain is a conceptual model that relates salient values of the consumer with evaluative criteria (attributes) of the product (Howard, 1977; Vinson, Scott, & Lamont, 1977; Reynolds
and Gutman, 1984). The model offers a procedural guide that establishes linkages connecting values important to the consumer to specific attributes of products, through psycho-sociological and functional benefits (called ‘consequences’).

A sequence of in-depth probes traces the network of connections or associations in memory that eventually lead to values. This laddering process is accomplished by asking a “why is that most important to you” question at each level and uses the response as the basis for the next probe. The process continues until both a consequence and a personal value are elicited from the consumer, or the consumer has no further answers to the probes (Reynolds and Perkins 1987).

Gutman’s original model (1982) used situation in the theoretical description as one part of the matrix. Situation was deemed an input to the process of consumer decision-making. However, in various empirical examinations of the model, situation was not included (Reynolds and Gutman 1984; Reynolds and Perkins 1987; Reynolds and Gutman 1988; Gengler and Reynolds 1989). This research proposes to use situation instead of product or brand as the central focus of the means-end analysis.

THE STUDY

As previously noted, no prior reported study has, to the authors’ knowledge, attempted to examine the link between situations and the means-end chains associated with them. Our main objective, therefore, is to look for a relationship between consumption situations on the one hand, and the resulting means-end chain characterising a consumer’s value chain on the other hand. To do this, we propose the use of learning vector quantization (LVQ), a predictive clustering technique that can be applied to whole means-end chains, as opposed to other specific characteristics. Specifically, in order to identify whether particular patterns of means-end chains are associated with particular situations, we seek to test empirically whether the LVQ approach would provide a predictive clustering methodology such that any consumer’s means-end chain could be associated and therefore allocated to a specific consumption situation.

This approach, clustering means-end chains based on consumption situations rather than consumers, is therefore quite distinct from a more traditional segmentation approach that would aim at grouping consumers exhibiting similar means-end chains.

We contend, consistent with Dickson (1982), that the same consumer may well exhibit a different means-end chain when facing a different consumption situation, making clustering the means-end chains more meaningful than clustering consumers.

Data collection method

The product selected for this study is wine. Previous research in occasion-based segmentation has shown that wine is chosen and consumed for different reasons in different situations (Dubow 1992; Lockshin, Macintosh and Spawton, 1997). Wine has a wide variety of attributes and as shown by Dubow (1992), a number of different consequences and values associated with its use. Therefore, the means-end approach adopted for this study used occasion as a factor for each ladder, rather than brand as in previous research. Indeed the seminal article in the means-end chain literature relies on data collected about wine coolers (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988).

A sample of 233 respondents was interviewed using a means-end analysis procedure. The sample was a convenience sample: interviewers used the phone book in a random manner in order to make contacts with respondents and also used personal contacts; some restrictions were placed on the sample. Respondents were required to be over 25 years of age and to have consumed wine which they had purchased in the last three months. Interviewers were asked to follow the means-end procedure for a specific purchase and consumption situation (some respondents discussed the last two occasions). The interviews thus produced 648 ladders for 356 occasions. The interviews were undertaken by trained researchers, the majority of interviews were undertaken by post graduate students in Marketing Research while approximately one third were undertaken by professional market research interviewers. All interviews were recorded and transcribed, all interviews were checked for authenticity and accuracy. As a result of reading the transcripts one of the authors (John Hall), identified the attributes, consequences and values associated with each wine consumption situation. A significant portion of these interviews were reviewed by colleagues to validate and support the process.

The values were coded to reflect the categories of the LOV scale. The 356 individual consumption occasions were also aggregated into 8 specific occasions that summarised and reflected the occasions presented by respondents (Table 1). A realistic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occasion Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intimate Dinner</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating with friends</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating with family</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business related</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBQ/Outdoor/picnic</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party/Celebration</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink by self</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual drink friends</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N=648</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Investigating Situational Effects in Wine Consumption: A Means-End Approach

The List of Values (LOV) was used to measure values in this study. Based largely on the work of Maslow and Rokeach, it uses nine terminal values that are based on the Rokeach Value Survey, namely Fun and enjoyment in life, Being well respected, Warm relationships with others, Self-fulfilment, Security, Self-respect, Sense of belonging, Sense of accomplishment, and Excitement. The items can be interpreted in terms of interest served and motivational domains (Kamakura and Novak 1992). It is important to note that the attributes, consequences and values elicited in this study are reflective of those found in other studies, each of which has been regarded as important by other authors in the field as summarised in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Content</td>
<td>Koewn (1995), Spawton (1991ab)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Gluckman (1990), Sharp (1991), Spawton (1991ab)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consequences</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

representation of age and gender was obtained in the sample and respondents had purchased a reasonable amount of both red and white wines.
RESULTS

The approach adopted in this study involved the use of a biomimetic method of predictive clustering coined ‘learning vector quantization’ (LVQ). According to this method, each object is assigned to the cluster, the center of which resembles most the object’s profile. The center of the cluster is then moved (i.e. its coordinates are changed) to allow it to come closer to the object if they are both connected to the same dependant variable (in this case the occasion). If this is not the case, the discrepancy of the cluster center with the profile of the object is increased. In other words, the clusters are built up incrementally with the addition of each object, around centers that reflect the similarities and differences in each additional profile. This results in differentiated clusters, while at the same time allowing some predictivity: as a new object is presented, its profile (i.e. coordinates) should enable an accurate allocation to a given segment. This approach is described in more detail elsewhere (Aurifeille and Deissenberg, 1998).

Most frequently cited attributes, consequences and values

Respondents were asked what had influenced their selection of a particular wine for a particular occasion. Following the interviews, the attributes were categorised. Table 3 shows these categories and the number of chains on which each attribute occurred. Taste (285), price (221), type (215), and brand (111) were the attributes of wine most frequently listed.

Table 4 lists the consequences identified and the corresponding number of ladders. A number of consequences were frequently suggested as a result of attributes associated with selected wines. Selected attributes were indicators of quality -a consequence appearing in most means-end chains (212). Other frequently cited important consequences included: Socialise (168), Complement Food (135), Impress Others (131), Value for Money (123), and Mood Enhancement (118).

Table 5 lists the values (from the LOV Scale) and corresponding number of ladders. All values except Excitement (6) and Sense of Accomplishment (35) were well represented. Fun and enjoyment in Life (226) was the most represented value on the means-end chains. Other popular values were: Being well respected (148), Warm relationship with others (121), Self fulfilment (119) and Security (109).

LVQ Clustering

A minimum requirement of the LVQ analysis is to define a number of clusters at least equal to the number of categories in the dependant variable, in this case, occasion. Therefore, in order to segment consumers’ means-end chains according to the eight types of occasions identified, the initial LVQ analysis sought an 8-cluster solution (ie. one for each consumption situation). Results of this initial LVQ are shown in Tables 6 and 7.

While the 8-cluster solution provides well differentiated segments, its ability to predict accurately the membership of any object remains modest. Indeed, there are only 199 ladders accurately assigned to the right occasion cluster. Considering that the worst possible score would involve 139 ladders accurately assigned (to a single occasion cluster), it appears that 7 additional clusters were required to assign a small proportion (less than 12%) of the objects.
We therefore undertook to improve the predictivity of the solution by increasing the number of clusters. This led to a 14-cluster solution (larger solutions appeared less predictive) for which 385 ladders remained ill-assigned. In other words, this solution assigned 24% of ladders accurately, a marked improvement over the 8-cluster solution. As a result, however, our 8 original occasions were split in 14 clusters as shown in Table 8.

The corresponding cross-tabulations are shown in Table 9 (eg. 59 ladders corresponding to occasion 2 are assigned to it from three different clusters, namely clusters 2, 3 and 4). It is clear that the 14-

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
& 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & 8 & Total \\
\hline
1 & 14 & 10 & 5 & 4 & 5 & 9 & 3 & 12 & 62 \\
2 & 14 & 44 & 13 & 19 & 12 & 14 & 10 & 13 & 139 \\
3 & 10 & 12 & 12 & 10 & 7 & 15 & 5 & 11 & 82 \\
4 & 4 & 27 & 5 & 27 & 2 & 4 & 2 & 2 & 73 \\
5 & 4 & 9 & 13 & 2 & 11 & 12 & 6 & 8 & 65 \\
6 & 3 & 18 & 7 & 14 & 7 & 36 & 4 & 15 & 104 \\
7 & 1 & 7 & 7 & 0 & 0 & 5 & 37 & 12 & 69 \\
8 & 1 & 3 & 7 & 4 & 2 & 8 & 11 & 18 & 54 \\
\hline
Total & 51 & 130 & 69 & 80 & 46 & 103 & 78 & 91 & 648 \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]
cluster LVQ solution, while more predictive, reveals less homogeneity within each occasion than was achieved with the 8-cluster solution.

Clearly, this 14-cluster solution suggests that 14 occasions would provide a better fit, as well as more interpretable results.

**CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This paper presented a novel approach that connects situation with consumers’ means-end processes. The method of analysis, learning vector quantization, was selected for its ability to optimise the resulting segments in terms of their differentiation and predictivity. It was found that predictivity with the proposed 8-occasion framework was poor and that 14 clusters were necessary to optimise the predictivity of the segmentation. However, interpretability of the 14 cluster solution is less clear.

These results suggest that the original categorisation of occasions into the 8 proposed consumption situations may need further examination. The 14-cluster solution demonstrated that only a few of these eight occasions were well defined, as evidenced by a match with a single cluster. The other occasions are represented by the sum of several clusters, which indicates, at least mathematically, a mixture of occasions in a single cluster. Future research should therefore seek to validate whether the 8 occasions used in this study are in fact multi-dimensional. For example, Eating with Friends (3 clusters) or Eating with Family (2 clusters) may in fact involve other latent but important factors that would influence the means-end chain associated with them.

Wine managers seeking to differentiate their markets based on the eight consumption situations would need to examine the content of these situations in order to uncover other aspects which may determine why certain choices are made, following distinct means-end chains. The strong fit of the eight cluster solution may provide a new means of segmenting wine markets, but the less definable 14 clusters may indicate some inherent problems with predictivity. However for practical purposes, the 8 cluster outcome provides some valuable insights and potential uses for marketing managers.

On a more general level, the paper shows the recurring compromise which must be made between predictivity and differentiation, two desirable outcomes sought when undertaking...
any clustering. Using an innovative data analysis technique enabled the researchers to question some of their assumptions regarding their categorisation of situations, while at the same time confirming the feasibility and the usefulness of clustering means-end chains for the purpose of understanding product choices. Further research, based on correspondence analysis of the occasions and the predictive means-end clusters, should assist in identifying the dimensions underlying the concept of situation. While further refinement is required, some optimism is warranted for a more detailed examination of the value oriented occasion-based clustering procedure.

REFERENCES


Consumer Grocery Search: Dimensions and Segments
Sanjay Putrevu, University of Western Australia
Kenneth R. Lord, Mercer University, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT
This research investigates the dimensions of consumer grocery search and identifies and profiles shopper segments based on distinctive patterns of search behavior. Results from a large random sample of U.S. grocery shoppers reveal the existence of eight distinct search dimensions (coupons, unit prices, number of stores visited, brand comparisons, advertised specials, word of mouth, checking price tags, and published product evaluations) and five segments (low-effort price/brand comparison, high-effort value seeking, search averse, high search, and time-pressed low search). Demographic differences between segments are identified and areas of strategic relevance of the findings are highlighted.

INTRODUCTION
Consumers of most cultures, classes and lifestyles have one experience in common—grocery shopping. An understanding of this form of consumer behavior is vital to retailers who often depend on high volume with thin margins, to producers whose products must grab the attention and arouse the preference of the time-pressed buyer, and to consumers who would seek to optimize their own shopping outcomes.

Information derived from the search process frequently influences consumer grocery-purchase decisions. No model or description of the grocery-decision process would be complete without a consideration of the search that accompanies it. Search and choice are bi-directional and inseparable: decision objectives motivate search and give it direction, and search outcomes provide the basis for applying decision rules.

Most prior research in this area models search as a general construct that can be explained as a function of variables such as benefits, costs, price dispersion, budget, time constraints, knowledge, and shopping enjoyment. While such studies, discussed in the next section, have successfully predicted search levels, no published research to date has fully explored the dimensions of consumer grocery search or examined whether distinctive patterns of search behaviors can form a basis for segmenting shoppers. Consumer search, in the context of grocery shopping, can take a number of forms, such as clipping coupons, checking list and/or unit prices, comparing brands or stores, reading articles or advertised specials, or soliciting advice from friends. Understanding which search patterns characterize distinct shopper segments could help marketers identify the information strategies best designed to assist consumers in their efforts and aid consumers in evaluating and improving the efficacy of their decision processes. Hence, this study seeks to: (1) explore the dimensions of consumer search; and (2) identify and profile shopper segments based on distinctive patterns of search behavior.

PRIOR RESEARCH
Most prior research in the area of consumer information search has focused on durable goods. Studies by Newman and Staelin (1972) and Punj and Staelin (1983) are characteristic of this body of literature; they reported the extent of consumer search when purchasing new cars and how it varies in relation to several exogenous variables. Beatty and Smith (1987) investigated the extent of consumer search for other durable goods (e.g., appliances) and tested its relationship with some individual-difference variables.

Some scholars have expanded this line of research to include consumer search for frequently purchased non-durable goods such as grocery products. Jacoby, Chestnut and Fisher (1978) and Moore and Lehmann (1980) conducted experimental studies that documented the extent and type of consumer search for a single grocery product based on direct observation. Carlson and Gieseke (1983) studied consumer search for groceries using panel data from 1956, denoting search as the number of store visits reported by the respondent. Hoyer (1984) and Dickson and Sawyer (1990) directly observed in-store search behaviors relevant to the full basket of goods purchased. Urbany, Dickson and Kalapurakal (1996) examined search from the perspective of price comparisons between stores. Putrevu and Ratchford (1997) identified and profiled shopper segments based on distinctive patterns of search behavior.

As valuable as an understanding of the amount of search is, it tells only part of the story. Equally important is an understanding of the dimensions of search and distinct groups of consumers who follow identifiable search patterns. To obtain that understanding requires more comprehensive identification and measurement of types of search than were undertaken by most of the above studies, and a different analytical approach than the modeling of search as a single general construct. A few scholars have offered conceptualizations of types of consumer search that, while not offered specifically in the context of grocery shopping, provide some guidance for this study.

Early work relating to new car purchases (Kiel and Layton 1981; Westbrook and Fornell 1979) identified information sources such as retail (store visits), neutral (newspaper or magazine articles), and personal sources (word of mouth). Beatty and Smith (1987) measured four types of search: media, retail, interpersonal, and neutral in the context of appliance purchases. Sambandam and Lord (1995) demonstrated that two of Beatty and Smith’s search types—media and retail search—relate to different stages of the automobile-purchase decision. Schmidt and Spreng (1996) conceptually posited five categories of search: marketer controlled, reseller information, third-party independent organizations, interpersonal sources and direct inspection.

If consumers can gather information from numerous sources, it follows that some segments might favor a particular source while others might be predisposed to alternatives. Claxton, Fry, and Portis (1974) studied consumer search behavior for furniture and appliances and reported the existence of three search segments—non-thorugh (those who do not search much), thorough balanced (those who seek information from multiple sources), and store intense (those who depend primarily on store visits). Similarly, studies relating to new car purchases have found the following search segments—low, moderate, selective and high search (Kiel and Layton 1981; Furse, Punj, and Stewart 1984; Westbrook and Fornell 1979). While consumers in the low-search segment consult few sources and spend minimal time deliberating their purchases,
those in the high-search segment consult most of the sources and undertake a thorough evaluation of the various alternatives. The selective-search segment prefers a subset of the information sources and relies on these to guide decisions.

It is clear from the above literature that distinct consumer search segments exist for durable goods. To date, however, almost no published research has studied whether consumers follow similar strategies for the repeated purchase of non-durable goods. Murthi and Srinivasan (1999) offer preliminary evidence that distinct segments exist in this market, based on their finding of three segments characterized by varying levels of evaluation propensity in the ketchup product category. This research attempts to expand knowledge by studying the search patterns of grocery shoppers across multiple dimensions of search and for the full basket of grocery products.

METHOD

The approach adopted in this study was to develop self-report measures of search through a survey of grocery shoppers. The use of self-reports, while questionable for durable goods where the measurement may occur months after the original purchase (e.g., Punj and Staelin 1983; Srinivasan and Ratchford 1991), is appropriate for grocery shopping. In this market, search and purchase activities are commonly undertaken each week and information regarding these activities should be reasonably accessible in the minds of consumers. In addition, certain aspects of search behavior require self-reporting due to the difficulty of observing them directly in the marketplace (e.g., scanning newspaper/magazine ads and articles, soliciting advice from friends).

As suggested by Churchill (1979), a multi-step process was undertaken to develop valid and reliable measures of search in a supermarket setting. First, depth interviews, lasting between one and two hours, were conducted with fifteen shoppers and two managers to develop a definition of search and to identify the domain of search behaviors needed for a test of that construct’s dimensionality. Based on these interviews, grocery search was defined as “the effort expended gathering information related to the selection and purchase of items in the family grocery basket.”

This exercise yielded nine recurring types of search behavior: the extent to which consumers (1) compare unit prices of products, (2) check price tags on considered and selected items, (3) compare competing brands on the various ingredients, (4) look for in-store promotions, (5) clip and use coupons, (6) look for advertised specials in newspapers and store flyers, (7) make multiple store visits, (8) exchange information with friends through word of mouth, and (9) read published product evaluations in newspapers/magazines. These search behaviors derive from a number of motivations: price savings (unit-price comparisons, price checks, in-store promotions, coupons, advertised specials); gauging product availability (store visits, advertised specials); seeking optimal features, attributes or benefits or updating information in an area of interest (brand comparisons, published product evaluations, word of mouth); and even social rewards (word of mouth). They are not constrained exclusively to the pre-purchase stage, but also reflect behaviors that may occur after or between purchase occasions (e.g., published product evaluations, word of mouth).

Several items were developed for each of the nine search behaviors based on literature search and interviews with shoppers and managers. The items were assessed for face and content validity by several faculty members and graduate students. A convenience sample of fifteen grocery shoppers (different from those interviewed earlier) was shown this list of items. Given the definition of each construct and its measures, they were asked whether each item constituted an appropriate measure of the construct and how easily they could respond to it. Based on this exercise, ten items were changed to enhance clarity and face validity.

A pilot study was then undertaken to assess the reliability of the scales developed as measures of the nine search behaviors. The response scale ranged from “never” (1) to “always” (7). Questionnaires were distributed to a convenience sample of 180 grocery shoppers recruited from a women’s club, a church group, acquaintances of the researchers, and university associates (faculty, staff, and students). Items detracting from overall scale reliability were deleted. Thirty-three items remained with at least three items for each of the nine types of search behavior identified earlier (each possessing adequate reliability—Cronbach α> .80 for eight and approximately .70 for the ninth).

Following the pilot study, data were collected on the search measures and other consumer- and decision-relevant variables from a larger and more representative sample. Given the objective of identifying search segments, three additional constructs—prior planning of grocery purchases, ease of information processing, and time pressure—were included because of the expectation that they would be associated with extreme patterns of search. It was expected that the planning of purchases in advance and finding it easy to process information about grocery products would be associated with multiple search behaviors, and that consumers who undertake their shopping expeditions under high time pressure would engage in minimal search of any type (the latter relationship was predicted by Titus and Everett [1995] and Schmidt and Spreng [1996], and is consistent with Urbany et al.’s [1996] finding with respect to price search). Also included were measures of readership of the local metropolitan newspaper (relevant to exposure to published store flyers and product articles) and several demographic items.

A mail survey addressed to a random sample (stratified on the basis of income) of two thousand households in a two-county metropolitan area in northeastern United States yielded 612 returned questionnaires, for a response rate of 30.6 percent. Of these, 588 were complete in most categories and thus used in the final analysis. The demographic characteristics of the sample were quite representative of the broader population: 76 percent were married; all age and income groups were represented, with 35–44 as the median age category and a median income in the range of U.S. $30,000–$39,999; mean and median number of persons in respondent households was three. A comparison of questionnaires received in the first two weeks after mailing with those received in the last two weeks of the acceptance period showed no significant differences. This finding, together with the demographic similarity between the sample and the larger population, suggests that there was no systematic non-response bias.

RESULTS

Dimensions of Search

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to assess whether the constructs identified earlier comprised empirically distinguishable dimensions of search. An initial maximum-likelihood factor analysis of the 54 non-demographic questionnaire items yielded thirteen factors with eigenvalues greater than one and numerous large cross-loadings between factors. Ten items that had low loadings across all factors were deleted for purposes of further analysis. This left four indicators of the use of unit prices (Cronbach α=.88), three of price tags (α=.80), four of comparing brands (α=.84), one of in-store promotions, seven of coupons (α=.84), four of advertised specials (α=.89), three of shopping at multiple stores (α=.89), three of word-of-mouth advice (α=.82), five of published...
product evaluations (α=.87), four of planning purchases in advance (α=.66), one of ease of processing, and five of time pressure (α=.90).

The factor analysis was run again. Ten common factors emerged with eigenvalues greater than one, accounting for 61.3 percent of the variance among the 44 items. Given the expectation of correlation among the various dimensions of search, an oblique rotation was used (promax with Kaiser normalization). The 44 items and the rotated factor loadings associated with them are shown in Table 1.

The factor loadings reveal that eight of the nine search behaviors identified in the earlier stages of the research represent distinct but correlated dimensions of consumer grocery search. Factor 1 primarily captures shoppers’ use of coupons. Six of the seven measures of coupon usage account for the highest loadings on that factor (.73–.91), with the remaining indicator showing the eighth highest loading (.64). Other measures with high loadings (greater than .50) reflect searching for advertised specials. Checking unit prices is the dominant behavior associated with Factor 2. The four indicators of that construct have loadings (.76–.90) that exceed those of all other variables. Factor 3 relates to time pressure. The five indicators of that construct have loadings whose absolute values fall between .72 and .86, while those of all other variables are below .30. The three indicators of the number of store visits have high loadings on Factor 4 (.81–.99). Only one other measure has a loading greater than .50 (checking newspaper ads), and that indicator loads more strongly on the factor it shares with other measures of checking advertised specials. Brand comparisons clearly explain Factor 5, with the only high loadings on that dimension coming from three indicators of that construct (.73–.91). Factor 6 captures shoppers’ tendency to check for advertised specials, with the four measures of that construct receiving the highest loadings (.72–.91) and coupon usage and planning having subordinate influence. The three items measuring word of mouth are the only ones with high loadings on Factor 7 (.71–.80). The three highest loadings for Factor 8 (.79–.82) fall on the price-checking items, with lesser contributions from advertised-special indicators. Factor 9 derives primarily from the prior planning of grocery purchases (the highest two loadings=.70 and .63), with weaker loadings associated with advertised-special and coupon items. Three published-product evaluation items yielded the only high loadings for Factor 10 (.73–.84).

The factors representing the various dimensions of search are significantly correlated with each other. This is not surprising given that they denote various aspects of the search process. The strongest correlations are between the coupon-usage, advertised-specials, and planned-purchase factors (all correlation coefficients greater than .60). The two price-checking factors (unit and tag prices) are also correlated with one another (r=.52), and the tag-price factor is correlated with use of store flyers (r=.62). All other correlation values are less than .50.

Search Segments

To define shopper segments on the basis of patterns of search, respondents’ factor scores (derived from the factor analysis described above) were submitted to K-means cluster analysis. Five distinct clusters emerged. Their sample sizes and centers (mean factor scores) are depicted in Table 2.

Consumers in Cluster A (30.6 percent of the sample) are more inclined than average to check unit prices. They also engage in a modest amount of in-store brand comparisons. Feeling some degree of time pressure, however, they perform none of the other search behaviors at an above-average level. Some of the more time-consuming behaviors occur in this cluster at levels substantially below the sample average (e.g., multiple store visits, word of mouth, published product evaluations). This cluster is labeled the low-effort price/brand-comparison segment.

Cluster B (17.8 percent of the sample) is highest in comparative shopping across multiple stores and commonly checks advertised specials. Respondents in this cluster are more likely than average to check price tags, use coupons and word of mouth, and plan their grocery purchases in advance. But despite engaging in fairly extensive and varied search behaviors, they are unlikely to engage in non-price brand comparisons or to read published brand evaluations. They represent a high-effort value-seeking segment.

Cluster C, 12.0 percent of the sample, engages in minimal search despite being no more time pressured than average. Members of this cluster are below average on all search dimensions and the lowest of the five clusters in checking unit prices and reading published product evaluations. They can be considered a search-averse segment.

Cluster D is highest in size (31.9 percent of the sample), in its propensity for prior planning of grocery purchases, and in most search activities (coupons, unit prices, brand comparisons, store flyers, word of mouth, price tags, and published brand evaluations). Consumers in this cluster are low in time pressure. They appear to enjoy all forms of search and are labeled the high-search segment.

The final group, Cluster E, is the smallest in the sample (7.8 percent). It is the highest in time pressure and is low in all dimensions of search (lowest planning purchases, visiting multiple stores, checking price tags, and using coupons, store flyers and word of mouth). Consumers in this cluster are a time-pressed low-search segment.

Additional data analysis was conducted to arrive at a demographic profile of the five segments defined above. No significant gender or occupational-status (full-time, part-time, unemployed, retired, etc.) differences were observed between segments. Marital status was significantly associated with cluster membership (χ²=21.24, p<.05). A plurality of singles (42.5 percent) fall within the low-effort, price/brand-comparison segment. The majority of married respondents are divided almost exactly evenly between that segment (30.6 percent) and the high-search cluster. The balance shifts in the direction of the high-search cluster among divorced/separated respondents (35.7 percent versus 26.8 percent in the low-effort price/brand-comparison segment). The high-search segment captures a stronger plurality of widowed respondents (46.9 percent).

Age is also relevant to cluster membership (χ²=32.56, p<.05). Both the low-effort price/brand-comparison and high-search segments claim a higher proportion of respondents in younger than in older age categories. Membership in the low-effort price/brand-comparison segment declines systematically with age (37.5 percent of respondents in the youngest category—under 25, to 15.0 percent of those in the oldest—65 or older). Similarly, the high-search segment has about 13 percent of respondents in each of the two youngest categories and only 5 to 9 percent of those in the four older groups. Other segments do not show systematic age differences.

Educational level is shown to differ significantly between the segments (F=5.84, p<.001). A post-hoc Duncan test (p<.05) reveals that this is driven by a mean educational level in the time-pressed low-search segment (15.38 years) that is higher than that associated with any other cluster (13.39 to 13.93 years).

Household size also varies significantly between clusters (F=2.80, p<.05). Duncan test results show significantly fewer household members in the time-pressed low-search segment (mean 2.65) than in any of the other clusters (3.08 to 3.18).

Finally, there are significant income differences between segments (F=5.79, p<.001). Duncan test results show significantly
### TABLE 1
Rotated Factor Loadings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I collect coupons for grocery products.</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I cut out coupons for grocery products.</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use cents-off coupons for grocery products.</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I receive or clip a coupon, I save it for future use.</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I look for products for which I have a coupon.</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before buying a product, I check to see if I have a coupon for it.</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I pre-sort my coupons before going grocery shopping.</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I check unit prices of products I buy.</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before buying a product, I check the unit price.</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I compare unit prices across brands.</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I compare unit prices across different package sizes.</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have only a limited amount of time in which to finish my grocery shopping.</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am in a hurry when I do my grocery shopping.</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find myself pressed for time when I go grocery shopping.</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I finish my grocery shopping fast because I have other things to do.</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have more than enough time to complete my weekly grocery shopping.</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.72</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get the best buys I shop at 2 or 3 different supermarkets.</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I shop at more than one supermarket.</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I visit only one supermarket to complete my weekly grocery purchases.</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.81</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I check the calories, fat and other nutritional information on packages before deciding to buy a specific brand.</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I compare brands on factors like calories, fat, nutritional value, etc.</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I compare the ingredients of different brands.</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I check the newspaper for advertised specials for grocery products.</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I look for weekly store inserts in newspapers for grocery items.</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I shop for advertised specials in supermarkets.</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before going grocery shopping I check the newspaper for advertisements by various supermarkets.</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I discuss grocery shopping with my friends.</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek out the advice of my friends regarding which supermarkets to buy grocery products.</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends tell me if there is a sale/special at a supermarket.</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before buying a product, I check the price.</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I check the prices of the grocery products that I purchase.</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read price tags of the grocery products that I buy.</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before going to the supermarket, I plan my purchases based on the specials available that week.</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a well organized grocery shopper.</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>-.29</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The products that I buy are on sale/special.</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prepare a shopping list before going grocery shopping.</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read articles in magazines/newspapers about grocery products.</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
higher income in the time-pressured low-search segment (about $50,000) than in any of the other segments. Respondents in Clusters A (low-effort/price-brand comparison) and C (search-averse) had a higher mean income (about $40,000) than those in the high-search segment (about $30,000).

**DISCUSSION**

Using a large, representative sample from a major metropolitan area, this study established the dimensionality of the consumer-grocery-search construct and defined customer segments characterized by varying patterns across search dimensions. Coupons,
unit prices, number of stores visited, brand comparisons, advertised specials, word of mouth, checking price tags, and published product evaluations emerged as distinct search dimensions. This finding offers understanding of the way in which the search types or categories revealed in earlier research for other product categories (e.g., Beatty and Smith 1987; Schmidt and Spring 1996) applies to consumer grocery-shopping behavior. The distribution of the search dimensions in the population was shown to coalesce around five patterns that represent viable market segments: low-effort price/brand comparison, high-effort value seeking, search averse, high search, and time-pressured low search. This result expands upon the three segments identified recently by Murthi and Srinivasan (1999) in the ketchup category. Adding to the value of search-behavior differences as a basis for segmentation is the finding of systematic demographic differences between segments.

By examining the combination of demographic and search characteristics in the different segments, marketers can better understand which of their targeted consumers are likely to search and in what ways, allowing for more efficient educational and promotional efforts. Those interested in helping consumers to optimize their expenditures can study the results for a clearer understanding of the search dimensions that are and are not benefiting those in greatest need (e.g., lower income, elderly, divorced or separated, less educated–population groups who fortunately do not fall disproportionately in the search-averse segment) and use that insight to formulate more effective educational campaigns. And by becoming overtly aware of their own segment membership, consumers can consciously evaluate whether their search practices (or lack thereof) are yielding the desired results in their own consumption behavior.

Additional research is needed to confirm or repudiate the validity of these results in other markets with different cultural values, household profiles, economic conditions and marketing practices. Furthermore, though a strength of this study is its expansion of the search behaviors commonly investigated in the marketing literature, future research could yield more insights by exploring a still more comprehensive array of potential dimensions of consumer grocery search (e.g., the Internet). Efforts at constructing a psychographic profile of search segments would be useful. Finally, a closer look is needed at the search segments reported here, to investigate the motivations behind their search patterns and the extent to which the outcomes match those motivations.

REFERENCES


SESSION OVERVIEW

This special session examines the evaluative formation process from three distinct, yet complimentary perspectives. The key question guiding the session is how variations in context can influence the formation of evaluations and how these differences in formation can have theoretically and strategically meaningful differences in consequences. The first paper, Culture and Compromise: The Influence of Collectivism and Introspection on Consumer Choice, examines this question from a cross-cultural perspective. In short, it examines how and when differences in cultural value systems influence evaluative processes related to choice. The second paper, The Effect of Expecting to Evaluate on Quality Evaluations, examines this question by investigating the influence of the mere knowledge that one will be asked to evaluate on the formation of evaluations. The third paper, Influencing Consideration and Choice: The Role of Evaluative Formation Processes, examines this question by examining how the thoughtfulness underlying the formation of evaluations can have ramifications on consideration and choice. Each of these papers provides an important insight into contextual influences on the evaluative formation process. Together, these papers begin to provide evidence for a theoretically meaningful understanding of when and how contextual factors influence evaluative processes, and consumer behavior.

Culture, Reasons, and Compromise in a Consumer Choice Dilemma: Chinese and American Cultures Bring Different Reasons to Mind
Donnel A. Briley, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong
Michael Morris, Stanford University, U.S.A.
Itamar Simonson, Stanford University, U.S.A.

Past research suggests that when consumers need to give reasons for choices they make, their emphasis shifts from searching for the best option to searching for the option supported by the best reasons. We propose that the search for good reasons, in turn, magnifies cross-cultural differences in product preferences, because cross-cultural differences in evaluations of reasons are often greater than differences in product preferences. We examine this proposition in the context of consumer preferences for compromise options, based on evidence that East-Asian Confucianist heritage and norms are more likely to favor pro-compromise reasons than Western Judeo-Christian heritage and norms. In Study 1, we find that Hong Kong participants compromise more than American participants when required to provide a reason for a consumer choice but not otherwise. By content analyzing participants’ reasons, we confirmed that cultural differences in the frequency of generating particular types of reasons mediated the difference in choices. Studies 2 and 3 replicate the interactive effect of culture and the need to provide reasons in a comparison of North American versus Japanese participants and in a comparison of Euro-American and Asian-American participants, respectively. Study 4 and 5 found that Chinese participants, compared with Americans, evaluate proverbs and the reasons of others more positively when these favor compromise. We discuss the value of conceptualizing cultural influences in terms of dynamic decision strategies rather than as static individual differences.

Influencing Consideration and Choice: The Role of Evaluative Formation Processes
Joseph R. Priester, University of Michigan, U.S.A.
Dhananjay Nayakankuppam, University of Michigan, U.S.A.

That consumers consider and choose prior to purchase is accepted without question (Shocker, Ben-Akiva, Boccara, Nedungadi, 1991). And that attitudes influence this process is not only intuitively appealing, but has received empirical support as well (e.g., Nedungadi, 1990; Posavac, Sanbonmatsu, & Fazio, 1997). In short, those brands which one prefers are more likely to be considered and chosen for purchase. In this paper, we investigate the question of whether the processes by which attitudes are formed moderate the influence of attitudes on consideration and choice. We hypothesized that evaluative formation processes that resulted in strong attitudes (i.e., relatively thoughtful processes) would be more likely to influence consideration and choice than evaluative formation processes that resulted in weak attitudes (relatively nonthoughtful process, see Priester & Fleming, 1997). Importantly, we hypothesized that this differential influence of attitude strength on consideration and choice should emerge even when the attitudes are equivalent in extremity, familiarity, exposure, and memorability (i.e., factors that have been found to influence consideration and choice). Such a finding would represent a theoretically informative boundary condition that could provide insight into how, why, and when attitudes guide choice processes. Equally important, such a finding would provide strategic insight into how to establish brand attitudes that are more likely to result in consumer purchase.

In order to test this hypothesis, we conducted an experiment in which participants were exposed to an advertisement for an unfamiliar product. The advertisement was designed such that it contained both strong arguments in support of the brand, and information that could be used as the basis for relatively nonthoughtful cues.

The Effect of Expecting to Evaluate on Quality and Satisfaction Evaluations
Chezy Ofir, Hebrew University, Israel
Itamar Simonson, Stanford University, U.S.A.

Customers’ evaluations of quality and satisfaction are critical inputs in the development of marketing strategies. Given the increasingly common practice of asking for such evaluations, buyers of products (e.g., cars) and services (e.g., hotels, educational programs/courses) often know in advance that they will be subsequently asked to provide their evaluations. In a series of field studies, we demonstrate that expecting to evaluate leads to more negative quality and satisfaction evaluations. The negative bias of expected evaluations is observed both when actual quality is low and when it is high, and it persists even when buyers are told explicitly to consider both the positive and negative aspects. We examine three possible explanations for this systematic bias, referred to as negativity enhancement, role expectation, and vigilant processing. The findings are most consistent with the negativity enhancement account, indicating that, unless buyers begin the evaluation task with low expectations, they tend to focus during consumption primarily on negative aspects of product/service quality. The paper concludes with a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of this research.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Evaluative Formation Processes: Antecedents, Influences, and Consequences
Joseph R. Priester, University of Michigan, U.S.A.
and heuristics to arrive at an attitude. Prior to exposure to the advertisement, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions designed to manipulate the psychological processes by which the evaluations toward the brand were formed. In the thoughtful attitude formation condition, participants were asked to pay particular attention to the thoughts that came to mind as they looked at and read the advertisement. These instructions were intended to produce thoughtfully elaborated attitudes. In the nonthoughtful attitude formation condition, participants were asked to pay attention to the number of words with one or more syllable that appear in the advertisement. These instructions were intended to produce nonthoughtful, heuristically-based attitudes. After an interval of approximately 30 minutes, participants were asked to choose a product from which the advertised brand was a possible alternative, and to report which alternatives were considered. The results revealed that, as expected, the thoughtfully- and nonthoughtfully-formed attitudes did not differ across condition in terms of extremity, memorability, or ease of memorability. The attitudes did differ, however, in terms of their influence on consideration and choice. Specifically, thoughtfully formed attitudes were more likely to be considered (35% probability of consideration) than nonthoughtfully formed attitudes (5% probability of consideration) and thoughtfully formed attitudes were more likely to be chosen (25% probability) than nonthoughtfully formed attitudes (0% probability).

This study demonstrates the importance of focusing not only upon brand attitude, but also upon the evaluative formation process by which a brand attitude has been established. Such processes can moderate whether a positive attitude will influence subsequent consumer consideration and choice.
SESSION OVERVIEW

This session focuses on how consumers from three Northern European countries construct, maintain, and revise their visions and images of the American West, one of the world’s most popular international tourist destinations, and a region heavily portrayed in film, literature, art, and the mass media. Drawing an analogy with Foucault’s (1980) concept of the gaze, this study focuses on the “tourist gaze” (Urry, 1990a, 1990b), which suggests that there are systematic ways of “constructing and seeing” what we as tourists look at and evaluate when considering and consuming a tourist destination. In terms of sheer numbers and availability of images, the U.S. West is one of the most highly visible regions in the world, and has been for decades (Costa and Bamossy, 1998). This visibility allows European consumers to easily browse images and fantazize about an environment that is represented both as a mixture of the past (the idealized “old West”) and the present (the West’s majestic scenery and attractive cities; MacLaren, Stevens and Brown 1998; Costa and Pavia, 1998). Thus, the marketing and consumption discourse relative to the American West, like that of Hawaii as paradise (Costa 1998), draws upon and sustains select images and marketing practices of the West as a tourism destination.

Using purposive sampling methods in each of three countries—the United Kingdom, The Netherlands, and Denmark—we have matched samples of: (1) young and mobile tourists whose visit(s) to the American West were not determined by the structure of travel agent itineraries (“Free Movers”, aged 20-30); (2) Tourist who have visited the American West in the past 24 months, making use of tour operator packages (men and women, aged 30-65, from middle to upper-middle social classes); and (3) Non-visitors to the American West, who have expressed a desire to visit as part of a holiday in the future (men and women, aged 30-65, from middle to upper-middle social classes). Using native speakers as moderators, separate focus group sessions with each group in each country were conducted in the Spring of 1998. Additionally, personal interviews to follow up on emerging themes from the focus group data were conducted, and collection of images of the American West from European-based media and websites is on-going.

While each presenter focuses on and develops different themes and findings in the analysis of his or her country’s data on the American West, the overall session is able to identify and discuss several themes of similarity and differences. Similarities include the majesty and grandeur of nature, often expressed through media representations; Western hospitality, the vastness of the American West, and the “travel triangle” of Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and San Francisco. Differences relate to the differing notions of “idealized” versus the “real” of the “old and new” West, as expressed by visitors (first hand impressions) and non-visitors (mediated expressions). Interestingly, the analysis of the data from the different countries reveals as much about the cultures of the respondents as it does about the subject of the investigation, the American West. This duality of focus and presentation (what Europeans have to say about the American West, and what they therefore say about themselves in discussing the American West) should make this a stimulating session, with many opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue. Also, consistent with the overall objectives of the Paris ACR conference, the presenters come from both sides of the Atlantic, and this diversity adds to the richness of perspectives presented. With the exception of one Dutch and one Danish graduate student, all the speakers have experience at presenting at ACR conferences.

“IT’s the Vastness of the Place…” British Travelers and Tourists in the American West

Margaret K. Hogg, Manchester School of Management, UMIST, U.K.

“Travel.. has made men think faster, imagine more largely, want more passionately… many.. now ‘travel’, yet few are travellers in the old sense of the word” [emphases added] (Boorstin 1962:87-88)

Boorstin (1962) argued that men had changed from active travellers to passive tourists. They had lost their delight in adventure, represented by exploring the strange, the unexpected and the unfamiliar. Instead they had settled for experiences which were ‘diluted, contrived, prefabricated’ (Boorstin 1962:86-88). Whereas Boorstin examined Americans’ views of the Old World, this paper starts from the opposite premise, and examines the views of visitors from the Old World to the New.

The study uses Boorstin’s (1962) themes from “From Traveler to Tourist: The Lost Art of Travel” as the basis for exploring, analyzing and interpreting the consumption experiences of two groups of British visitors to the American West. The themes which emerged from discussions with a focus group of upscale visitors to the USA (aged 30-55) and with a focus group of younger free movers (aged 20-30) included: the discovery of new worlds and disturbing ideas; guided tours, planned excursions and sightseeing; the insulation of the tourist from the travel world; isolation from the landscape; provision of local atmosphere; tourist attractions; examples of local culture ‘collected and embalmed’ (page 110); ‘the democratizing of travel, the lowering cost, increased organization, and improved means of long-distance transportation’ (page 117); and superhighways. The findings from these British consumers of the American West are discussed within the context of Boorstin’s contrast between the active traveller and the passive tourist.

One of the main findings was that British visitors consumed different visions of the American West depending on their own cultural perspective. This finding reflected McCracken’s (1986) view that consumers bring their own cultural ‘lens’ and ‘blueprint’ to their experiences of the categories of time, place, space and people within the context of other cultures. The findings also echoed Boorstin’s final point that:

“travel becomes a tautology. The more strenuously and self-consciously we work at enlarging our experience, the more pervasive the tautology becomes. Whether we seek models of greatness, or experience elsewhere on the earth, we look into a mirror instead of through a window, and we see only ourselves”. [emphases added] (Boorstin 1962:124-125)
The Myth of the Wild West in Advertising
Søren Askegaard, Odense University, Denmark
Diana Storn, Odense University, Denmark

“Dust is whirled up by the galloping hoofs of horses, and the villain is pursued swinging the lasso above one’s head”. Most people in the Western World are familiar with the imaginary universe of the American Wild West exemplified in this interview excerpt. They would probably not only be able to recognize it from descriptions such as this, but also to add their personally and culturally shaped twist if they were to express their image of the American West; a world of its own, heavily loaded with symbolic meanings.

The imagery of the American West is very much a part of the European heritage of cultural references (Kroes 1996) and it is widely used also in advertising originating in Europe. However, to our knowledge, no consumer research project has been undertaken to demonstrate the readings of the “Wild West” imagery beyond the taken-for-granted stereotypes. Research has demonstrated the richness and versatility of consumers’ advertisement readings far beyond the sender’s intentional meanings (e.g. Mick & Buhl, 1992; Scott, 1994). Therefore, we have found it worthwhile to explore in depth the perceptions of wild west themes or imagery in advertising, the possible linkages between wild west imagery and the images of particular products or kinds of products, and the salient values and themes invoked therein.

The present research project explores the imaginary world of the American Wild West employed in advertising as perceived by a group of Danish consumers. This is done by means of qualitative research and more specifically through focus group and depth interviews. Via these methods and the complementary use of projective techniques, initial data was collected and analysed using the analytical principles of the grounded theory approach. The research provided insights into the informants’ perceptions of wild west themes or imagery in advertising and shed light on a number of oppositional meanings evoked in such advertising. It also opened up for new questions concerning the issue of possible linkages between the wild west imagery and the images of particular products or types of products.

Where Does the Marlboro Man Live?
Gary J. Bamossy, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, and University of Utah, U.S.A.
Janeen Arnold Costa, University of Utah, U.S.A.
Tom Rood, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam

In the 17th century, pilgrims from the Dutch town of Leiden saw America as a refuge and site of hope, marking the beginning of Dutch fascination with America. When Peter Stuyvesant purchased Manhattan Island from the indigenous Indians for roughly $24, the relationship took on a more commercial—and, hence, decidedly Dutch—interest. In the 1990s, only the U.K. and Japan have greater amounts of foreign investment in the US. In short, the Dutch have a long and active economic, political, and social relationship with America. Nonetheless, Dutch knowledge of the American continent generally, and of the American West specifically, is fairly superficial and has been strongly influenced by media representations.

This paper examines the various ways in which the Dutch construct and maintain their images, expectations, and visions of the American West. One of the rich themes emerging from the Dutch data is the strong interplay of the “idealized” West, replete with images of nature’s grandeur and Western hospitality, with the hard, urban, dangerous constructs of America’s West, as typified by Los Angeles. Thus, within the Dutch focus groups, there was seldom a singular focus on any one aspect of the West for any extended period of time. Rather, a consistent point-counter-point discussion of the “ideal and romanticized West” versus the “real West of development, racial inequality, and urban decay” prevailed. That which is admired about the West versus that which is abhorrent about American society, as it is played out in the American West, often dominated the discussions, regardless of the semi-structured approach to topics taken by the focus group facilitator. Often, informants used media based anecdotes, so that television programs about the “old West” (Bonanza, Little House on the Prairie), for example, were interspersed with those about the “new, real West” (Baywatch, L.A. Law). Similarly, informants contrasted the hyperreality and perceived tackiness of Disneyland and Las Vegas as destinations with the civilization and cultural sites of San Francisco. Thus, the Dutch respondents used a large number of dyadic contrasts as a platform to identify and discuss just where, and what, the American West is for the Dutch tourist.

REFERENCES
The Perceived Risks and Benefits of Genetically Modified Food Products: Experts versus Consumers
Joachim Scholderer, University of Potsdam, Germany
Ingo Balderjahn, University of Potsdam, Germany
Lone Bredahl, The MAPP Centre, Denmark
Klaus G. Grunert, The MAPP Centre, Denmark

ABSTRACT

Two qualitative studies investigate perceived risks and benefits of genetically modified food products in expert and consumer samples. In Study 1, expert focus groups were conducted in Denmark, Germany, Italy, and the UK. Results indicate that the biotechnology community will concentrate future communication activities on three key benefits: functional food innovations, price advantages, and environmentally sound production. In Study 2, 400 laddering interviews with consumers from Denmark, Germany, Italy, and the UK were conducted. Both for yoghurt and beer products, the attribute ‘genetically modified’ was more strongly associated with risks than benefits. The same attributes that experts considered key benefits were considered as risks by the consumers, either resulting in ambivalence or in rejection of genetically modified food products.

INTRODUCTION

Modern biotechnology is generally expected to have dramatic effects on the food chain (Smink and Hamstra 1994). However, there is a strong digression about the actual desirability of these effects. Whereas the biotechnology community predicts continuously growing market shares for innovative applications (e.g., Morrison and Giovannetti 1998), a coalition of environmental and consumer activists seems determined not to rest until genetic engineering is completely banned from food production. The present paper will address the issue in two qualitative studies. Study 1 is concerned with the expert community, investigating which risks and benefits European experts consider crucial for future trends in the marketing of genetically modified food products. Study 2 will take the opposite approach, exploring which risks and benefits European consumers actually associate with the product attribute ‘genetically modified’.

A considerable body of survey research has investigated the role of perceived risks and benefits in the formation of consumer attitudes towards genetic engineering (for a recent review see Bredahl, Grunert, and Frewer 1998). Frewer and Shepherd (1995; also see Sparks, Shepherd, and Frewer 1994) found that perceived risks and benefits were the best predictors for summative attitudes among British consumers. Hamstra (1995) reports comparable results for Dutch consumers, with perceived benefits being slightly better predictors than perceived risks. Hampel and Plenning (1998) conclude from a German survey that attitude formation is characterized by an explicit trade-off that has not ended up in deliberate decision-making but in prolonged ambivalence. However, the type of biotechnology application seems to be an important moderator. In a recent Eurobarometer survey (European Commission 1997), approximately 16,000 European consumers were asked to evaluate six types of biotechnology applications with respect to their perceived risk, benefit, and moral acceptability. Diagnostics for the detection of genetic deficiencies in humans were evaluated most positively, followed by modification of bacteria to produce medicines and vaccines, introduction of pest resistance into crop plants, development of laboratory animals for biomedical research, genetic engineering in functional foods, and, finally, transplantation technology. Rank orders were consistent across the three dimensions, suggesting that perceived risks and benefits cannot necessarily be generalized across different application types and, consequently, across different product classes.

The public outrage of the last decade has left its stamp on modern biotechnology. Consumer surveys all across Europe indicate that genetic engineering is widely perceived as a potentially hazardous technology. In contrast to this, science, industry, and governments are generally supportive of biotechnology and see no justified reasons for a public moratorium. Yet, a technology that is only deemed hazardous will cause the same communication problems as a technology that is actually hazardous. The studies reported in this paper will thus address two research questions: (a) which risks and benefits of genetically modified food products are regarded crucial by the experts, and (b) which risks and benefits are regarded crucial by the consumers? Since survey research can neither assess conceptual differences between consumers and experts nor the underlying cognitive structures that lead consumers to summative risk evaluations, both studies will use a qualitative approach.

STUDY 1: THE VIEW OF THE EXPERTS

Study 1 will present the results of four expert focus groups we have conducted in Denmark, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom in November 1997. Leading European experts were invited to discuss the risks and benefits of genetically modified food products, as well as the communication strategies planned by their organizations.

Method

Participants. In autumn 1997, the four participating research institutions in Denmark, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom recruited outstanding experts for participation in the focus group discussions. Reflecting the different actors involved, we attempted to make sure that at least one representative of each of the following groups would take part: scientific research, authorities responsible for the approval of genetically modified organisms, suppliers of genetically modified organisms, food processing industry, umbrella organizations of the food industry, agricultural organizations, retailers, the media, professional communication agencies, consumer organizations, and environmental organizations. The final composition of the four focus groups is given in Table 1. Altogether, N=48 experts participated in the study.

Procedure. The warm-up topic elicited different views on global trends in the food sector that might evolve from the increas-

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ing use of genetic engineering techniques, including perceived change in consumer characteristics, nutritional habits, and demand. The first main part of the discussion identified outstanding risks and benefits of genetically modified food products. The moderator prompted the coverage of eleven content aspects: safety, health, environment, moral values, price, quality, social usefulness, distribution of benefits, information, freedom of choice, and decision power over foodstuffs. After risks and benefits had been extensively discussed, each participant was asked to state those three topics he or she expected the public debate to focus on in the future. The second part focused on risk communication, eliciting strategies for communicating the risks and benefits to the public.

Data analysis. A content analysis procedure similar to Knodel (1993) was chosen. In a first step, the videotaped discussions were transcribed, translated, and divided into meaningful segments. In a second step, the segments were classified according to a previously defined category system (derived from Smink and Hamstra 1994) including the risk-and-benefit categories safety, health, environment, moral values, price, quality, social usefulness, distribution of benefits, information, freedom of choice, and decision power over foodstuffs. In a third step, the segments were paraphrased and grouped according to equivalent content.

Results

Safety. The perhaps most astonishing result of Study 1 was the experts’ general unwillingness to resume the public debate on biosafety. The German experts agreed even collectively that the risk discussion was over. However, this was attributed to different reasons: (a) some experts thought that the safety requirements and administrative procedures were simply perceived as appropriate, (b) some thought that the critics had not been able to present scientific evidence for their risk theories, and (c) some thought that global assessments of the risks and benefits of a production technique as a whole were pointless anyway, because only the behavior of a specific organism could be judged meaningfully. Besides, proponents as well as opponents wondered what was so special about genetic engineering, maintaining that it was competitively unfair to impose the strong safety requirements only on genetic engineering techniques and not on other methods in breeding and food processing.

Health. Especially the German experts perceived a general consumer trend to healthy food, but questioned whether substantially improved functional foods would enter the European market within the next five years (see below). Some critics objected that functional foods could equally well be produced without genetic engineering, and that public health issues were generally exaggerated in the industrialized countries. However, there were cross-national differences. Whereas British participants claimed that health issues were overdone, consumer health maintenance in Italy not even seems to work properly with conventionally produced foodstuffs.

Environment. The outstanding environmental risk that was related to transgenic organisms was the possibility of an unintended gene transfer into wild populations. Besides, only general claims of threatened sustainability were made. Sustainability was also called upon from the benefit side. Herbicide resistant plants, for example, provide environmentally sound agricultural production and food processing, especially through an up to 40% reduction in herbicide expenditures, reduced energy consumption, and reduced transportation costs due to more independence of environmental constraints.

Moral values. The notion of sustainability was not confined to the more or less scientific question about impacts on the environment. Sustainability also has strong moral dimensions. Several experts noted that genetic engineering is interfering with consumers’ basic beliefs about nature. Depending on the respective position, objections of this kind were either discounted as being logically faulty since no cultivation is natural in such a sense, as masking simple resistance to technological innovation, or as being just a matter of appraisal. Specifically, the notion of animal welfare was raised. Transgenic microorganisms provide an alternative to enzyme extraction from calves. However, European consumers were expected to be even more critical about transgenic animals than about transgenic plants, although reservations would be less strong when the application was clinical, for example in cows producing allergy-friendly milk.

Price. The experts agreed that price advantages are currently the outstanding asset of genetically modified food products. In the first place, farmers realize cost advantages, for example due to reduced pesticide expenditure. It is expected that decreases in the

### TABLE 1
Composition of the expert focus groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Italy</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientific research institute</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority responsible for approval</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplier of genetically modified organisms</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food processing industry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food industry organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication agency</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consumer organization</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental organization</td>
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</table>

N 10 14 14 10 48
price of raw materials will carry over to subsequent stages of the production chain and finally enhance the price-performance ratio of consumer goods. Naturally, this brings its competitive disadvantages for those producers who have decided to keep on growing conventionally bred seeds, and this holds for competition within the European Union as well as for competition with the US industry and other major suppliers of the world market. If no stronger market barriers will be put up, the European food industry may not have a real choice regarding the growing and processing of transgenic plants.

Quality. The development of genetically engineered food products seems to follow a generation pattern. Most products that have already entered the European market are perceived as a first generation whose quality attributes pertain to improved cultivation, processing, and distribution characteristics. Significant changes in functional characteristics will require considerably more time, and many experts expected them not before 2010. Changes in functional characteristics that are currently under development include allergy-friendly breastmilk substitutes, soybeans with modified oil composition, potatoes with modified starch composition, and products containing less saturated fatty acids, resulting in improved nutritional value and thus providing healthiness as a quality attribute. However, it was stressed that the effects of improved quality on product sales are most likely subject to price constraints. That is, demand for genetically engineered food products will only increase if their quality is superior while their price remains constant or is lower than that of conventional products.

Social usefulness. Product and market characteristics evaluated as socially useful centered on three major issues: health, freedom of choice, and development. Regarding the health issue, European consumers seem to perceive healthy food as a medical application, providing benefits that could not be achieved in other ways, and thus being an acceptable public health measure. Concerning the freedom of choice issue, genetically modified foods add to the current level of product differentiation and provide further possibilities of choice, perhaps even new markets for entirely new product qualities. As one participant mentioned, this includes also the opportunity to choose between different kinds of production. Another well-known point regularly made by the proponent side is the more reliable cultivation of genetically modified crops in the developing countries, offering the chance to reduce starvation and propagate development. Yet, the notion of progress seems also of relevance to the developed world. Since the western societies are used to continuous improvements in average quality of life, it should also be a matter of social concern to maintain the slope of development, and biotechnology is generally perceived as one of the key factors in technological innovation.

Distribution of benefits. The participating experts agreed that the current generation of genetically modified food products focuses its benefits on the producer side. Producers may gain competitive advantages through more effective use of agriculturally productive land, improved logistics due to enhanced storage and transportation qualities, and optimal use of processing capacities. However, such attributes are difficult to communicate to consumer markets. Apart from cost advantages transferred along the production chain, or claims of environmental friendliness, it was generally agreed upon that European consumers demand improvements in the actual quality characteristics of products.

Information. Although information and transparency are generally regarded as important features of a democratic public, there may sometimes be a risk in information itself. Consumers appear so sensitized that even the lowest objective risk figures may have devastating effects on perceived risk. The problem of sensitization extends to the labeling of genetically modified food ingredients. Consumers may misinterpret notes on the package label in such a way that labeled ingredients are automatically misperceived as risky ingredients. Responsibility for the public outrage was blamed on the usual suspects: environmental and consumer organizations having established a stable counterfactual association between genetic engineering and risk, and the media readily picking up such counterfactual messages and even multiplying them.

Freedom of choice. The purpose behind labeling of genetically engineered food products is to enable informed consumer choice. While several proponents argued that genetically modified food products provide more variety in food markets and thus by definition improve consumer choice, others were not so unconditionally optimistic. It was doubted if a choice between genetically modified products and unmodified products would even be possible: soybeans, for example, are not distributed separately on the world market, so that no producer or retailer can guarantee that his input material has definitely been free of genetically modified varieties. Consequently, virtually any traded product may contain traces of genetically modified material. One participant even predicted that consumers would only face a decision between products that are labeled and products that are not labeled. Furthermore, informed choice requires a certain amount of knowledge. Knowledge, however, may be formed upon information that is unbalanced or even deliberately biased, resulting in faulty judgments and, finally, in faulty decisions.

Decision power over foodstuffs. The question of who actually controls the development of the food sector is both a descriptive and a normative one. As expected, the perceptions of actual control varied wildly. The food processing industry participants felt no possibility to control the raw materials they used, especially when the materials were imported. Other participants maintained that exactly the food processing industry had the power to control primary production. In a similar way, control was assigned to the retailers, while others perceived just the opposite. The consumers were also referred to as the primary demand-side factor, ruling the food market by means of purchase and boycott, while others perceived them as largely powerless. Furthermore, monopolistic tendencies and the overwhelming influence of the US market were blamed.

Discussion

The results of the expert focus group discussions in Denmark, Germany, Italy, and the UK indicate that the European expert community attributes a generation pattern to the development and diffusion of genetically modified food products. Most products that have already entered the European market are perceived as a first generation whose quality attributes pertain to improved cultivation, processing, and distribution characteristics. Many producers hope that the second generation will take over the market for functional foods, improving the nutritional value of products and thus providing healthiness as a quality attribute. However, the second generation is still missing. Consequently, the current substantial assets of genetically modified food products reduce to cost advantages. It is assumed that decreases in the price of raw materials will carry over to subsequent stages of the production chain and finally enhance the price-performance ratio of consumer goods. A third key benefit is seen in the potential for a more sustainable production. Reduced herbicide expenditure in agriculture, for example, should meet the increased ecological awareness of European consumers. However, it is questionable if such a remote benefit can outcancel certain moral reservations that seem to be associated with sustainability as well. Many experts perceived a biased perspective on ecological
STUDY 2: THE VIEW OF THE CONSUMERS

The results of Study 1 indicate that European biotechnology experts expect three particular benefits to have a decisive impact on future demand for genetically modified food products: functional food innovations, price advantages, and environmentally sound production. Study 2 will explore if the experts’ expectations really correspond to what European consumers perceive as the risks and benefits of genetically modified food products. Means-end chains will be elicited using the laddering technique, a semi-structured qualitative interview and data analysis method (Reynolds and Gutman 1988). The technique starts with eliciting those salient product attributes the respondent regards important for choosing among a given set of products. For each salient product attribute, the interviewer uses a series of ‘why is that important to you’ questions to get the respondent to reach increasingly abstract levels of explanation. The technique presupposes a hierarchical cognitive structure, and the idea is to uncover the entire chain from concrete and abstract attributes over functional and psychosocial consequences to instrumental and terminal values. Individual data (the ‘ladders’) are usually aggregated into hierarchical value maps (HVMs), graphically representing the associative structures that are dominant in a given sample.

Method

Participants. Altogether, N=400 laddering interviews with regular beer and yoghurt consumers were conducted in Denmark, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom, including 50 interviews per product category in each country. In the beer sample, quotas were imposed on consumption frequency (with extreme consumers excluded), education, and gender. In the yoghurt sample, quotas were imposed on consumption frequency, education, and presence of children in the household. All yoghurt respondents were main food shoppers of their household.

Product profiles. Four product profiles were developed for each product category. The yoghurt products varied with respect to fat content, production method, presence of additives, and texture: (a) traditional full-fat whole-milk yoghurt without additives, characterized by ‘a nice taste and smooth texture’, (b) traditional low-fat skim-milk yoghurt without additives, characterized by ‘a nice taste and thin texture’, (c) fat-free yoghurt containing stabilizers and antioxidants, characterized by ‘a nice taste and smooth texture’, and (d) fat-free yoghurt produced with genetically modified starter cultures, characterized by ‘a nice taste and smooth texture’.

The beer products varied with respect to production method, energy consumption/ environmental soundness, quality of raw materials, and price: (a) beer produced in a traditional way from high quality raw materials, sold at a medium price, (b) beer produced in a traditional way from standard quality raw materials, sold at a low price, (c) beer produced by means of modern process technology (but not genetic engineering), ensuring lower time and energy expenditure during the production process, and thus more environmentally sound, sold at a high price, and (d) beer produced by means of genetically modified yeast, ensuring reductions in time and energy expenditure during the production process, and thus more environmentally sound, sold at a low price.

Thus, the consumer benefits of applying genetic engineering in the yoghurt example were absence of fat and a smooth texture without the use of artificial additives, whereas in the beer case the consumer benefits of applying genetic engineering were environmentally sound production and a lower price. Naturalistic yoghurt products were created from new yoghurt cups, which were filled with a substance resembling yoghurt in weight and filling, and provided with labels containing the relevant product information. Naturalistic beer products were created from existing bottled beers that had their original labels removed before being equipped with the new labels containing the product information developed for this study. In this way, identical products were obtained for all beer and yoghurt alternatives, except for the label information. To make the product examples still more realistic, it was decided to supply the beer products with brand names (‘Classic’ for the traditional, medium price beer, ‘Economy’ for the traditional, low price beer, ‘Hi-tech’ for the beer produced by unspecified modern process technology, and ‘Green’ for the genetically modified beer). The yoghurts were kept as no-name products. All products were used for visual presentation only.

Procedure. In the first part of the interview, the participants were asked to rank the products according to preference and give their reasons for this ranking. In the second part, these salient attributes were used as starting points for the laddering procedure. Reverse laddering was used in cases where abstract attributes or consequences were mentioned initially. The interviewers listed the resulting ladders in standardized forms. In addition, all interviews were tape-recorded for subsequent quality checks.

Data analysis. After completion of the fieldwork, the Danish laddering data were categorized into attributes, consequences, and values. By thorough meaning-based interpretation of all individually mentioned concepts, the data were then coded into broader categories. The procedure was carried out separately for the beer and yoghurt data. The resulting categories were translated and applied to the German, British, and Italian data. Additional categories were added when necessary. All codes were finally checked and synchronized across countries, resulting in a 60-category system for the yoghurt data and a 61-category system for the beer data. Altogether, 2187 ladders were extracted from the yoghurt interviews and 1874 from the beer interviews. For both sets of products, the Danish interviews yielded by far the largest number of ladders (643 for yoghurt, 543 for beer), followed by Germany (557 for yoghurt, 497 for beer) and Italy (530 for yoghurt, 429 for beer), whereas the smallest number of ladders was obtained in the British interviews (457 for yoghurt, 405 for beer). The coded data were aggregated into HVMs with initial cut-off levels ranging from three to five respondents. Separate HVMs were produced for each product and country to account for cross-national differences. The respective final solutions were chosen by inspecting the interpretability of the HVMs.

Results and Discussion

Product preferences. Overall, the more traditional product alternatives were clearly preferred. More than half of the participants in all four countries ranked the medium-priced traditional beer as the product they preferred most of the four beers. Similarly, the traditional full-fat whole-milk yoghurt was most preferred by a majority of respondents in Denmark, Germany and Italy, while in the United Kingdom, the fat-free yoghurt with artificial components to ensure a smooth texture was most preferred. Thus, preference for the genetically modified products was generally low, and more so in Denmark and Germany than in the United Kingdom and Italy. In the German sample, about three fourth of the participants actually mentioned the genetically modified beer as the least preferred product. This contrasts with the British and Italian samples,
where a considerable proportion of the participants claimed to prefer the genetically modified product over the three other products. The following sections will try to identify reasons for these low preferences in the HVMs for genetically modified yoghurt and beer.

Genetically modified yoghurt. Disclosure information about genetic engineering was correctly represented in most consumers. Figure 1 shows that this attribute was associated with negative consequences that counteract important life values. The most dominant association seems to be the belief that genetic engineering will turn yoghurt into an unwholesome and unnatural product, and, judging from the perceived consequences, the belief seems also to be tied up with feelings expressing unfamiliarity with the product. Thus, there were strong beliefs that ingestion of the product would reduce personal healthiness and that the product could not be trusted because of unknown long-term consequences on human health and the environment. These perceived consequences are crucial since they were generally believed to inhibit the achievement of important life values, such as a long and healthy life, happiness and inner harmony, security, and responsibility for nature and other people.

The belief that the application of genetic engineering would damage the environment was found primarily among Danish and German consumers, but there were no strong links from this belief to self-relevant psychosocial consequences or values, indicating that perceived environmental impact was possibly not of crucial personal importance. Furthermore, respondents in Denmark and Germany perceived genetic engineering in yoghurt to be morally wrong, and a number of respondents in these two countries as well as in the United Kingdom also opposed the application of genetic engineering in yoghurt by claiming that there was no need for this technology in food production at all. Nevertheless, the HVMs also show that the consumers were in fact aware of the benefits that had been added to the hypothetical products by means of genetic engineering, and, judging from the perceived consequences, these benefits were actually appreciated. Both the absence of additives and the absence of fat were mentioned as important product characteristics, and these attributes were believed to enhance a long and healthy life via increased healthiness. The smooth texture, which was claimed to have been achieved by means of genetic engineering, was also seen as desirable, at least in Denmark and the United Kingdom. Here, respondents claimed that a smooth texture would increase the enjoyment of consuming the product, and, in Denmark, the smooth texture was also linked to consuming the product without spilling, and extended usage possibilities (breakfast, dessert, or snack).

However, the results of the ranking procedure indicate that these positive attributes and consequences could generally not outweigh the perceived negative and undesirable consequences of genetic engineering. The HVMs point to some interesting cross-national differences, though the basic pattern of the associations remains the same. Danish, German and British consumers generally perceived a larger set of consequences of genetic engineering, and, particularly in Denmark and Germany these consequences were closely related to personal values. This was apparently not the case in the United Kingdom where the ladders of perceived consequences of genetic engineering did generally not reach the value level. Moreover, security seems to be a more central value among Danish and Italian consumers than among British and German consumers, whereas the more social values (responsibility for nature and welfare of other people) seem more central to Danish and German consumers.

Genetically modified beer. The HVMs for genetically modified beer closely resemble the ones for genetically modified yoghurt. Again, application of genetic engineering was an important attribute, bringing a range of undesirable consequences about. The central associations were unwholesomeness, unnaturalness, and low trustworthiness of the resulting product. These consequences were typically believed to counteract the values long and healthy life, happiness and inner harmony, and security. Again, some respondents perceived genetic engineering as morally wrong and unnecessary in food production. Furthermore, undesirable side effects on personal health were expected. The HVMs indicate that the fact that a product is based on a modern and intensive production method is sufficient to trigger significant negative perceptions of the product. The attribute intensive brewing method was associated with poor quality and taste in all four countries. These associations, in turn, were linked to less enjoyment and the preclusion of happiness and personal well being.

Interestingly, environmental friendliness (which was one of the genetic engineering benefits attributed to the product) was valued in Denmark, the United Kingdom, and Italy, but not in Germany. In these three countries there seems to be no doubt about the significance of this attribute for consumer choice as the perceived consequences eventually reach the value level, the crucial values being responsibility for nature and unity with nature in Denmark and the United Kingdom, and improved quality of life in Italy. The German respondents generally believed that the application of genetic engineering did not benefit anyone but the producer. The relevance of the low price of the product as a consumer benefit is even more doubtful, as the respondents in all four countries generally associated the low price with lower quality and taste, while on the other hand they also pointed out a desirable money aspect. Again, the widest range of associations arising from the application of genetic engineering was found among Danish and German respondents, while there were particularly few associations to this attribute among the Italian respondents (note the higher cut-off levels in the Danish and German HVMs). In this case, the associations arising from this attribute reached the value level in the United Kingdom sample as well. This can probably be attributed to the fact that the British respondents, as the only ones, explicitly linked the application of gene technology to environmental soundness, which was perceived to lead to desirable consequences closely linked to life values.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

When the american corporation Advanced Genetic Science released the first transgenic organism into the environment in 1986, apocalyptic scenarios went through the media. For example, it was feared that the anti-frost microbes would cause long-term distortions of the global climate. Technicians had to wear astronaut-like protective clothing. Observing scientists from all over the world were far from certain that the consequences of the release would be reversible. More than twelve years later, the scenery has changed. Science, industry, and public authorities are clearly supportive of biotechnology in most European countries. Process derivatives of genetically modified soybeans alone will soon be included in more than 30,000 consumer products. The public, however, seem to have a problem with these novel foods. Several consumer surveys all across Europe suggest that the benefits advocated by science, industry, and public authorities have still not managed to outweigh the risks perceived by consumers. Yet, surveys cannot provide answers about the underlying cognitive structure that leads consumers to risk evaluations. Neither can surveys assess conceptual...
FIGURE 1
Hierarchical Value Maps for Genetically Modified Yoghurt and Beer
differences between consumers and experts. Consequently, the present paper has addressed these issues in two qualitative studies.

Study 1 used data from expert focus groups conducted in Denmark, Germany, Italy, and the UK to investigate which risks and benefits the European expert community expects to be decisive for the future of genetically modified food products. The results indicate that the biotechnology community is going to concentrate their activities on three key benefits: functional food innovations, price advantages, and environmentally sound production. According to Scholderer, Balderjahn, and Will (1998), these are exactly the key benefits on which the biotechnology industry is planning to build communication strategies for consumer markets.

Study 2 used laddering interviews to investigate which risks and benefits European consumers actually associate with the product attribute ‘genetically modified’. Again, samples from Denmark, Germany, Italy, and the UK were included in a cross-national design. Both for yoghurt and beer products, the attribute ‘genetically modified’ was more strongly associated with risks than benefits. Across countries, a wide range of negative consequences was perceived, with the main focus on beliefs relating to unhealthiness and low trustworthiness of the resulting products. These beliefs were generally seen to inhibit the attainment of individual life values such as happiness and inner harmony, a long healthy life, quality of life, security, and the social values responsibility for nature and responsibility for the welfare of other people. Notably, consumers evaluated risks and benefits of genetic engineering not only in the light of consequences for themselves, but also for the environment and future generations.

Relating the results of Study 1 and Study 2 yields several points where expert perceptions clearly contradict consumer perceptions. The first point is the experts’ plan to position genetically modified products in the functional foods market. A defining characteristic of functional foods is that they claim healthiness. However, the attribute ‘genetically modified’ was in all countries, and in both product categories, associated with perceptions of unwholesomeness and (with the only exception being beer in Italy) unhealthiness.

The second point is the experts’ plan to communicate the potential for a more sustainable production as added value to consumer markets. The genetically modified beer in Study 2 claimed that reduced energy expenditure during production would provide an environmentally sound product. However, only British and Italian consumers were inclined to accept the added value claim. Danish consumers were ambivalent. German consumers, constituting the largest beer market in Europe, completely ignored the environmental soundness claim but considered genetically modified beer an unnatural product.

The third point is the experts’ plan to utilize price advantages in competition with traditionally produced foodstuffs. The genetically modified beer in Study 2 claimed to be sold at a low price. However, consumers in Denmark, Germany, and the UK were still ambivalent, associating the low price not only with value for money, but also with poor quality and taste. Italian consumers unequivocally inferred poor quality and taste, ignoring the price benefit.

Taken together, the results of our studies suggest serious perceptual incongruities between experts and consumers. The same attributes that are considered key benefits by the experts are considered risks by the consumers. This is likely to become a substantial problem for future information and communication activities. Products that derive their benefit claims from such ambiguous attributes may be perceived as an attempt to trick consumers into purchase. However, this is an empirical question, currently under investigation in an experimental study. Information effects, source effects, and product class effects will be tested in another cross-national design, enabling us to draw detailed conclusions about the way risk/benefit information is affecting attitude formation and attitude change processes in consumers.

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Explaining Consumer Attitudes to Genetic Modification in Food Production
Lone Bredahl, MAPP, The Aarhus School of Business, Denmark

ABSTRACT

Consumers have not had many possibilities yet for seeking out, buying and consuming genetically modified food products. However, for various reasons consumer attitude formation with regard to these products is likely to be complex and closely related to personal values. The paper presents a model for explaining consumer attitudes to genetic modification in food production which builds on modern cognitive psychology and multi-attribute attitude theory. In addition, the paper introduces the empirical research which is undertaken at present to validate and estimate the parameters of the model by means of surveys in Denmark, Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy (total n=2000).

INTRODUCTION

Genetic modification is increasingly used in the development of new foods and ingredients for food production, and the benefits of these applications are widely appraised by food producers and food technologists, who generally tend to dismiss the occurrence of serious risks arising from applications of gene technology in food production (e.g. Scholderer, Balderjahn & Will, 1998). Research has, however, shown consumers to be far less supportive of genetic modification, and considerably less so of applications in the food domain than of applications in the medical field (e.g. European Commission, 1997; Heij & Middendorf, 1995).

In itself, gene technology offers entirely new and seemingly infinite possibilities for combining genetic material from different species and even for combining human genetic material with animals or plants. Up till now, consumers have, however, only had little opportunity to actually seek out, buy and consume foods produced by means of genetic modification, and their experience with this type of products is therefore limited. Taken together, this makes genetic modification a highly involving process characteristic among consumers, and these aspects generally give reason to expect consumer attitude formation with regard to using genetic modification in food production to be complex and closely related to personal values.

Research conducted so far points to some shortcomings of existing consumer behaviour theory in explaining consumer attitudes to genetic modification in food production (reviewed in Bredahl, Grunert & Frewer, 1998). Moreover, most research undertaken so far is so diverse in focus and research methodology that it is difficult to derive more general conclusions about the constituents of these attitudes. Together with the potential complexity of consumer attitudes to applying genetic modification in food production, this calls for the development of a new theoretical basis.

A MODEL FOR EXPLAINING CONSUMER ATTITUDES TO GENETIC MODIFICATION IN FOOD PRODUCTION

The model which we suggest for explaining consumer attitudes to genetic modification in food production adopts a cognitive approach and takes into account previous research into consumer attitudes to general and specific applications of genetic modification, alternatively modern biotechnology. The model specifically builds on Fishbein’s multi-attribute attitude model, which states that a person’s attitude to an object is determined by the sum of beliefs that the person has about the consequences or attributes of the object weighted by their evaluations (Fishbein, 1963). This model has been widely applied in consumer research, but some revision is required in this context.

For example, it has been shown that consumer attitudes to genetic modification in food production are not only based on the consequences that the technology is perceived to have for the person him- or herself, as claimed by Fishbein, but also on considerations of consequences for other groups in society, such as one’s family, future generations and the environment (Bredahl, 1998; Frewer, Howard & Shepherd, 1996). The beliefs about the consequences of applying gene technology in food production may even vary in strength depending on which outcome group the person has in mind. Thus, in empirical research in this domain, the beliefs underlying attitudes should be explicitly related to key outcome groups so that the influences of each group on overall attitudes can be assessed.

Likewise, it has been shown that beliefs about the risks and benefits of genetic modification are important determinants of attitudes (e.g. Hamstra, 1991, 1995). Generally, perceived risks can be considered to influence attitudes negatively, while perceived benefits can be assumed to influence attitudes in a positive direction, thereby allowing a certain amount of risk to be compensated for by perceived greater benefits in the minds of the consumers. To allow the weights of these two kinds of beliefs to be empirically assessed, we suggest that an explicit distinction be made between perceived risks and perceived benefits of applying gene technology in food production.

Furthermore, it seems reasonable to expect consumer attitudes to genetic modification in food production to be determined both by beliefs concerning the production process and by beliefs that relate specifically to the perceived quality of the resulting product, as has also been suggested by Frewer, Howard, Hedderley and Shepherd (1997). In fact, it may even be that a person’s attitude to genetic modification in food production is determined both by beliefs about process and beliefs about product regardless of whether the production technology is directly traceable in the final product (e.g. yoghurt produced with a genetically modified starter culture) or not (e.g. beer brewed by means of genetically modified yeast). Again, to allow the weights of the two kinds of beliefs to be determined empirically, we suggest an explicit distinction between process and product beliefs.

More general attitudes and knowledge domains can also be expected to significantly influence attitudes. Previous research has indicated at least five general attitude and knowledge domains as...
antecedents of attitudes to genetic modification in food production. These are perceived knowledge about genetic modification (Bredahl, 1998, 1999; Grunert & Bredahl, 1996), attitude to environment and nature, and attitude to science and technology (Borre, 1990; Hamstra, 1991; Sparks, Shepherd & Frewer, 1994), food neophobia (Bredahl, 1998), and trust in regulators (Frewer, Howard, Hedderley & Shepherd, 1996). In addition, it seems likely that consumers' perceived personal control over buying and eating foods produced with gene technology will significantly influence attitudes, and that these attitudes will also be influenced by the consumers' level of knowledge about food production.

Finally, the proposed model takes into account the general critique of the multiplication principle in Fishbein’s model that has been put forward by Schmidt (1973) and Evans (1991). The authors suggest that belief strengths are measured directly and that the direct assessment of outcome evaluations is replaced by standardized regression coefficients resulting from a regression of beliefs on the global measures of attitude. Since the beliefs will be interrelated, and in order to allow an estimation of the model by structural equation analysis using latent constructs, single beliefs may be replaced by belief factors, identified by means of principal components analysis.

To summarize, the model on explaining consumer attitudes to genetic modification in food production deviates from the Fishbein’s model in five ways: outcome beliefs are specified for different outcome groups, an explicit distinction between perceived benefits and risks is included, a distinction between beliefs about product and process is made, more general attitudes and knowledge domains are included as determinants of attitudes, and the belief-based measures of attitudes are weighed by standardized regression coefficients rather than direct evaluation measures.

A graphical presentation of the model can be seen in figure 1. More formally, the postulated relationships can be listed as shown in Figure 1.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The aim of the empirical research is to validate the proposed attitude model across different cultural environments and to estimate the relative impacts of the various parameters in explaining consumer attitudes to genetic modification in food production.

Methodologically, the aim is also to investigate the applicability of omitting the evaluation terms of Fishbein’s framework in order to avoid the statistical bias that arises from the traditional multiplicative composites.

METHOD

Respondents

2000 consumers were interviewed in Denmark, Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy, with 500 interviews in each country, using a standardized, self-administered questionnaire. Denmark, Germany and the United Kingdom have previously been shown to differ in food-related lifestyles (Bruuns, Grunert & Bredahl, 1996) and the four countries have been shown to differ in attitudes towards modern biotechnology as well (European Commission, 1997). The countries are therefore regarded apt candidates for investigating cross-national similarities and differences in the constituents of consumer attitudes to genetic modification in food production.

Questionnaire

At the beginning of the questionnaire a short definition of gene technology and genetically modified food products was given. The definition was kept in as neutral terms as possible to avoid undesirable attitudinal effects, and went as follows:

All living organisms (plants, animals and human beings) are made up of cells. The cells contain, among other things, hereditary characteristics (genes) that determine what each organism will look like, for instance whether a child will get blue eyes or whether a plant will be able to resist a certain pesticide.

The hereditary characteristics of all living organisms are changed from one generation to another, either naturally or through traditional breeding techniques. By gene technology the hereditary characteristics are altered in a new way. Gene technology can be used to modify the hereditary characteristics of an organism, to move hereditary characteristics from one organism to another, or to take away a specific hereditary characteristic from an organism.

When we use the term ‘genetically modified food products’ in this study, we mean foods where gene technology has been applied at some stage in the production process.

The questionnaire listed the relevant items in a randomized order. Unless otherwise noted, the items mentioned below were measured on 7-point Likert scales.

The global constructs A, B and R were each measured by three items. Attitude was measured by ‘Applying gene technology in food production is extremely bad—extremely good’, ‘Applying gene technology in food production is extremely foolish—extremely wise’, and ‘I am strongly against—strongly for applying gene technology in food production’. Perceived overall benefits were measured by ‘Overall, applying gene technology to produce food products will prove beneficial to the environment, myself and other people that are important to me’, alternatively ‘... will offer great benefits...’ and ‘... will prove advantageous...’, and perceived overall risks were measured by ‘Overall, applying gene technology to produce food products involves considerable risk to the environment, myself and other people that are important to me’, alternatively ‘... will prove harmful...’ and ‘... will prove disadvantageous...’. The items were all assessed on strongly disagree—strongly agree scales.

Specific risks and benefits were elicited from an introductory qualitative study conducted in the four countries using means-end chain theory and the laddering technique (Bredahl, 1998). The elicited risks and beliefs were covered by one item each in the questionnaire and were also rated on strongly disagree—strongly agree scales.

As far as possible measurement of the general attitude and knowledge domains GA was based on already established measurement instruments found in the literature. Attitude to nature was measured by six items. The items constituted a subset of Dunlap and Van Liere’s ‘New Environmental Paradigm’ scale (1978), which was used by Steger, Pierce, Steel and Lovrich (1989) with results similar to those obtained by using the complete scale. Attitude to technology was measured by five items which have previously been used with success by Hamstra (1991). The items are a modified subset of items of a scale which was originally developed to measure technocratic attitudes among scientists. Food neophobia was measured using five items of the ten-item scale developed by Pliner and Hobden (1992). The five items were selected on a subjective basis. Allison (1978) developed a 35-item scale for...
Explaining Consumer Attitudes to Genetic Modification in Food Production

measuring consumer alienation from the marketplace, and the
dimensionality and validity of the scale was further investigated by
Bearden, Lichtenstein and Teel (1983), who identified a three-
factor structure. Here, we have used a subset of five items from the
identified ‘business ethics’ factor, which originally consisted of
eleven items. Again the items were selected on a subjective basis,
excluding items which were not considered appropriate in relation
to food issues. All items were rated on strongly disagree–strongly
agree scales.

Perceived knowledge of the use of gene technology in food
production was attributed both to self, the average person, govern-
ment and industry, each measured by one item, while perceived

FIGURE 1
Determinants of attitude to genetic modification in food production

A = w₁B + w₂R + ∑ᵢ uiGAᵢ

B = ∑ⱼ ∑ₖ βⱼₖpbⱼₖ + ∑ⱼ ∑ₖ βₚₖcbₚₖ

R = ∑ⱼ ∑ₖ βⱼₖprⱼₖ + ∑ⱼ ∑ₖ βₚₖcrₚₖ

where

A = attitude to genetic modification in food production
B = perceived overall benefits
R = perceived overall risks
GAᵢ = general attitude or knowledge domain i
w, u, β = empirically determined weights (standardized regression coefficients)
pbⱼₖ = strength of belief about product-related benefit j related to outcome group k
prⱼₖ = strength of belief about product-related risk j related to outcome group k
cbₚₖ = strength of belief about process-related benefit m related to outcome group k
crₚₖ = strength of belief about process-related risk m related to outcome group k
personal control was measured by two items inspired by previous measurements of the ‘perceived behavioural control’ measure of Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behavior (1985). Again, all items were assessed on strongly disagree–strongly agree scales. Actual knowledge of food production was measured by eight items which were rated on dichotomous true–false scales.

The questionnaire was developed in English and was translated into Danish, German and Italian by bilingual researchers. The translated versions were then cross-checked by another group of bilingual researchers and the questionnaire was pretested in each country (n=30) to allow final adjustments before the full-scale applications.

Data collection

Data were collected by means of personal in-home interviews as this was thought to be the most neutral and least stressing interview setting for respondents of all countries. All respondents completed the questionnaire themselves in the presence of an interviewer who could be consulted with questions relating to the usage of response scales and other technical matters.

ANALYSIS

In the analysis of the data, special emphasis will be put on the cross-cultural validity of the results, and the general construct validity of the results will also be analyzed.

First, principal components analysis will be used to explore the unidimensionality of the items used as measures of each the general attitude and knowledge domains. Likewise, principal components analysis will be used with the belief items to detect possible underlying belief factors. The belief items are expected to group into process and product beliefs, each covering one or more factors.

The applicability in a cross-cultural setting of the detected factors and of each of the three-item measures of the global constructs A, B and R will then be analyzed using multi-sample confirmatory factor analysis. Here, the framework proposed by Grunert, Grunert and Kristensen (1994) which distinguishes among several levels of cross-cultural comparability will be applied and the cross-cultural validity of the data will be analyzed both on an item and scale basis. In addition, the reliabilities of the individual scales will be analyzed by means of Cronbach’s alpha.

Depending on the cross-cultural validity of the data, the proposed attitude model will then be estimated on the pooled data and separately for each country. Possible modifications of the model will be considered as well by inspection of modification indices.

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Explaining Consumer Attitudes to Genetic Modification in Food Production


Extending Two Cognitive Processing Scales—Need for Cognition and Need for Evaluation—for Use in a Health Intervention

Michael Sherrard, University of Auckland, New Zealand
Ronald Czaja, North Carolina State University, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT

The present study builds on the works of Cacioppo and Petty (1982) and Jarvis and Petty (1996). They posit that individuals have different cognitive processing styles and that these individual differences can be reliably measured with the Need for Cognition Scale (18 items) and the Need for Evaluation Scale (16 items). This paper presents research that reduces the two scales from a total of 34 to 18 items. Preliminary results support single factor structures for both reduced scales. Suggestions for future scale development research and implications for a health promotion intervention study are presented.

INTRODUCTION

This study, an early part of a larger research effort, set out to reduce the number of items on the Need for Cognition (Cacioppo and Petty 1982) and the Need for Evaluation (Jarvis and Petty 1996) scales. The overall health promotion intervention research that this study precedes involves administering the two scales in a medical clinic environment. In the clinics it is uncertain who will administer the scales and how much time will be available for this task. It is reasoned that the shorter the combined Need for Cognition (NFC) and Need for Evaluation (NFE) questionnaire, the greater the ease of administering the total instrument in the health clinic environment.

NEED FOR COGNITION CONSTRUCT

Need for cognition (NFC) is defined as the “tendency to engage in and enjoy thinking” (Cacioppo and Petty 1982, p116) and has been well established in the communication and persuasion literature. A sizeable empirical base developed over the past 16 years supports the need for cognition scale. The construct can be reliably measured, is stable over time and situations, and can account for significant variance in information processing beyond that explained by intellectual ability (for a summary see, Cacioppo, Petty, Feinstein, and Jarvis 1996)

A review of the NFC literature shows that researchers have concentrated on either developing a short form of the 34-item scale developed in the original study (Cacioppo and Petty 1982) or investigating the number of required sub-scales (Cacioppo, Petty, Feinstein and Jarvis 1996).

Factor Structure and Reliability of the NFC Scale

Originally, Cacioppo and Petty (1982) developed a 34-item scale to measure the need for cognition, refined from a possible total of 45 items. This was later shortened to a more efficient 18-item scale (Cacioppo, Petty and Kao 1984) that was highly correlated and of equal reliability to the 34-item scale \( r=0.95, p<0.001 \), \( \alpha=0.90 \) for the 18-item scale and \( \alpha=0.91 \) for the 34-item scale. The factor analysis to date demonstrates that inter-individual difference in the engagement and enjoyment of effortful cognitive activities is represented by one dominant factor. The dominant one-factor structure and reliability of the 18-item scale has been replicated (Sadowski and Gulgoz 1992), translated into Dutch (for example, Verplanken, Hazenberg and Palenewen 1992), and administered to different types of populations (Cacioppo, Petty, Feinstein and Jarvis 1996).

Three studies by Chaiken (1987) investigated if high and low NFC loaded onto separate factors. The results supported the single factor structure of the NFC and showed that individuals high in NFC prefer effortful information processing while low NFC individuals prefer heuristic information processing (Cacioppo, Petty, Feinstein and Jarvis 1996).

Replication studies of the 34-item and the 18-item NFC scales have produced similar levels of reliability to the original scales (majority of results, \( \alpha>0.85 \)). The reliability of the scale is demonstrated by the correlations in two test-retest studies of 0.88 \((p<0.001; \text{Sadowski and Gulgoz 1992})\) and 0.66 \((p<0.001; \text{Verplanken 1991})\). Studies using the NFC scale items have not always maintained the original items and some researchers have selected a reduced number of items to be used to measure the NFC construct (Cacioppo, Petty, Feinstein and Jarvis 1996). The 34-item scale was reduced to 9 items in a mail survey (Manfredo and Bright 1991) resulting in a reliability score of alpha=0.76 and reduced to 15 items (Wolfe and Grosec 1990) with a reliability score of alpha=0.88. The 18-item NFC scale that was translated into Dutch was reduced to 11 items (Verplanken 1991) with a reliability score of alpha=0.74 and 6 items were used twice (Verplanken et al. 1992) producing reliability scores of alpha=0.82 and 0.85.

Relationship of the NFC to Other Individual Differences

Numerous studies have shown positive relationships with the NFC scale, although, other than intelligence (Cacioppo and Petty 1982), none have shown more than a moderate correlation. For example, scales measuring devotion to ongoing cognitive tasks had a \( r=0.37, p<0.01 \) (Cacioppo, Petty, Feinstein and Jarvis 1996); perception of personal relevance or involvement had \( r=0.23, p<0.05 \) (Thompson and Zanna 1995); and values had a \( r=0.29, p<0.05 \) (Berzonsky and Sullivan 1992).

A number of studies have shown that the NFC scale is not related to other individual difference variables. These studies show that the NFC is negatively related to dogmatism \((r=-0.23 \text{ to } -0.24, p<0.05; \text{Cacioppo and Petty})\), close-mindedness \((\text{meta-analysis}_r=0.34, p<0.01, \text{where } r_{ave} \text{ is the average correlation index}; \text{Petty and Jarvis 1996})\), and a need for closure \((\text{meta-analysis}_r=0.26, p<0.01; \text{Petty and Jarvis 1996})\). These studies offer support that the NFC scale is a unique, unidimensional measure (Cacioppo, Petty, Feinstein and Jarvis 1996, Petty and Jarvis 1996, Thompson and Zanna 1995).

NFC Characteristics

Many studies have also investigated characteristics or behaviour of individuals who are high compared to low on NFC. The three main areas of study are (1) tendency to engage in effortful cognitive activity, (2) perception of level of cognitive activity, and (3) potential bias in information processing (Cacioppo, Petty, Feinstein and Jarvis 1996).

Tendency to engage in effortful cognitive activity. Individuals who are classified as high in their need for cognition compared to those classified as low, have been shown to: recall more information with which they have been supplied, search for more information to process, be more responsive to argument quality and less responsive to heuristic-systematic cues, generate more task rel
evant thoughts, have a higher correlation between their judgement and thoughts and beliefs, possess more knowledge, perform better on general cognitive tasks, have a stronger link between thoughts and attitudes over time, and manifest extreme attitudes (Cacioppo, Petty, Feinstein and Jarvis 1996, Petty and Jarvis 1996, Verplanken, Hazenberg and Palenewen, 1992, Manfredo and Bright 1991).

Perception of the level of cognitive effort. High NFC individuals perceive that they put forth more cognitive effort than low NFC individuals on specific cognitive tasks.

Potential bias in information processing. Three types of bias have been found to influence high and low NFC individuals in their information processing. First, mood has an effect on a high NFC individual’s cognition while it may affect both high and low NFC individuals’ attitudes. Second, priming of cognitive material may affect the response of high NFC individuals, however, if two messages are presented to a high NFC individual, then primacy effects may influence his or her choice based on the perceived stronger message argument. Last, low NFC individuals are more likely to be influenced by recency effects in information processing (for a full summary see, Cacioppo, Petty, Feinstein and Jarvis 1996, Petty and Jarvis 1996).

**NEED FOR EVALUATION CONSTRUCT**

The Need for Evaluation (NFE) is defined as “the extent to which people naturally tend to engage in evaluation, that is, consider what is good versus bad about various people, objects, and issues” (Petty and Jarvis 1996, p.222). Jarvis and Petty (1996) have shown that, similar to the NFC variable, the NFE variable can be reliably measured, is stable over both time and situations, and is significantly different from other individual difference variables. This last finding contradicts common beliefs that evaluative responding is pervasive and closely tied to cognition. Although the NFE construct is relatively new and untested compared to the NFC, Jarvis and Petty (1996) have suggested that it is an influential and a complementary individual difference variable to the NFC.

**Factor Structure and Reliability of the NFE Scale**

Five studies to date have undertaken on scaling individual differences in the NFE (Jarvis and Petty 1996). The factor analysis in the scale development process shows that inter-individual differences in evaluative activity are represented by one dominant factor. In addition, the 16-item NFE scale, refined from an original pool of 46 items, is shown to be highly reliable (alpha=0.83 to 0.87).

**Relationship of the NFE to Other Individual Differences**

The NFE was predicted to be related to existing individual difference scales. For example, theorists have commented that individuals who are high in NFE make more global evaluations than individuals low in NFE and this gives them greater control over their environment (Jarvis and Petty 1996). One hypothesized relationship is between the NFE and the Desire for Control Scales (Burger and Cooper 1979). The correlation was significant but relatively small (r=0.22, p<.05), suggesting that the motivation for control may only be one dimension of the NFE. Jarvis and Petty (1996) also demonstrated low or no significant correlations between the NFE and four other individual differences: motivation to attain structure and knowledge, self-monitoring, affect intensity, and social desirability. One scale that the NFE was expected to be significantly related to is the NFC. Jarvis and Petty (1996) found a moderate and positive relationship (r=0.35, p<.001). The authors suggest that the NFE is partly based on differences in people’s motivation to think and that evaluation does not require continuous effortful thought (Petty and Jarvis 1996, Jarvis and Petty 1996).

These studies have suggested two characteristics of individuals that distinguish between those who are high versus low in NFE: (1) the amount and time of attitude retrieval from memory, and (2) the amount of opinions offered by an individual (Petty and Jarvis 1996).

The aims of the current research are threefold: 1) to provide another test of support for the unidimensionality of the NFC and NFE constructs, while 2) reducing the number of scale items to make them easier to administer in a health clinic environment, and 3) maintaining the reliability and validity of the reduced scales.

**METHOD**

**Study Participants**

A self-administered questionnaire containing both the NFC and the NFE scales was administered to 111 primarily undergraduate university and technical institute students majoring in arts, business, or social science subjects. Four subjects did not complete the instrument and were excluded from the analysis, thus, the results consist of 107 respondents.

As in the original study of the 16-item NFE scale (Jarvis and Petty 1996) and the short form 18-item NFC scale (Cacioppo, Petty, Feinstein and Jarvis 1996), subjects’ responses in our study were recorded on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1=extremely uncharacteristic to 5=extremely characteristic. To control for response acquiescence, 9 items in the NFC scale and 6 items in the NFE scale were reverse-keyed. Participants were classified as high or low in NFC and NFE based on whether their summed score was above or below the median for that scale.

The first stage goal was to replicate the original 18-item NFC (Cacioppo, Petty and Kao 1984) and the 16-item NFE scale studies (Jarvis and Petty 1996). The analysis of the scale responses included principal components factor analysis, Cronbach’s alpha, item-total correlations, item mean and standard deviation comparisons across studies, and an assessment of validity (Jarvis and Petty 1996, Churchill 1979). A confirmatory factor analysis was also undertaken on the reduced NFC and NFE scales using Amos–Version 3.61 (Arbuckle 1997). This procedure complements the traditional methods of scale development and provides a more explicit test of unidimensionality (Gerbing and Anderson 1988).

We discuss first the process of reducing the number of items used to measure the two constructs.

**Assessing Content Validity**

Content validity was assessed to ensure measurement of the two individual difference constructs as defined by Churchill (1995) and Zaichkowsky (1985). Two judges who are well versed with the NFC and NFE literature independently grouped the items into categories. The categories for the NFC items were: (1) need for puzzle solving, (2) thought avoidance tasks, (3) enjoy thinking, (4) don’t enjoy thinking, and (5) enjoy important thinking tasks. The NFE items were grouped into: (1) strong opinions, (2) having opinions, (3) evaluate as good or bad, and (4) indifference.

To further assess content validity, two reviews of the items were undertaken. First, the two full scales were administered to 24 graduate students who are not part of the data analyzed in this paper. The students were asked to write comments on the meaning of each item and the appropriateness of the items to measure the two constructs. Concurrently, a total of five judges, including the principal investigators, commented on the items’ meaning and appropriateness of the wording. Comments from both reviews were used to choose the items that were retained (retained and deleted items are shown in Tables 1 and 3). Additionally, a number of wording modifications were suggested. The reviewers noted that
some NFE items and reverse NFC items could not be answered accurately because they felt the items were too extreme. For example, the reviewers commented that the NFE item, “I enjoy strongly liking and disliking new things”, and the NFC reverse item, “I only think as hard as I have to”, may be perceived as too negative and socially undesirable.

**RESULTS**

**Need for Cognition Measure**

The retained and deleted items, corresponding factor loadings, and item to total scale correlations of the 18-item NFC scale are presented in Table 1.

**Factor analysis.** The principal components analysis revealed a single dominant factor for both the 18-item and 9-item NFC scales. The first factor of the 18-item NFC scale accounted for 25.5% of the variance while the second factor accounted for 10.5% of the variance. A total of 15 items with factor loadings 0.35 or greater loaded on the first factor of the 18-item NFC scale. The first factor of the 9-item NFC scale accounted for 39.5% of the variance while the second factor accounted for 9.5% of the variance. The percentage of variance attributable to the first factor in the reduced scale is greater than for the first factor in the 18-item scale. Factor loadings for the first dominant factor of the 9-item NFC scale were of moderate to high strength: absolute values range from 0.55 to 0.74. The Scree test shown in Figure 1 supports the retention of one factor for the 9-item scale. Hence, the longer 18-item scale does not appear more efficient with our sample.

**Scale reliability.** The 18-item and the reduced 9-item NFC scales were both subjected to reliability analysis. The 18-item scale had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.81 while the 9-item scale had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.80. This result suggests that in using the reduced scale little is sacrificed in terms of the reliability.

**Scale correlation and convergent validity.** If the first factor extracted from the data in both the 18-item and 9-item NFC scales were the same construct, then there should be a high degree of
correspondence in the factor loadings between scales. Table 2 shows the correlation between the scales is 0.70 (p<0.001), suggesting a conceptual redundancy of the 18-item scale with the 9-item scale. This result also establishes convergent validity of the reduced scale.

**Need Evaluation Measure**

The retained and deleted items, corresponding factor loadings and item to total scale correlations of the 16-item NFE scale are presented in Table 3.

**Factor analysis.** The principal components analysis revealed a single dominant factor for both the 16-item and 9-item NFE scales. The first factor of the 16-item NFE scale accounted for 25.1% of the variance while the second factor accounted for 12% of the variance. Factor loadings for the first dominant factor were of low-moderate to high strength for the 16-item NFE scale: absolute values range from 0.32 to 0.74. The first factor of the 9-item NFE scale accounted for 35% of the variance while the second factor accounted for 13% of the variance. The variance attributable to the first factor in the reduced scale is greater than the variance associated with the first factor in the 16-item scale. Factor loadings for the first dominant factor of the 9-item NFE scale were of at least moderate strength: absolute values range from 0.43 to 0.74. The Scree test shown in Figure 2 supports the retention of one factor for the 9-item scale. This result suggests that the 9-item NFE scale may be more efficient than the longer scale.

**Scale reliability.** The 16-item scale had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.79 while the 9-item scale had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.76. Similar to the NFC reduced scale, this result demonstrates that little is sacrificed in terms of the reliability with the 9-item scale.

**Scale correlation and convergent validity.** The 9-item NFE first factor scores correlated highly and significantly to the original 16-item NFE first factor scores. Table 4 indicates a correlation of 0.74 (p<0.001), again suggesting a conceptual redundancy between the original 16-item scale and the reduced 9-item scale. This result also shows convergent validity of the reduced scale.

**NFE scale predictive validity.** The NFE is a newer construct than the NFC and therefore it is important to test for predictive validity. Past research by Jarvis and Petty (see Jarvis and Petty 1996, Petty and Jarvis 1996) has shown three related measures of a need for evaluation are (1) level of message retrieval from memory, (2) level of agreement with authority spokespersons on incorrect statements, and (3) level of opinions on fictitious or unknown statements. Individuals who have high need for evaluation retrieve more information from memory. This suggests that they rely on information retrieved from memory and are not as persuaded by fictitious statements by authority spokespersons. Below is the statement that incorporated these measures of need for evaluation.
Recently, Dr Hatherwaite from the British College of Physicians, stated that, “the importance of having a diet high in fiber and low in fat is exaggerated.”

Dr Hatherwaite believes that studies that link fiber and fat levels in diet to colon cancer and heart disease, respectively, are inconclusive.

Table 5 illustrates that a significant majority of participants who are high in need for evaluation disagreed with this fictitious
**Extending Two Cognitive Processing Scales—Need for Cognition and Need for Evaluation—for Use in a Health Intervention**

TABLE 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>NFE16</th>
<th>NFE9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.735**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the p<0.001 level (2-tailed)

TABLE 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Disagree % (Raw)</th>
<th>Agree/Don’t Know % (Raw)</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 item NFE</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>37.9(22)</td>
<td>62.1(36)</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>62.5(30)</td>
<td>37.5(18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09 item NFE</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>39.0(23)</td>
<td>61.0(36)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>61.7(29)</td>
<td>38.3(18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>NFC18</th>
<th>NFC9</th>
<th>NFE16</th>
<th>NFE9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.697**</td>
<td>.183</td>
<td>.185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFC9</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>.735**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFE16</td>
<td>.183</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFC9</td>
<td>.185</td>
<td>.185</td>
<td>.735**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the p<0.001 level (2-tailed)

Additional Tests

NFC and NFE reduced scale discriminant validity. As noted by Jarvis and Petty (1996) “...evaluation by no means requires effortful thought” (p182). This assertion indicates that the two constructs, NFC and NFE, should not correlate highly. Table 6 shows that there is no significant correlation between the reduced NFC and the reduced NFE scales, thus offering evidence of discriminant validity.

Preliminary results of a confirmatory factor analysis. The exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis supports the position that a single dominant factor is responsible for a large percentage of the variance in each scale. To more rigorously test the hypothesis that the reduced NFC and NFE scales are unidimensional, a confirmatory factor analysis was undertaken using Amos—Version 3.61 (Arbuckle 1997, Baumgartner and Homburg 1996). Table 7 shows that our goodness of fit measures indicate fair to good results that are consistent with the exploratory analysis. The 9-item NFC scale model has the best fit with a Chi-square value of 29.10 (df=27, p=0.35). Other fit indices support the one factor solution of the reduced NFC scale: Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)=0.94, the Adjusted-Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)=0.90, Comparative Fit Index (CFI)=0.99). The Chi-square value for the 9-item NFE scale indicates that our model is less than perfect ($\chi^2=44.49$, df=27, p=0.02,) but the GFI=0.912, the AGFI=0.854, and the CFI=0.89. These latter measures of fit contrast with the Chi-square result and indicate a reasonable model.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study set out to reduce the number of items in the NFC and the NFE for use in a health promotion intervention. The two scales were reliably reduced to 9 items each and remained valid and representative of the original constructs. The new reduced scales
will be more manageable than the original 34-item combined scales and this will be beneficial in the planned health clinic application. Further, the positive predictive validity test result of the 9-item NFE scale, using a health based question, is a preliminary confirmation of the use of the reduced scales in health interventions.

The confirmatory factor analysis generally supports the single factor structure of the two new reduced scales, but the results suggest a need for further refinement and testing to assure unidimensionality. One direction for future work would be to reexamine the scale item wording using cognitive pretesting methods that have been developed for and applied to survey questions. The present study suggests that some items were too extreme or ambiguous to truly measure latent individual characteristics.

The present study supports Jarvis and Petty’s (1996) exploratory factor analysis findings of a weak but positive correlation between the NFC and the NFE constructs. Future research needs to examine if these two individual difference constructs are subdimensions of a higher-order cognitive processing construct.

### REFERENCES


Wolfe, Raymond N. and James W. Grosch (1990), “Personality Correlates of Confidence in One’s Decisions,” Journal of Personality, 58, 515-534.

SESSION OVERVIEW

The three papers in the session addressed different aspects of consumer discontent. Together, the papers focused on how consumers’ knowledge about the company and involvement with the specific cause of discontent interact with remedial actions taken by that firm in affecting consumers’ expressions of discontent. Specifically, the first paper by Sen, Gürhan-Canli, and Morwitz examined consumers’ decisions to participate in a boycott following an unfair price increase. They treated the consumers’ boycott decision for an otherwise desirable product as a social dilemma. They draw on research, which has been used to explain mobilization and participation in social movements to predict whether or not an individual will participate in a boycott. They find that consumers’ expectations of overall participation in the boycott, of their own effectiveness, and of the boycott’s success interact in predictable ways to affect individual consumers’ decision to boycott. Their research reveals the tension between individual and collective gains in this particular expression of consumer discontent. The second presentation by Klein explored consumer reactions to corporate responses to a boycott. An experiment was conducted in which subjects were exposed to accusations against Nike concerning their labor practices in Asia and Nike’s responses to these accusations were manipulated. The findings indicated that these responses differentially affected consumer anger towards Nike, feelings of guilt concerning the purchase of Nike products in the future, and the intention to boycott Nike products. The third presentation by Dawar and Pillutla reported the results of a field survey and an experiment designed to examine whether consumers’ prior expectations about a firm’s consumer friendliness affects the interpretation of the firm’s response to a product-harm crisis and consequently the brand equity of the firm. The results suggest that prior responses interact with actual firm response to determine the effect on brand equity. Specifically, the same response by two firms with different levels of prior consumer expectation can be interpreted very differently, especially when the response is equivocal.

Withholding Consumption: A Social Dilemma Perspective on Consumer Boycotts
Sankar Sen, Temple University, U.S.A.
Zeynep Gürhan-Canli, University of Michigan, U.S.A.
Vicki Morwitz, New York University, U.S.A.

Boycotts have become a pervasive and potent expression of consumer discontent in today’s marketplace: according to the newsletter Boycott Quarterly, over 800 products, not to mention whole states and countries, are current targets for boycotts worldwide. This paper represents an initial attempt at a theoretical understanding of the individual consumer’s decision to participate in a boycott. We propose that for a majority of consumers, the decision to withhold consumption of a desirable product or service in the interests of achieving certain collective economic, social and/or political gains can be conceptualized as a social dilemma. Consequently, we draw on social dilemma research and Klanderman’s (1984) theory of mobilization and participation in social movements to investigate the determinants of and the mechanisms underlying the individual consumer’s decision to participate in a boycott. In a set of two experiments involving marketing policy boycott scenarios, we manipulate (i) subjects’ expectations about overall participation in the boycott (small vs. large percentage), (ii) their expectations about their own contribution (low vs. high self-efficacy), and (iii) the boycott’s eventual outcome (failure vs. success), to examine their interactive effects on subjects’ willingness to participate in a boycott protesting an unfair and unanticipated price increase (Garrett 1987).

Our results suggest that when the personal value of achieving the boycott’s objective (i.e. reversing or mitigating the price increase) is low, consumers’ decision to participate in the boycott is analogous to cooperation in a social dilemma. In particular, we find that consumers’ boycott participation decision is jointly and predictably determined by their expectations regarding overall participation, their own efficacy, and the boycott’s eventual outcome. When a successful boycott outcome is salient, their high likelihood of participation is not affected by either their expectations about their own efficacy or others’ participation. On the other hand, when an unsuccessful boycott outcome is salient, we obtain a crossover interaction between their expectations about their own efficacy and others’ participation. While subjects’ participation likelihood is not affected by their expectations about others’ participation when their self-efficacy expectations are high, it varies directly with the percentage of consumers expected to boycott when their self-efficacy expectations are low. Importantly, the relationship between consumers’ participation likelihood and all three expectations is mediated by their perceptions of boycott success, and moderated by their susceptibility to interpersonal influence. The implications of our findings for consumers, boycott organizers, and boycott targets are discussed.

The Effectiveness of Corporate Responses to Boycotts: Nike’s Defense of Labor Practices
Jill G. Klein, INSEAD, France

Labor practices in Asia have prompted calls for the boycott of products of some multinational corporations. These accused firms must decide how to respond to consumer protests. While there has been some discussion of boycotts in the marketing literature (e.g., Friedman 1991; Garrett 1987), little attention has been paid to the effectiveness of different corporate responses to a boycott.

In the present study consumer reactions to corporate responses to a boycott were investigated. An experiment was conducted in which subjects were exposed to accusations against Nike concerning their labor practices in Asia. This study was conducted through a mail survey of a sample of U.S. households (mean age=48). Nike’s responses to accusations were manipulated across subjects. Four types of responses were examined (each of which were actually made by Nike): 1) denial of the accusations; 2) claim that they cannot control what happens in overseas factories that they do not own; 3) implementation of a Code of Conduct that protects overseas workers (with a monitoring plan); 4) no response (control).

Thus far, surveys have been returned by 63 subjects (32% response rate). Preliminary results indicate that the implementation of a code of conduct led to a lower intention to participate in a Nike boycott than did the other two responses ($t(59)=2.11$, p<.05). This tactic also led consumers to feel that Nike had done the right thing.
in its response to accusations ($t(44)=3.18$, $p<.01$), and to feel marginally less guilty about purchasing Nike products in the future ($t(59)=1.93$, $p<.06$). Further, the claim that they could not control what happens in their overseas factories generated greater anger at Nike than did the other responses ($t(58)=2.06$, $p<.05$).

The impact of various motivations to participate in a boycott on the intention to boycott were examined through regression analysis. Anger toward Nike and feelings of guilt were both predictors of the intention to boycott ($b=.57$, $p<.001$ and $b=.29$, $p<.05$, respectively). Consumer efficacy, or the belief that consumers could change corporate behavior through boycotts, was not a significant predictor of boycott intention ($b=.05$, n.s.). Thus, the desire to participate in the boycott appears to be fueled by emotional issues.

Product ownership appeared to affect perceptions of Nike. Those who owned Nike products were less angry than were those who did not own Nike products ($t(60)=3.53$, $p<.001$). Among owners, boycott intention was lower the greater the number of Nike products owned ($r=-.40$, $p<.01$). These initial results suggest that Nike owners are predisposed to view Nike’s labor practices and their responses to accusations in a favorable light. Additional data are being collected to examine the reactions of owners versus non-owners to Nike’s responses to accusations concerning their labor practices.

**The Impact of Product-Harm Crises on Brand Equity: The Moderating Role of Consumer Expectations**

Niraj Dawar, The University of Western Ontario, Canada
Madan Pillutla, HKUST, Hong Kong

Product-harm crises which are discrete, well publicized events in which a product is found to be defective or dangerous, are increasing with the complexity of products, the more stringent quality requirements of consumers, and stricter interpretations of product liability laws. Crisis situations, and in particular, product harm crises, provide an opportune setting to study the impact of corporate actions on customer-based brand equity because: (1) by their very nature crises have a major impact on customer perceptions of firms and their brands. Large shifts in brand equity are important from a corporate standpoint and are more easily detectable from a measurement standpoint; and (2) product-harm, as opposed to other forms of crises (e.g. environmental or political crises) directly involve the marketing function and customers’ brand-related perceptions. The purpose of the present research is to assess the impact of firm responses to a product harm crisis situation on customer-based brand equity. A conceptual framework is developed on the basis of previous research, which suggests how information about crises and firm response may be integrated into existing cognitive structures based on prior expectations of firm response. Hypotheses drawn from this theoretical framework are tested in an experiment and a field survey conducted in the immediate aftermath of a product-harm crisis.

Results suggest that the impact of firm response to a crisis on customer based brand equity is a function of consumers’ prior expectations. An identical response by two firms with different prior consumer expectations can have opposite effects on brand equity. The magnitude of difference depends on the whether the firm’s response was unambiguous or ambiguous. Results of the field survey show that these differences may be due to selective weighting of information. In particular, consumers loyal to the target crisis brand were more likely to base their future purchase decisions on their perceptions of the firm’s responsible behavior during the crisis. On the other hand, consumers who purchased other brands were more likely to base future purchase decisions on their perceptions of the risk associated with purchasing the target brand.

Implications of the results are drawn for crisis management, brand equity, and the theoretical expectations framework. Specifically, for crisis management the results suggest that brand equity is preserved, and in some cases enhanced, by communicating to consumers the firm’s unambiguous response to the crisis. Further, tailored messages for different segments of the market (e.g. existing and future consumers) would alleviate their different concerns. The contribution of this project to brand equity research is that it provides an initial examination of corporate actions on brand equity. Finally, from a theoretical standpoint, the results of the experiment also demonstrate an interaction of prior expectations and a new information, which has remained elusive in previous research on expectations (Hoch and Ha 1986; Ha and Hoch 1989).

Smith (1993) suggested that the interaction is elusive because the stimuli (advertising and product-trial) used in previous experiments in marketing have generally been overwhelmingly positive, creating a ceiling effect. In a crisis situation, the base-line impact is negative. This removes the constraints of the ceiling effects. As a result, we do detect the interaction that theory predicts, but which has remained elusive in previous studies.

**REFERENCES**


SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY
Ethical Issues in Social Sector Marketing
Gary J. Bamossy, University of Utah, U.S.A.

SESSION OVERVIEW
An increasingly common approach to solving social problems around the world is the application of commercial marketing concepts and techniques, known as social marketing, to influence undesirable behavior. Much of the practice and research in this area is closely based on consumer behavior theory and field and laboratory investigations. Now that we are becoming more successful getting these ideas accepted in managing behavior, we need to consider the ethical issues surrounding the management of these behaviors. Unfortunately, unlike most marketing activities, social marketing is not subject to formal market regulations nor are there any accepted code or norms of practice. Yet, there is a wide range of ethical and moral issues that must be confronted if the field is to achieve the formidable mission it sets out for itself. At the moment, practitioners and their funders and advisors are guided primarily by their own sense of what is right and proper.

Social marketers confront ethical and moral dilemmas all the time, but do not always reflect on them. What if improving the lives of one group has negative effects on another group? Or what if a strategy would work better and more lives improved if only the social marketer was not quite so candid about the recommended course of action? Is it permissible to try to drive tobacco marketers out of the cigarette business? Is it permissible to pass laws making a crime to not wear a seat belt if this takes away individual freedom? Are alliances with tainted partners acceptable if together they are making the world a better place? Does social marketing need its own Code of Ethics?

This session is designed to address these and many more issues surrounding the use of a very potent technology, commercial marketing, in influencing consumer behavior in what everyone assumes is a good cause.

A Framework for the Ethical Management of Public Health and Social Issues
Michael Rothschild, University of Wisconsin, U.S.A.

Public health and social issue managers are asked to succeed with respect to the management of the behavior of members of society. To accomplish this, they have at hand the tool sets of education, marketing and law. What are the rights and responsibilities of these managers in seeking to influence the behavior of citizens in a free-choice society when the freely-made choices may lead to externalities for the society or for other individuals? What are the rights and responsibilities of the target individuals as well as the individuals who are indirectly impacted in social marketing programs? Under what conditions do managers have the right to influence, and under what conditions is there a responsibility to do so? If there is a responsibility to manage efficiently and effectively, then what tradeoffs need to be made between allowing free choice and managing externalities that result from undesired free choice?

Utilitarianism calls for the greatest good for the greatest number; teleology suggests that means are justified by the ends. These philosophies encourage managers to focus on the development of strategies with wide impact. But, are the issues here different from those in commercial marketing? Should the height of the ethical hurdle in selecting marketing strategies be higher or lower than that in the private sector? There are many in social marketing who would say that the standard must be higher, that their cause is a noble one, and that they must be beholden to a higher standard. Another view would be that the standards permissibly can be lower because the cause they are promoting is more noble than in commercial ventures. Is any strategy permissible if the cause is good enough?

If a manager is entrusted with resolving a public health or social issue problem and selects less than the most efficient and effective set of strategies and tactics, can this be inferred to comprise unethical management? Is it unethical to use inefficiently what is limited taxpayer or charitable resources? Is it unethical to allow illness and premature death to occur unnecessarily when unused strategies could be have had more impact?

Eating more fruits and vegetables reduces the probability of the onset of many forms of cancer. Given that fact, is it ethical to use inefficient education programs that inform many, but only change the behavior of a few? In a free-choice society, is it ethical to pass laws that force people to eat more produce if they would rather choose junk food? Are manipulative and emotional tactics based on misleading messages and incomplete information ethical if good health is prolonged? In a society where medical costs are high—and are paid for either through tax revenues or through insurance (both being a sharing of costs across large numbers)—is it ethical to allow a behavior to exist which causes externalities that are imposed on others? Can consumer marketing be seen as a good compromise between the inefficiency of education and the abatement of free choice that comes with laws?

This presentation does not reach answers to any of the above questions, but, rather, puts forth a framework within which the manager can consider two sets of issues. First are the tradeoffs between rights and responsibilities, and free choice and externalities. Second are the issues inherent in considering costs and benefits, efficiency and effectiveness, and means and ends. This presentation considers conditions under which education, marketing, and/or law might be appropriate and ethical tools of behavior management with respect to public health and social issue problems.

Alliances for Social Benefit: Being Good While Doing Good
Alan R. Andreasen, Georgetown University, U.S.A.
Minette Drumwright, University of Texas at Austin, U.S.A.

Two fundamental characteristics of social marketing organizations are that they have very limited resources (both finances and skills) and they often have huge, dramatic goals (give examples). As a consequence, they need help from others to leverage their own resources. While alliances are common in the private sector, they pose special problems for social marketers. In part, this is because the parties B typically corporations and nonprofits B differ significantly in size, expertise, objectives, performance measures and, most importantly, cultures.

These differences can lead to potential ethical problems on both sides. These can appear with respect both to the alliance transactions themselves and to the content of the social marketing program on which the alliance is working. Among the possible dilemmas are the following:

a. Hiding or disguising policies, practices, outcomes;
b. Taking an unfair share of the Aspoils;
Ethical Issues in Social Sector Marketing

Ethical Issues in Social Sector Marketing

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N. Craig Smith, Georgetown University, U.S.A. and INSEAD, France

The practice of social marketing is generally founded on good intentions. Nonetheless, in seeking to do good, social marketers face many ethical issues. Indeed, in some respects there is greater scope for unethical practice in social marketing than in for-profit marketing by business. This paper identifies the range of ethical issues arising in social marketing and explores the potential of social contract theory as a basis for informing decisions about these issues. More specifically, it examines the possible use of Integrative Social Contract Theory (ISCT) by social marketers.

Social marketing seeks to change social behavior to benefit the target audience and the broader society. Hence, at its core, social marketing may challenge the autonomy of the individual who is the subject of a social marketing campaign. Further, some social marketing campaigns may be of benefit to the wider society, but not to the target individual (e.g., some contraception programs in LDCs). Even where target individuals would give informed consent to social marketing campaigns and see benefits to themselves, there may be ethical issues arising in the development and execution of marketing programs. Social marketers make decisions about which segments to target and, hence, who will not benefit from social marketing programs. Marketing programs may involve questions associated with product safety, truth in advertising, and fairness in pricing. In sum, social marketers are faced with many of the ethical issues found in for-profit marketing as well as a set of issues that are unique to the social marketing context.

Social contract theory is gaining increased recognition within business ethics, particularly in a specific formulation known as Integrative Social Contract Theory (Donaldson and Dunfee 1994). ISCT integrates two types of contracts. A hypothetical macrosocial contract provides the overall framework and is a heuristic device comparable to the classic social contracts of Locke, Hobbes, and Rousseau. In keeping with these philosophers, ISCT views global humanity as seeking to design a binding, though unwritten agreement that establishes the parameters for ethics in economic relation-
A New Typology of Brand Image
Michaël Korchia, ESSEC, France

ABSTRACT

Keller’s (1993) definition of brand image as “perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory” is adopted in this paper. However, both his typology of brand image and Aaker’s typology (1991) are shown to have some weaknesses. In this paper I introduce a new typology of brand image that addresses the weaknesses in these typologies.

Most researchers and practitioners agree about the importance of stressing brand image. Aaker (1991), for example, says image creates value in a variety of ways, helping consumers to process information, differentiating the brand, generating reasons to buy, giving positive feelings, and providing a basis for extensions. However, there is still a lack of agreement about the definition of brand image (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990). Keller’s (1993: 3) definition, although it has not, to my knowledge, been tested yet, seems to be a major contribution in this domain. His definition of brand image as “perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory” is consistent with many other authors’ (Newman, 1957; Dichter, 1985; Aaker, 1991; Engel, Blackwell & Miniard, 1995... ); A more simple definition could be “all that a consumer can possibly associate with a particular brand.” Mitchell (1982: 46, for a review) considers memory an associative network model: “within this model, the nodes of the network represent concepts while the arcs are linkages (that also define relationships) between concepts.” As Keller notes, these associations (Figure 1) can vary in strength (which makes information more accessible), favorability, and uniqueness (the degree to which this association is not shared with other competing brands). Sirgy (1981) thinks that these associations can be characterized by at least eleven dimensions.

Accordingly, this associative network of knowledge for a brand is the image of this brand (Engel, Blackwell & Miniard, 1995) as stored in the long-term memory, which is defined as “a subcomponent of memory which is permanent, virtually unlimited in storage capacity, and well stored” (Dacin & Mitchell, 1986). Brand associations are all the linkages that exist between a brand and the other nodes stored in memory. In measuring the structure (how information related to a brand is organized in memory) and the content (i.e. brand associations) of an associative network of knowledge that a consumer holds for a brand, the perception the consumer has of the brand is also measured.

Note that this view is consistent with the belief that knowledge is organized into packets of information (Mitchell, 1982). For example, schemata are packets of information centered around concepts. As Olson (1979: 5) notes, “the schema notion implies that memory is comprised of many highly organized structures of knowledge or schemata, and is not a vast storage ‘bin’ into which all coded information is ‘dumped’.”

EXISTING TYPOLOGIES OF BRAND IMAGE

In this paper, the word “brand” is restricted to companies that sell consumer goods. Thus, organizations, charity funds and so forth do not match this definition.

Several ways to classify knowledge have been proposed, including the distinction between declarative versus procedural knowledge (Anderson, 1983). Declarative knowledge involves the facts that are known about a particular domain, whereas procedural knowledge refers to the knowledge of rules to take action. However, to study the perception of brands, the researcher, as well as the practitioner, needs a more relevant typology.

Keller (1993) considers brand image and brand awareness (brand recall and recognition) to be the two components of brand knowledge. He classifies brand associations (and therefore brand image) into three categories that fall along a continuum from concrete to abstract.

1. Attributes: Keller distinguishes between non-product-related attributes (price, packaging, user imagery, usage imagery; the last two can also produce brand personality attributes) and product-related attributes.
2. Benefits: functional (often linked to physiological needs), experiential (what it feels like to use the product), and symbolic (one example: a need for social approval or self-esteem). See Park, Jaworski, & MacInnis (1986) for more details.
3. Brand attitudes, defined as consumers’ overall evaluations of a brand.

Keller (1991) makes another important contribution with his typology, distinguishing between 11 dimensions: product attributes, intangibles, customer benefits, price, use/application, user, celebrity, life style, product class, competitors, and country of origin.

Aaker’s and Keller’s typologies share many common categories (see Delamotte, 1996, for a review): price, user imagery, usage imagery, and product attributes. I will show that both have some weaknesses, but first consider how it is possible to tap the content of a consumer’s knowledge...

THE FREE ELICITATION PROCEDURE

It is widely accepted that a “spreading activation” process occurs when retrieving information stored in memory (e.g. Collins & Loftus, 1975; Keller, 1991; Mitchell, 1982). When the amount of activation at a node exceeds some threshold level, the information contained in this node is recalled. When a node is activated, the nodes most strongly linked with this node are more likely to be activated.

Olson and Muderrasiglu (1978: 7) define the free-elicitation method as “a procedure in which respondents are free to say anything and everything that comes to mind when presented with a stimulus probe cue.” A very general probe attempts to activate a memory schema without inducing any particular answer. When the probe is a brand name, the objective is to activate all the nodes associated with this name in the subject’s memory. However, as subjects are not likely to recall everything they know about a brand in response to a single probe, a multiple elicitation procedure

2The first statements elicited by a consumer are the most likely to be the “strongest” ones; also, the concepts that are the most repeated are probably connected to many other concepts, indicating that they are central (Michel, 1997, 1998). However, it goes beyond the scope of this paper to take a further look in this direction: our aim is to clarify the content of a brand image, not to show why people have positive/negative or strong/weak brand associations.
A New Typology of Brand Image

Limitations of the existing typologies

If a typology does not satisfy any of Brucks’ three criteria (1986), it must be modified and improved. Both Keller’s and Aaker’s typologies need to be tested conceptually and empirically and subsequently be improved.

1. Are not exhaustive: Keller’s typology doesn’t include any category for competing brands. It doesn’t seem possible to classify such a statement as “Brand X has a lot of shops everywhere in the country” (this indicates the need for a category called “retailing” or “distribution,” see further the discussion about secondary associations), nor to classify any statements about the subject’s own experience (such as “I bought some brand X jeans”). Aaker’s typology doesn’t include attitudes (making a statement such as “I love brand X” difficult to code). If a typology is not sufficiently comprehensive, that is, if too many statements do not fit in any of the categories (say 10 percent or more; Brucks, 1986, reports that 98 percent of the relevant statements could be classified into one of the categories of her typology), it must be improved and/or rewritten.

2. Are too difficult for coders: The fact that some important categories are missing makes the coding task more difficult. Moreover, Keller argues that the typology does not need brand personality attributes (human attributes attributed to the brand) because these attributes arise as a result of inferences about the underlying user or usage situation. Yet, it seems impossible, when a consumer says a brand is “youthful,” to determine whether this statement is motivated by the ads, the consumers, or even by his observation of the products. This point is a consequence of the former statement.

3. From a more theoretical point of view, Keller doesn’t emphasize that attitude must be viewed as an unidimensional construct (see Lutz, 1991 for a review).
Keller (1993: 11) distinguishes between brand associations and secondary associations. The latter are associations that are linked to a brand association but not directly related to the product or service. He adds that “Because the brand becomes identified with this other entity, consumers may infer that the brand shares associations with that entity, thus producing indirect or ‘secondary’ links for the brand... Secondary associations may arise from primary attributes associations related to the company, the country of origin, the distribution channels, a celebrity... or an event.” This means that what Keller calls secondary associations are not directly linked with the brand in memory, but that they can be, if, for example, the brand communicates in this manner. Moreover, the reasons some associations are considered secondary instead of direct are not clearly defined: for instance, why are celebrity spokespersons considered secondary associations while typical users are considered direct associations? In addition, Keller says that the distribution channels are secondary associations because “store images have associations that may be linked with the product they sell,” but many associations related to stores are “direct” brand associations, particularly when the store has the same name as the brand. If a customer says that shop assistants working in a shop called “brand X” are good-looking, this is a brand association; “brand X” is directly linked with this node (Dacin & Mitchell, 1986). Customers may make inferences that create a more favorable attitude toward the brand.

Because of the possible limitations of both these typologies3 a new typology of brand image (Figure 2) is proposed and tested. If this typology can satisfy Brucks criterion, it can be accepted. This new typology was tested empirically against Keller’s and Aaker’s typologies (see below).

If a large number of statements are classified in categories that don’t exist in Keller’s or in Aaker’s typologies, both typologies will be shown not exhaustive enough, and that the new typology is more comprehensive than the other ones.

The typology is detailed below, and refers in part to previous works by Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993). It was conceptually built taking both Aaker’s and Keller’s typologies into account, and after discussions with experts and personal reflexion. Brands associations can be classified into 6 broad dimensions, or 15 dimensions in total:

1. The company: this category refers to knowledge of facts related to the firm: its country of origin, its strategy, its story, and so forth. Statements relative to the notoriety of the brand are included in this category, because the brand is itself a part of the company (Olivar, 1989). This category doesn’t appear in previous typologies (except for the country of origin notion), even though consumers may elicit statements more related with the firm itself than with the brand.

2. Other Organizations: this includes statements referring to the competitors, comparing them with the brand of concern, to government, charity funds, and so forth.

The evoked universe:

3. Brand Personality, lifestyle: Human characteristics associated with the brand (Fournier, 1994).

4. Celebrities/events: When advertising creates an association between a brand and a celebrity endorser, the celebrity’s associations may then become related with the brand (Rossiter & Percy, 1987). In other words, his/her expertise, attractiveness and so forth, may be shared with the brand. The same thing may happen when dealing with events instead of celebrities.

5. User imagery: brand associations about the typical user or other users. Several distinctions can be made: age, physical appearance, job...

6. Usage imagery: associations about the typical usage situation: the location, personal experience or information search.

“Attributes are those descriptive features that characterize a product -what a consumer thinks the product is or has and what is involved with its purchase or consumption... Product-related attributes are defined as the ingredients necessary for performing the product function sought by consumers. Non product-related attributes are external aspects of the product that relate to its purchase or consumption” (Keller, 1993: 4).

Non product-related attributes:

7. Product category: associations about the product category to which some of the products of the brand belong. Positioning of the brand as perceived by consumers. The level of abstraction (from “Kenzo makes some jackets,” the most concrete, to “Kenzo makes ready-to-wear,” the most abstract) may vary widely (Kanwar et al., 1981; Conover, 1982).

8. Price: consumers often strongly associate the price, for example, with the quality of the brand.

9. Communication: all associations, mainly about the ads and the catalogs.

10. Distribution: associations about the distribution networks, the decoration of the stores, the shop assistants.

11. Product-related attributes: they are “the ingredients necessary for performing the product function sought by the consumer. Hence, they relate to a product’s physical composition” (Keller, 1993: 4). Note that, contrarily to Keller, packaging is considered here a product-related attribute, because for many products (for example perfumes, ties, cultural goods), it is one of the necessary ingredients sought by consumers.4

“Benefits are the personal value consumers attach to the product attributes -that is, what the consumers think the product can do for them” (Keller, 1993: 4; see also Park et al., 1986).

12. Functional benefits: Refer mainly to physiological and safety needs, as well as to desires for problem removal or problem avoidance.

13. Experiential benefits: refer to what it feels like to use the product. They are related with sensory pleasure, variety and cognitive stimulation.

14. Symbolic benefits: relate to underlying needs for social approval or personal expression and outer-directed self-esteem.

3If these typologies can’t tap most of a consumer’s knowledge about a brand, then they will fail in the study of this brand’s image: for example, they neglect the importance of the retailing channels for a brand, leading to an incomplete description.

4In this article, packaging can be seen a product-related attribute because the product category is clothes. For some other product categories, packaging may be a non product-related attribute.
Attitude: a quite narrow definition of attitude will be used: “an attitude is an index of the degree to which a person likes or dislikes an object, where ‘object’ is used in the generic sense to refer to any aspect of the individual’s world” (Ajzen & Fischbein, 1980: 64). Thus, the attitude is considered here unidimensional (Lutz, 1991), consistent with some recent writings (Engel, Blackwell & Miniard 1995; Machleit, Allen & Madden, 1993). Note that our interest is not the predictive power of attitude, but rather an affective feeling toward the brand.

The relationships between attributes, benefits and attitude need to be detailed: attributes are objective items that do not depend on the consumer’s point of view (a clothe in wool is in wool for everyone); however, the perceptions of these attributes may lead to different perception of benefits and attitudes. The main difference between attitude and benefits is that attitude is a global level of liking of disliking about a brand or a product while benefits refer to what the product can do for the consumer. If a person says “I like the taste of this soft drink,” this statement5 refers to an experiential benefit (whose valence is positive), because the product can bring her/him a pleasant taste; an attitudinal statement would be “I like this soft drink” (attitude is considered unidimensional, hence related statements must be straight and simple).

The relationships between these concepts can be viewed as causal too: some benefits arise because of some attributes (a clothe is hot because it is in wool), and the level of attitude depends on the valences associated to the attributes and benefits. A consumer will like a product because it is in wool, which is comfortable and hot, if, according to the Ajzen & Fischbein model (1980), she/he likes wool and hot and comfortable clothes, and if she/he thinks this is important for an article of clothing.

Each of these 15 categories can be subdivided into several subcategories, to increase the depth of analysis. The “short version” (with 15 categories) of the coding scheme must be used as is for any brand and any product category. However, the detailed coding scheme6 which features 65 categories, must be adapted to the specificity of each brand and/or product category.

**EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION OF TYPOLOGY**

This study is in part a replication of Brucks’ works (1986: 60) about product class knowledge, adapted to the case of brands. Hence, the objectives of the study are:

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5This statement contains actually two units to code: the first is “I like the taste of...”, and the second is “(This is a) soft drink,” which can be classified in the product category class.

6The detailed coding scheme can be found in the lengthier version of this paper.
1. To provide a test of the comprehensiveness of the typology;
2. To assess the inter-judge reliability of the coding-scheme; and,
3. To provide an estimate of the inter-correlations between the amount of knowledge in each of the categories.

As explained earlier, the multiple elicitation procedure was used. Using a probe such as “Tell me all that comes to mind when I say brand X” has been shown to be a good way to tap the content of knowledge structures. “Constructive recall” was allowed: subjects were allowed to make inferences during the interview and to verbalize them, as they were asked to verbalize the “true” knowledge stored in their memory. This runs contrary to some previous works (Dacin & Mitchell, 1986; Olson & Muderrisoglu 1978). Brucks (1986: 60), however, argues that constructive recall and stored knowledge seem to “better represent the knowledge that people actually use during decision making than stored knowledge alone.”

**Domain**

Before selecting some brands to study, a product class had to be chosen. Ready-to-wear clothing is a product class for which there exists a wide variance of knowledge and involvement, and in which some strong brands exist. Kookai and Kenzo were chosen: both sell clothes for women (Kenzo makes clothes for men too, but the focus of this study is on women). Kookai’s target market is primarily young women between the ages of 15 and 25. Their prices are quite low, and their adverts often show attractive and impertinent young women who are supposed to be typical consumers. Kenzo sells high-priced clothes, but their target market is older (mostly between the ages of 30 and 40). Kenzo styles itself according to the world of French and Japanese “haute couture” (Kenzo is a Japanese who settled in France 30 years ago). Some pre-test interviews and interviews with experts showed that women had very clear (and sometimes very contrasted) ideas and images of these brands, which spend a lot on advertising. Working with these brands (one mass-market brand and another brand considered “haut-de-gamme” - a step below luxury), that communicate very different, and whose clothes are very different, may be a good way to elicit some various statements while remaining in the same product category (and therefore reduce product bias).

**Subjects**

Twenty women were interviewed, but, because of tape machine failure, two interviews were lost. Two subjects refused to be interviewed about Kenzo (because they thought they didn’t know enough about this brand). Subjects were between the ages of 19 and 39. About half of them were students, while the remaining half were employed. Most had at least a master’s degree or were enrolled in graduate programs. Two of them were married, and one had children.

Before being questioned about the two brands of interest, people were asked to practice the elicitation procedure by saying all that came to mind about a brand of their choice, that is to verbalize their knowledge about a brand. Then half of the subjects were first questioned about Kenzo, then Kookai (and vice versa). The elicitation procedure lasted between 10 and 40 minutes for each brand. After the elicitation task, subjects had to answer a questionnaire about their knowledge of the brands, their attitude toward these brands, and some other questions unrelated to this paper.

**Interjudge Reliability**

The transcription of seven interviews about Kookai were coded by the author and a person not involved in the study. The transcription represented 40 percent of the elicited statements. Perreault and Leigh (1989, p. 146) recommend to « start the coding process on a random sample of responses using multiple judges (coders) and to evaluate the reliability of the coding process » when it is not practical that multiple judges code every statement.

Kassarjian (1977: 14) defines interjudge reliability as “the percentage of agreement between several judges processing the same communications material.” The judges agreed on 81 percent of the classifications for the coding scheme involving 15 categories, which is quite satisfying; the agreement in the Brucks’ study (1986) was 72 percent, with only 8 categories. Moreover, the Perreault and Leigh’s I_{ir}, which indicates reliability, is high at .89 (Perreault and Leigh 1989). Due to these results, the coding of the author was used for all the interviews.

**Results**

Respectively 1730 statements (96.1 per subject) and 1512 (94.5 per subject) were obtained for Kookai and Kenzo. A statement repeated twice or more by a subject was only counted once. Only 25 statements for Kookai and 8 for Kenzo were judged to be irrelevant to the brand or could not be classified, demonstrating that the coding scheme and the related typology are exhaustive. The number of associations an individual has about an object ranged between 17 and 176 for Kookai and between 28 and 177 for Kenzo.

The number and the percentage of elicited statements per category (Table 1) show the composition of knowledge in memory (but not its salience). Approximately half of the statements fall into three categories: Users, product-related attributes, and communication. Most of the subjects had a very precise (and often convergent) image of the typical Kookai user, called a “kookairet”. Because Kookai is one of the leaders of ready-to-wear (Le Figaro Economie, 1994) in France, and has a very large advertising budget, and because the subjects were exposed intensively to the brand (many of them belonged to the target market), subjects had a great deal of knowledge about these two latter categories in memory. Because all subjects thought Kenzo is a high quality brand, most of the statements elicited concerned product related attributes.

Note that these results are very similar for both brands. Kendall and Spearman correlation coefficients were computed. They are both very high (0.82 and 0.90), which indicates that the ranks (i.e. the number of associations elicited for each brand) between the 15 categories (i.e. the number of associations elicited) are the same for both brands.

For both brands, approximately 40 percent of elicited statements fall into some categories not mentioned as brand associations by Keller (1993), and 19 percent fall into categories he neither mentioned as brand associations nor as secondary associations (competitors, brand personality, product category, and communication).

Approximately 16 percent of elicited statements fall into some categories not mentioned by Aaker (1991): the company, communication and attitude. As some of the categories presented in this article have the same name as some categories of Aaker’s categories, but are much wider (i.e., Aaker’s definition of the category “Usage, experiences” is narrower than that used in this study), this percentage may be raised.

These empirical results show the lack of comprehensiveness of both Aaker’s (1991) and Keller’s (1993) typologies, at least for these brands (the question of validity of this study will be discussed...
Moreover, they demonstrate that the new typology is more exhaustive. As Brucks (1986: 61) noted in her article about product class knowledge: “it may be erroneous to conclude, however, that these frequencies represent the actual amount of knowledge that people have stored in memory in each of these categories.” The reasons are that:

1. Information is often “chunked” in memory: to reduce the number of salient concepts in a structure, and therefore to require less of a person’s limited cognitive capacity, “a new code is assigned to represent several other usually less abstract codes” (Kanwar et al., 1981: 123). The multiple elicitation procedures may have reduced this bias, because when an abstract code (or concept) was mentioned by a subject, this code was subsequently used as a probe, often resulting in an activation of the related (more concrete) associations.

2. Because attitude is considered an unidimensional concept, and because the number of attitudinaly different statements is limited, the number of elicited statements in this category may seem low. On another hand, a subject who has only been in a Kookai shop once may have a sharp impression of the experience and therefore elicit a lot of statements about the shop and the vendors, even though these associations are weak or confused. The number of associations elicited does not reflect the strength or the favorability of these associations.

### Relationships Between the Categories.

If the levels of the correlations between the categories vary widely, subjects’ perceptions of brand image aren’t made on the same basis. Moderate correlations were expected for most of the categories, because the categories are conceptually dependent. Some high correlations are however expected, because consumers may interrelate beliefs about some of the different concepts. For example, we could expect relationships between the strategy of the company (category 1) and descriptions of its ads (category 9).

The correlations between the number of statements elicited in each category range from -0.26 (non significant) to 0.77, the mean is a moderate correlation of 0.31 (and non significant because of the small sample). For Kenzo, they range from -0.37 (non significant) to 0.74, the mean is a moderate correlation of 0.24. Additional factor analysis is needed to better interpret this set of correlations. Factor analysis is the best method to use in this situation, because the data to analyze are in a contingency table (Lebart & Salem, 1994).

It has been shown (Korchia, 1994; Lebart & Salem, 1994) that it is often easier, and more precise to make a classification based on the results of the factor analysis when the matrix to analyze is a

### TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>number of BA: Kookai</th>
<th>Number of BA: Kenzo</th>
<th>Percentage: Kookai</th>
<th>Percentage: Kenzo</th>
<th>Rank: Kookai</th>
<th>Rank: Kenzo</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The company</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>7.40%</td>
<td>6.35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other organizations</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
<td>4.96%</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brand personality, lifestyle,</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2.60%</td>
<td>2.91%</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Celebrities, endorsers</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>0.06%</td>
<td>3.31%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Users</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>20.46%</td>
<td>14.62%</td>
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<td>Product category</td>
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<td>7.14%</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>3.77%</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>12.14%</td>
<td>8.47%</td>
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<td>Product-related Attributes</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>12.49%</td>
<td>22.16%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional benefits</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2.37%</td>
<td>2.51%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential benefits</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2.54%</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic benefits</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7.34%</td>
<td>6.55%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>3.06%</td>
<td>4.30%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements impossible to code</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.45%</td>
<td>1.32%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of statements</td>
<td>1730</td>
<td>96,1</td>
<td>9.45%</td>
<td>91,5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
contingency table crossing texts with semantic units, and to interpret the classes obtained with this classification. The result of the dendrogram (not shown because of space limitations) indicates that the best partition is to use three classes for Kookaï, and four classes for Kenzo. It is not surprising if we get different results for these brands because:

- No association related to celebrities or spokespersons was elicited for Kookaï, while 51 were elicited for Kenzo (because some subjects knew that Kenzo is the name of the brand and the name of the creator).
- There is no reason why the 15 categories should interrelate the same way for both brands, because these brands are different.

This partition in three classes indicates, for the case of Kookaï, that brand image perception is multidimensional and based on three dimensions:

- The company, brand personality, users, communication, distribution. The first dimension represents a functional and “clinical” description of Kookaï.
- Product-related attributes. This dimension is strictly related to product-related attributes.
- Competitors, usage, product category, price, benefits (functional, experiential, symbolic), attitude. The last dimension is related to knowledge that arises out of personal experience. It represents the non-descriptive elements that may, or may not, make a consumer buy certain Kookaï products.

The results are different, yet interesting, for Kenzo (dimensions are the brand and its products, brand personality through communication, the designer Kenzo, and other categories).

CONCLUSION

The results of this research are quite similar to previous works by Brucks (1986) who made a typology of consumer knowledge content. The new typology of brand image I proposed in this article has been shown more comprehensive and easier to code than previous ones proposed by Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993). It indicates that brand image can be classified into 15 distinct categories. In the case of Kookaï, a French ready-to-wear brand, these categories can be themselves classified along three broader dimensions. For Kenzo, a “haute-d’gamme” ready-to-wear brand, four dimensions have been found. However, the external validity of this typology cannot be assessed: the case of Kookaï and Kenzo, and of ready-to-wear in general, is limited in generalizability. Other limitations arise from the small sample and from the elicitation procedure (although it seems to be the best way to tap consumers’ knowledge).

Because the basis on which consumers perceive brand image have been identified and classified, it is easier to build exhaustive questionnaires designed to measure brand images. These questionnaires must contain some questions designed to tap the fifteen dimensions of brand image. Some of these questions must be open-ended, because of the qualitative nature of brand image. Knowing how they are perceived, brands can adjust their communication to change consumers’ beliefs (Park et al., 1986).

Effects of specific dimensions of brand image (for example, beliefs about product related attributes) on consumer decision-making or brand equity need also to be explored.
A New Typology of Brand Image


ABSTRACT

Primacy effects have been considered as a general phenomenon, but not as an effect that might vary amongst individuals, or in this case, consumers. This study investigates the moderating effect of the level of consumer knowledge on primacy effects in brand recall. The study also extends past research results by considering a situation where consumers are learning about brands in one product category, instead of many categories. The results indicate that low knowledge consumers are more susceptible to primacy effects than high knowledge consumers.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A robust finding in memory research is that people tend to remember the things they learned first more easily than they remember the things they learned in the middle or at the end of the learning episode. Although this phenomenon, called a primacy effect, has often been demonstrated in cognitive psychology labs, there are only a few investigations of the effects with marketing information (for example, Burke and Srull 1988; Pieters and Bijmolt 1997). In both of these studies, primacy effects are considered in the context of advertising blocks: the length of the block and the placement of an advertisement in that block in particular. Two issues emerging from these studies are investigated here.

First, the primacy effects found in these studies are treated as a general phenomena. The potential for variation in the magnitude of the effects across consumers is not considered. The most common explanation for the primacy effect is that an individual has more opportunity to rehearse the first few items on a list. Rehearsal is one of the possible strategies employed when encoding new information, but clearly not the only effective strategy. Imagery (Miller and Marks 1992) and elaboration during encoding (Meyers–Levy 1990; Mick 1992), as well as integration into existing knowledge structures (Kardes and Kalyanaram 1992), have also been demonstrated to encourage learning and memory. Integrating information requires that links be created between brands with similar features or attributes, or between brands useful in the same usage situation. It is asserted here that the rehearsal strategy is most likely to be employed when there is limited opportunity to use other learning strategies such as integration. Studies in cognitive psychology indicate that when the to-be-learned information does not encourage integration, the probability of observing primacy effects increases (some examples are Craik and Watkins, 1973; Rundus, Loftus and Atkinson, 1970; Sato, 1990). Some speculation, and some evidence in the consumer research literature suggests that higher knowledge consumers are more able than lower knowledge consumers to integrate information during encoding (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987; Mitchell and Dacin, 1996; Srull, 1983). The argument presented here posits that those unlikely to integrate information during encoding, low knowledge consumers (LKCs), are more susceptible to primacy effects.

Second, consumers do not exclusively learn information about brands from commercials, there are other learning situations. For instance, consumers look in retail environments for information, as well as reading articles in magazines such as Consumer Reports. These information sources result in quite a different type of learning situation because consumers are exposed to information about many brands in the same product category. Consumers are also often presented with verbal presentations of a list of specials in restaurants, and available draught beers in pubs or bars. If an order effect in recall exists, it would be in the best interest of the marketer to be aware of the effect and conditions under which it is likely to occur. Whether the order of the information presented to the consumer matters to their ability to recall the information later has not been considered in marketing literature. The objective of this study is to investigate the knowledge level of the consumer as a potential moderator of primacy effects.

2.0 BRAND RECALL: REHEARSAL, DISTINCTIVENESS, AND INTEGRATION

How will brand recall be affected when integration does not occur at encoding? There is no study reported in the consumer behaviour literature that limits the opportunity to integrate brand information at study, and then tests for an effect on brand recall. There have been studies in cognitive psychology, however, that intentionally use lists of items that do not lend themselves to integration of the to-be-learned information (some examples are Craik, 1970; Craik and Watkins, 1973; Rundus, Loftus and Atkinson, 1970; Rundus and Atkinson, 1970). In these studies, subjects see a list of relatively meaningless information such as numbers (Darley and Glass, 1975), or unrelated words (Bruce and Papay, 1970; Craik and Watkins, 1973; Rundus, Loftus and Atkinson, 1970; Sato, 1990) and after a brief study session, try to recall items from the list. Typically, the items presented at the beginning and at the end of the list are better recalled than the items presented in the middle of the list. The effects have been found both when subjects are aware of an upcoming memory test (Rundus, Loftus and Atkinson, 1970), and when they are not (Craik and Watkins, 1973). Many explanations exist for the effect, but two of the most often cited are the rehearsal explanation and the von Restorff effect.


According to this explanation, individuals rehearse information presented on a list while it is held in working memory. The more often a piece of information is rehearsed, the greater the probability the information will be transferred to long term memory. As working memory reaches capacity, new information entering working memory supplants the incumbent information. Because the first pieces of information on the list are rehearsed longer, they have the highest probability of transfer to long term memory, and therefore, a greater probability of recall.

The rehearsal explanation is perhaps the most common explanation for the primacy effect, although many compelling studies question its explanatory power. Of these studies, some limit the opportunity to rehearse with time constraints (Kim and Suk-Oh, 1979; Leshowitz and Hanzi, 1974; Titus, 1991; Wixted and McDowell, 1989), instructions (Bruce and Papay, 1970; Titus, 1991) or distraction (Murdoch, 1965), but still find primacy effects.

2.2 The von Restorff Effect (von Restorff, 1933).

According to this explanation, distinct items are better recalled than other items. Since the first items in the list are the most distinct
then they should be recalled with a higher probability than subsequent items. Titus and Robinson (1973) offer support of this explanation when a shift of the voice in auditory list presentation resulted in a primacy effect for the items immediately following. Shiffrin (1970) suggested that primacy effects are the result of both rehearsal and the von Restorff effect, however, Rundus (1971) presents evidence that the von Restorff effect is due entirely to an increase in the amount of rehearsal for distinctive items (Rundus, 1971, Experiment 2).

Both of these explanations rely on the assumption that the individual processing the information is simply trying to encode the information without any real attempt to understand, integrate or group the items on the list. In this case, there should be a relationship between the absence of integration and the primacy effect. Tulving and Madigan (1970) suggest in their review of memory and verbal learning, that presentation order effects are related to instances where ‘the barest minimum by way of learning’ occurs (page 454).

If the same logic is applied to consumer learning, consumers that process brand information in a non-integrative manner, are more likely to demonstrate primary effects in recall than are consumers that integrate brand information present during the same learning episode. In fact, evidence in both person perception (Takahashi, 1977) and consumer behaviour studies (Kardes and Kayanaram, 1992) demonstrate that presenting items simultaneously, which effectively frees cognitive resources for integration (Craik and Lockhart 1972), attenuates the probability of primary effects in recall. If the opportunity for integrating the information improves, then the probability of observing primary effects during recall decreases. Logically then, when consumers are integrating new information into existing knowledge structures, they are much less likely to demonstrate primary effects in recall.

### 3.0 INTEGRATION AND THE LEVEL OF PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE

High knowledge consumers (HKCs) are often able to recall more brands than LKCs (Alba and Chattopadhyay, 1985; Bettman and Park, 1980; Hutchinson, 1983). The advantage of the HKC in recalling previously presented brand information is exaggerated when the presentation format is random instead of blocked (Srull, 1983). Presumably, low knowledge individuals find it difficult to organise the product information at learning, while high knowledge individuals are able to use schemas stored in memory to guide the organisation of new information (Chiesi, Spilich and Voss, 1979; Voss, Vesonder and Spilich, 1980). When learning new information, consumers that rate themselves as HKCSs, and have knowledge of the characteristics of a product, are more likely to draw comparisons between brands (Mitchell and Dacin, 1996). Mitchell and Dacin (1996) also found that the number of links or relations between brands and attributes increases with product knowledge, and that consumers with more knowledge are more likely to represent the level of the attribute, instead of just the presence of the attribute. The additional information about the quantity of an attribute presents further opportunity for integration, as relations between brands may also be based on the level of an attribute instead of just its presence. Taken together, HKCs should be more likely to integrate information during encoding, and therefore, less likely to evidence primary effects in recall.

LKCs are less likely to have integrated knowledge structures. In this case, the structures are not conducive to integration during encoding, particularly integration based on attributes or usage situations. Instead, the LKC may organise their knowledge around the learning episode, and the brands that are strongly related to the episode are most likely to be recalled. The LKC, therefore, is more likely to show primary effects in recall.

### 4.0 EMPIRICAL WORK

#### 4.1 Study Design

In this study, subjects see two lists of brand attribute statements (first, second). There is a break in between, this is similar to a shopping trip where more than one retail outlet is visited with a short lag between learning episodes. The brands can be integrated over usage situation because three brands are associated to each usage situation. After a brief study session and a filler task, subjects try to recall as many of the brands as possible. Primary effects will occur in the recall performance of consumers (subjects) that do not integrate the information. Primacy effects will not be observed if the consumer is integrating information during encoding.

The design includes 2 levels of consumer knowledge as a measured between subject factor. Subjects are randomly assigned to one of two versions of the lists that counterbalance the order of presentation of the brand names. The measure of recall performance is the probability of recalling brands from three positions on the list (the beginning, middle or end).

4.1.1 Subjects. Thirty undergraduate subjects received course credit for participation in the study. Two subjects did not properly complete the study questions and were not included in the analysis. Twenty-eight students responses are used in the analysis.

#### 4.2 Stimulus Design

4.2.1 The Product Category. The product category must be complex enough to allow for significant variation in the level of product knowledge and be relevant to university students. Three of the hypothetical brand names may be more familiar to HK subjects and therefore affect their ability to recall the brands.

The brand names are five letter nonsense words. The brand names were pretested to check for:

1. significant differences in the probability of recalling the different names,
2. associations between the brand names and existing camera brand names, and
3. associations between the brand names and any existing brand name.

**Pretest One—Similarity to Existing Brand Names**

Forty undergraduate students were shown each of twenty brand names with the following instructions:

1. list any characteristics associated with cameras that come to mind when you read each of the hypothetical brands,
2. rate your familiarity with each of the hypothetical brand names,
3. state whether the brand name reminds you of other existing brand names and,
4. identify other similar and related brand names.

Two of the hypothetical names reminded subjects of existing camera brands. Three of the hypothetical brand names (including the two previous names) reminded subjects of brand names for

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2 A pilot test using existing brand names resulted in similar effects for the presentation order as are reported here, except that there was an effect for the familiarity with the brand.
other products. These brand names were not included in the main study. Many of the comments made during the pretest were speculations as to the country of manufacture or the language the word might be taken from. Although there was some consensus as to the country itself, there was no systematic consensus as to the meaning of the ‘word’ (no more than one subject identified a particular meaning for the word).

**Pretest Two—Memorability Pretest**

Twenty students were shown 16 brand names and asked to rate whether the camera sounded as though it might be ‘easy to use’ on a scale anchored with ‘easy to use’ and ‘difficult to use’. Ten minutes later they were asked to recall as many of the brands as possible. The position on the list (beginning, middle or end) is counterbalanced between four lists. When position on the list is a covariate, there are no significant differences in the probability of recall between the brands.

4.2.3. The Attributes. The attributes are described using simple language. The description for less common attributes included the benefit associated to the attribute. For instance: “Davon cameras have an automatic shutterlock which prevents accidental exposures” or “Menze cameras have a solid, durable body which is good for travelling”.

4.2.4. The Lists. Two lists were composed of ten statements each: six target, two filler and two buffer statements. All the statements were approximately twelve words long. Each of the statements related to one of four usage situations: for beginner photographers, for professional shots, for travelling, and for someone who wants a trendy, stylish camera.

**Target Statements.** Each subject saw twelve target statements (6 statements x 2 lists). The target statements consisted of a hypothetical brand and an attribute. Two of the six statements were presented at the beginning of the list (statement two and three), two of the statements were presented in the middle of the list (statement five and six) and two at the end of the list (statement eight and nine).

Each brand, and each attribute was mentioned once during the study session. The lists were constructed such that integration was possible, but not easy. The following rules were adhered to during list construction:

1] brands associated to the same usage situation were not seen sequentially,
2] each brand was seen only once,
3] each attribute was seen only once, and
4] each usage situation appeared on both lists.

There was an opportunity for integration over usage situations however, as three of the attributes related to each of four usage situations.

**Filler and Buffer Statements.** Two of the statements were buffer statements (statements one and ten) and two were filler statements (statements four and seven). These statements were general statements about cameras or photography. For instance: “Photography has become a very popular hobby these days”.

Generally, the results of studies investigating the influence of presentation order reveal a fairly smooth function declining from the relatively high probability of retrieval for the first few items. The filler statements served to segregate the lists such that the target items captured the beginning, middle and end of the serial position curve.

The order in which brands were presented was counterbalanced between the two sets of lists. Brands that were at the beginning of the list one, version one, were either in the middle or at the end of the list two, version two. An ANOVA reveals that the list version was not a significant factor in brand retrieval ($F(1,47)=0.09, p>.10$).

**5.0 PROCEDURE**

Subjects were randomly assigned to one of the two versions of the lists. Subjects were informed that they would be participating in a number of short tasks. The first would be to read brand information about cameras. They were warned that the brands were hypothetical, and that they should not be concerned that the brand names would be unfamiliar to them. The subjects saw the brand attribute statements projected on a screen, and heard the study administrator read the statements aloud. Each of the statements was seen individually. Subjects were encouraged to ask for more time to read the statements if the pacing of the presentation was too brief. No subjects complained of the pace. This presentation format was implemented to encourage the subject to pay attention to the information.

The remainder of the session is divided into three parts: two study sessions and one test session.

5.1 Study Session One.

Subjects saw the first list of ten statements about cameras projected on a screen with an overhead projector, while the administrator read the statements aloud. Each statement was visible for approximately ten seconds. Each statement was seen sequentially. Following the study session, subjects read unrelated material for five minutes.

5.2 Study Session Two.

Subjects saw the second list of ten statements about cameras projected on a screen with an overhead projector, while the administrator read the statements aloud. Each of the statements was seen sequentially. A second five minutes was spent reading unrelated material.

5.3 Test Session.

Subjects recalled as many of the brands as possible from the two lists. Following the free recall task, subjects completed a knowledge questionnaire, were debriefed and thanked for their participation.

5.4 Measures

5.4.1 Dependent Measure. Recall performance is measured as the probability of recalling a brand from the beginning, middle and end of the list.

5.4.2 Independent Measures. Both objective and subjective questions were used to measure expertise and familiarity with the product. The objective measures are designed to test for knowledge of existing brands and attributes. The subjective knowledge measures are designed to test for experience and familiarity with the product.

**Objective Measures.** Subjects were asked to define technical terms describing the process of taking photos, such as ‘depth of field’. Subjects were also asked to describe attributes associated to cameras such as ‘f-stop’. Finally, subjects were asked to list as many brand names for existing cameras as they could.

**Subjective Measures.** Subjects were asked to rate their familiarity, usage and knowledge on ten point scales. The anchors for these scales are not very familiar / very familiar, not very often / very often and novice / expert, respectively.

A median split on the knowledge measure results in 14 HKCs and 14 LKCs. The coefficient alpha for the measure of knowledge
is .89. All the correlations between the individual objective and subjective measures are significant at p<.01.

6.0 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The hypothesis for the study asserts that the presentation order of information at encoding influences the retrieval behaviour of LKCs more than HKCs. Specifically, LKCs will demonstrate primacy effects in recall. The hypothesis is tested with a mixed ANOVA on retrieval probabilities, with knowledge level, and the list (first, second) as between subject factors and list placement (beginning, middle, end) as a within subject factor. As expected, the results of the ANOVA reveal non-significant results for the between subject factors of knowledge level (F(1, 156)=0.26, p>0.10), list (F(1, 156)=0.26, p>0.10), and the interaction of the two (F(1, 156)=0.06, p>0.10). The probability of retrieval of brands was the same regardless of knowledge level or list. The interaction of importance is the knowledge level by list placement (or order) interaction which tests whether the order of presentation effects brand recall differently for high and low knowledge consumers. The ANOVA results indicate that this interaction is significant (F(2, 165)=4.4, p<.05). See the ANOVA Table (Table 1) for results.

To facilitate the interpretation of this interaction, separate ANOVAs were run for each knowledge level. The ANOVA for LKCs reveals that the list factor is non-significant (F(1, 78)=0.27, p>0.10), and the list by list placement (or order) interaction is non-significant (F(1, 78)=0.98, p>0.10), but that list placement factor (or order) is significant (F(1, 78)=6.68, p<.005). In other words, brand recall was the same for both lists and the order of presentation affected brand recall in the same manner for both lists, primacy effects were found for both lists. The retrieval probabilities for LKCs for the items at the beginning of the list, are significantly greater than the probabilities for items in the middle (t=2.65, p<.01) or at the end of the list (t=-2.65, p<.01). Retrieval probabilities for HKCs are unchanged regardless of the list factor (F(1, 78)=0.04, p>0.10), list placement or order (F(1, 78)=0.13, p>0.10), or the interaction of the two (F(1, 78)=2.14, p>0.10). See Table 2 for the results.

The primacy effect is found in the recall of LKCs for each list. The list placement factor is measured for each list, and does not interact with the list factor. The data observed here suggests that instead of ‘things I learned in the lab today’ or ‘things I learned shopping today’, the learning episode is limited to ‘things I learned on one list’ or ‘things I learned in one store’.

7.0 DISCUSSION

The study is simple, but important. First, the results indicate that it is LKCs that are more likely to demonstrate primacy effects. The logic employed here suggests that the presence of primacy effects indicates non-integrative processing. However, the assertion cannot be made that LKCs are not processing integratively unless processing is manipulated and tested with processing measures.

Murdock (1976) asserts that order effects should not be observed when the subject has the opportunity, and ability to associate on the basis of their content. If the information about brands was integrated during encoding, then the retrieval probabilities would vary in a manner uncorrelated to presentation order. This is the pattern of results for the HKC. Perhaps HKCs use knowledge structures from memory to organise the information and to aid in ‘seeing’ the relations between items.

8.0 CONTRIBUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The contribution of these results is twofold. For marketers, the order in which less knowledgeable consumers are exposed to brand names affects their ability to remember the brands later. This has implications for any learning episode where information about more than one brand is communicated. Examples of this situation occur in shopping environments, where consumers may listen to a sales pitch, or be exposed to point-of-sale material, or when learning information about brands in a format where many brands are compared. It is important to keep in mind that LKCs may recall the first things they are told by a salesperson better than subsequent pieces of information.

The second contribution is toward an understanding of the way in which consumers process information during learning. Of course, these are only initial indications of processing styles, but the results are consistent with the idea that HKCs integrate information during encoding, and that LKCs do not integrate information. Instead the LKC learns the information as though it was a list of unrelated information. A future study could manipulate the learning session in order to test for primacy effects when: 1) integration is impossible—perhaps by distracting the consumer and reducing the available resources, and 2) integration is encouraged by the format of the presentation or the task at study. Primacy effects should be apparent for HKCs in the first instance, and primacy effects should be attenuated for LKCs in the second instance.

There are important limitations to the study. First, the sample size is small. Although the results have been replicated in a study not reported here. Second, the study is performed in a laboratory situation without the creation of a retail environment, and all of the relevant variables found there. A valuable extension to the research would be to investigate the likelihood of detecting primacy effects in the field. It may also be interesting to know whether primacy effects would be found over different forms of media, in other words, whether the media bounds the learning episode. Another

### TABLE 1
ANOVA Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Type III SS</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F Value</th>
<th>Pr&gt;F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>0.02747253</td>
<td>0.02747253</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.6082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.02747253</td>
<td>0.02747253</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.6082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KNOWLEDGE*LIST</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00598291</td>
<td>0.00598291</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.8109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORDER</td>
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<td>0.28031899</td>
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<td>0.04519994</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.6487</td>
</tr>
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interesting area of research might be to investigate the interaction
dof involvement and knowledge on the probability of primacy
effects in recall.

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### TABLE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Level</th>
<th>List Placement</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over Lists</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HKCs</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td>.23&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.25&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End</td>
<td>.27&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LKCs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td>.40&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.15&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End</td>
<td>.15&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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Cell means with the same superscript are not significantly different.


ABSTRACT
A study was conducted to examine the processes by which expectations for future introductory patterns are developed for novel (new-to-the-world) high-tech products. Our findings indicate that high-tech novices and high-tech experts differ significantly. Specifically, novices appear to base expectations for a novel product on observations about a familiar product that shares salient attributes with the novel product. Experts, on the other hand, are unlikely to be influenced by the observed history of such a product.

Prior research suggests that a consumer’s decision to buy a high-tech product is influenced by expectations about when a new version of the product will be introduced (Balcer and Lippman 1984). Thus, for example, a consumer’s decision to buy a palmtop computer may be affected by his/her expectations for when the next new model is likely to become available. More specifically, when a consumer believes that the time until the next generation will be short, the likelihood of purchasing the current version is lower than when the time is estimated as fairly long. Several explanations for this behavior are that a short time estimate implies that the current version will soon be obsolete, that it will be difficult to obtain replacement parts for or that there may be decreased technical assistance.

Given the pivotal role of consumers’ “intergenerational timing” expectations in the purchase/delay purchase decision, it is not surprising that these inferences have begun to attract research attention. In particular, recent studies have explored development processes for these expectations (Cripps and Meyer, 1994). An intuitive finding in this research is that such expectations can develop from observations about past introductory patterns (Boone, Lemon and Staelin, 1999). That is, individuals tend to form expectations about future introductory timings by projecting out past introductory patterns for the same product. This implies that, for instance, expectations for a palmtop computer’s next introduction will often be based on a sense of how long the intergenerational time span has been for this product in previous iterations.

A question that remains to be addressed is how expectations are formed when there is no historical information available. For example, for the first generation of a new product in a new product category—for which previous intergenerational timelines are nonexistent—how does a consumer develop timing expectations? This is the central issue of the present research. For guidance, we turn to a contemporary theory of how expectations, in general, are formed for novel items.

Learning by Analogy
When developing expectations for a novel product, consumers may often attempt to apply knowledge that they already have about some other product. When this occurs, the consumer is learning by analogy (Gregan-Paxton and Roedder John 1997). Although numerous circumstances may call for analogical reasoning, it seems especially likely to take place when consumers are curious about characteristics that cannot be observed in an initial encounter with the novel product. For example, imagine that a consumer is shopping in an electronics store and encounters an E-Book (electronic book) for the first time. While some characteristics, such as physical features and price, may be obvious from a simple visual examination of the product, other characteristics cannot be observed. An example of such a characteristic would be the length of time before the current E-Book model will be replaced with a new version.

To learn about this characteristic, the consumer may apply analogical reasoning. In so doing, he or she would transfer over information about the intergenerational timing of some other product with which he or she is more familiar. For example, perhaps the consumer who encounters the E-Book has some knowledge of palmtop computers. This knowledge base might include information about how often new versions become available. By activating this knowledge base, the introductory timing of the palmtop can be projected onto the E-book to create an expectation for the intergenerational timing that will be associated with the E-Book.

Recent research provides insights into the multi-stage process by which knowledge is transferred analogically from a known product such as the palmtop computer to an unknown product such as an E-book (for summaries of this literature see Gentner and Markman 1997 and Gregan-Paxton and Roedder John 1997). First, an individual who is exposed to an unknown product accesses some known product (called a “base” in the analogy literature) that may provide information to transfer to the unknown product (termed the “target”). Prior research suggests that the base products that are most likely to be accessed are those that share salient attributes with the target (Gentner, Ratterman and Forbus 1993; Ross 1987). Thus, upon viewing an E-book (unknown target), a consumer might access knowledge of palmtop computers, because palmtops share attributes such as size, shape, color, and so on.

Next, the consumer attempts to map known characteristics of the base product (palmtop) onto the novel product (E-Book) to verify their similarity. For example, perhaps the consumer’s knowledge base for palmtops includes their approximate weight and price range. By activating this information, the consumer can map it to what can be observed about the E-Book. The objective in this stage is to verify that observed characteristics of the E-Book correspond to those known for palmtops. Such a correspondence causes the mapping to seem sound, and to thus permit transfer of further information about the palmtop to the E-Book. For instance, if the weight and price range that are known for the palmtop seem similar to those observed for the E-Book, then other information that cannot be observed for the E-Book—such as the intergenerational timing between product versions—may also be inferred to be true of the E-Book.

Reflecting on this theory of analogical learning, it seems that purchase likelihood for a new product is at the mercy of the expectations for products that look like it. Such products are, after all, what are most likely to be accessed as an information source and used as a basis of transfer. However, this assumes that the mapping phase produces verification of similarity of the base and target products. If, on the other hand, serious inconsistencies are identified during mapping, the match between the base and the target will seem insufficient to support the transfer of further information.

The Moderating Role of Expertise
Recent research suggests that the probability of identifying inconsistencies that would interrupt transfer of expectations from a
known base (palmtop) to an unknown target (E-Book) may relate to expertise with the base product. Specifically, base experts may be more likely than base novices to recognize discrepancies that will interrupt transfer.

Experts’ knowledge structures are richer than novices. Importantly, the expert structure is likely to contain both attributes and deeper functional information about the base product (Alba and Hutchinson 1987; Pennington 1987; McKeithen, Reitman, Reuter and Hirtle 1981). Hence a palmtop expert should not only know the typical size, shape, color, weight, price and the general frequency with which new versions are introduced, but also functional aspects of a palmtop such as that it can process spreadsheet formulas and connect with the internet.

With new-to-the-world products of the type we are studying, this deeper knowledge seems likely to lead to recognition of discrepancies between a base and a target. If a novel product shared attributes and functions with extant products, it would not be truly novel. In many cases, such as with the E-Book, the really new product is introduced specifically to offer a heretofore unavailable combination of functions. Hence, when a palmtop expert attempts to map functions such as spreadsheet processing to the E-Book, a mismatch will be identified. When this occurs, transfer should be interrupted.

In contrast, novices are less well-equipped with the kind of knowledge that may bring such discrepancies to light. By definition, the base knowledge structure of the novice should be relatively impoverished. Although it may include attribute information that is salient about the base, it is unlikely to include deeper functional information (Alba and Hutchinson 1987; Murphy and Wright 1984; Schoenfeld and Herrmann 1982). Hence, novices with respect to palmtops may know certain attributes, such as their typical size, shape, color, weight, price and the general frequency with which new versions are introduced. However, novices are unlikely to understand functional aspects of a palmtop such as its capability to process spreadsheet formulas and connect with the internet.

With primarily an attribute-based knowledge structure, a novice is unlikely to uncover substantial differences between the base and the target. In theory, the base (palmtop) was retrieved because it does share some salient attributes with the target (E-Book). As a result, differences that novices could identify are virtually eliminated at the outset. Further, if novices are unlikely to notice differences between a new-to-the-world product and an existing product that shares surface attributes, then novices are likely to complete the transfer of knowledge and expectations from the known base (palmtop) to the unknown target (E-Book).

On the basis of the foregoing discussion, we predict that when considering a purchase of a novel product, novices will be influenced by intergenerational timing for a familiar product that has similar salient attributes. When the familiar product’s introductory time frames seem relatively long, the novice will estimate the novel product’s future intergenerational time spans as longer than when the familiar product’s time frames seem relatively short. Consequently, novices’ purchase intentions should vary according to these estimates. Specifically, the purchase intentions should be higher when the expected intergenerational time are relatively long than when they are relatively short.

Experts, on the other hand, will be unlikely to be influenced by time frames observed for products that share attributes, if there are differences between the products at a deeper functional level. Thus, there should be no difference in experts’ expectations for a novel product’s future intergenerational time frames, regardless of whether they believe a physically similar product has a history of relatively long or relatively short intergenerational periods. It follows that purchase likelihood should correspondingly not vary for experts.

These observations are consistent with research that has been conducted by Novick (1988). She exposed both expert and novice problem solvers to practice problems and trial problems that shared attributes but not deeper functional solution principles. Novices tended to incorrectly transfer the solution from the practice problem to the trial problem on the basis of the attribute similarity between problems. Experts, in contrast, tended not to transfer the solution, presumably because of differences that were noted at the deeper level and implied that further transfer was inappropriate.

**STUDY**

An exploratory study was conducted to examine our hypotheses. During the experiment, subjects were incidentally exposed to information about intergenerational time frames for a “leading palmtop computer.” The times given were manipulated such that half of our participants were exposed to times that were relatively long, and half were exposed to times that were relatively short. This manipulation of perceived palmtop intergenerational times was combined with an expertise variable to investigate the effect on purchase intentions for a novel product with attribute resemblance to a palmtop computer. In keeping with the current theorizing, we anticipated that novices’ purchase intentions for the novel product would vary as a function of perceived intergenerational timing for the palmtop, but that experts’ intentions would not vary thusly.

**Subjects and Procedures**

Subjects were 40 MBA students who participated in the study during a regular class period. Our entire study was broken into two parts, which were represented to subjects as two independent and unrelated experiments. Part One (“Experiment 1”) was intended to incidentally expose subjects to product introduction timing information for a typical palmtop computer. In such a way, we hoped to unobtrusively make available information that could be applied to a physically similar new product in Part Two (“Experiment 2”).

“Experiment 1” was introduced as an investigation of the methods that consumers use to remember detailed information about products. Instructions for the experiment informed subjects that they would be presented with some product information and later tested on the accuracy of their recall for this information.

The product information they were given was a listing of introduction dates and intergenerational timings for a palmtop. Two versions of this listing were developed for the experiment. Half of the subjects were given a listing with relatively short time spans, where the average time between generations was 11 months. The second half of subjects were given a listing with a relatively longer time span, in which the average time between generations was 18 months (see Appendix for an example). The two versions of the information were meant to encourage perceptions of short or long times between palmtop computer introductions.

Subjects were encouraged to study this information and to use their favorite memorization method to learn as many of the given product details as possible. In keeping with the alleged purpose of “Experiment 1,” subjects were then asked to list as much of the information as they could and to write a short description of the method they’d used to commit the information to memory. This concluded “Experiment 1.”

“Experiment 2” was then introduced. To support the cover story that two different studies were being conducted, the booklet for “Experiment 2” was formatted differently from “Experiment 1,” using differently colored paper, different text fonts, and different page layouts.

Preliminary instructions for “Experiment 2” were to read an ad for a brand new product, the E-Book. This ad showed a picture of the product, which physically resembles a palmtop computer. The
ad also included brief copy that highlighted key attributes and benefits of the new item. For example, these claims included “Lightweight at only 14 oz” and “Small and convenient to hold.” After reading the ad, subjects turned the page to find two questions relating to their interest in purchasing and likelihood of purchasing an E-Book if money were no object. Subjects responded on 1-7 semantic differential scales anchored by not interested/very interested and not likely/very likely.

Next, two questions were presented regarding the anticipated time span before the next generation of E-books would be introduced. The first of these items asked subjects to indicate how long they thought would be before a new E-Book is introduced on a 1-9 scale anchored by short time/long time. The second question asked for an estimate in months of the time between generations of E-Books. These two items allowed us to investigate whether differences in purchase interest and likelihood corresponded to differences in expected intergenerational times for the E-book.

Subjects then encountered a quiz that asked them to define as many of the following high-tech terms as they could: LAN, Java, Perl, modem, ethernet, dongle, universal serial bus, HTML, FTP, proxy server. It was expected that high-tech experts would be able to define more terms than high-tech novices, and therefore that this quiz would allow us to separate our subjects into groups of relative novices and relative experts. Those who defined more than the median (6.0) number of words were deemed Experts, and those who defined fewer than the median number of words were designated as Novices.

Finally, subjects received a question measuring perceived times between palmtop introductions. This was intended to serve as a check on the adequacy of the introductory timing premise at producing perceptions of relatively long or relatively short intergenerational times for palmtops. Subjects provided an estimate of the length of time for palmtops between introductions on a 1-7 scale anchored by short time/long time.

Analysis
Prior to conducting the analyses of primary interest, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the expectations for palmtop computer introduction time frames. This step allowed us to perform a check on the manipulation of perceptions regarding the palmtop computer. A two-way full-factorial ANOVA was run with high-tech expertise (high vs. low) and palmtop introduction timing (long vs. short) primed by the product information in “Experiment 1” (this variable is hereafter referred to as “priming condition”). The dependent variable consisted of responses to the survey question about time between palmtop introductions. If the manipulation was successful, then those subjects who saw the list with relatively long time spans should estimate palmtop intergenerational time frames as being longer than those who saw the list with relatively short time spans. Results of the analysis were consistent with our predictions. The only significant effect was a main effect for priming condition (F (1, 36)=28.58, p<.001). Means on the dependent variable suggest that subjects in the long-time priming condition expected a significantly longer time between palmtop introductions (X=4.92) than subjects in the short-time priming condition (X=3.60). This result implies that the priming manipulation was successful in producing differences in the perceived intergenerational time frames for palmtops.

The key hypotheses of interest were that whereas novices would apply expectations for the palmtop to expectations for the E-Book and vary their purchase intentions accordingly, experts would not apply palmtop expectations to the E-Book and thus would not vary their purchase intentions. As a first step toward testing these hypotheses, a two-way full factorial ANOVA was conducted on responses to each question related to interest in and likelihood of purchasing the E-Book. Independent variables for these analyses were expertise (expert, novice) and priming condition (long time, short time). It was anticipated that novices would be significantly more interested in and likely to purchase an E-Book when the palmtop introductions seemed relatively long than when they seemed relatively short. Experts, on the other hand, were predicted to be no more or less interested in and likely to purchase an E-Book after having seen the long-time priming list or the short-time priming list.

Significant interactions between expertise and priming condition were observed for both the interest (F (1, 36)=3.82, p<.058) and likelihood of purchase (F (1, 36)=4.04, p<.052) dependent variables. Follow-up contrasts demonstrate that these interactions were driven by a greater interest in (X=5.89 vs. 4.73; F (1, 36)=8.35, p<.007) and likelihood of purchase (X=6.00 vs. 5.09; F (1, 36)=4.70, p<.037) among novices when the primed palmtop introduction timing was long than when it was short. In contrast, experts did not differ in interest (X=5.27 vs. 5.22; F (1, 36)=0.02, p<.901) or purchase likelihood (X=5.28 vs. 5.56; F (1, 36)=0.46, p<.504) as a function of priming.

These findings support a relationship between perceived palmtop introductory time frames and purchase intentions for E-Books for novices but not experts. However, one facet of our theory remains to be tested, namely the intervening assumption that novices’ (but not experts’) expectations for the E-Book were influenced by expectations for the palmtop. To examine this hypothesis, we conducted two additional ANOVAs. Responses to the two items (a scale rating and an estimate in months) measuring expected E-Book introductory time frames were subjected to ANOVAs with expertise and priming condition as independent variables. In each case, a two-way interaction between the independent factors was observed (scale rating: F(1,36)=7.00, p<.012; months estimate: F (1, 36)=3.70, p<.056). Follow-up contrasts indicated that novices expected a longer time between E-Book generations when the palmtop priming condition was long (scale rating: X=7.44; months estimate: X=17.0) than when it was short (scale rating: X=6.00; F(1,36)=8.84, p<.005; months estimate X=12.09; F(1,36)=9.34, p<.004). Conversely, experts’ expectations for the E-Book did not vary according to the palmtop priming condition (scale rating: X=6.18 vs. 6.56, F (1, 36)=0.59, p<.447; months estimate: X=15.09 vs. 14.67; F (1, 36)=0.07, p<.793).

Further, as Figure 1 demonstrates, the pattern of means for the E-Book introductory timing expectations mirrors that of the interest in and likelihood of purchase ratings for the E-Book. Such parallel patterns are consistent with our prediction that palmtop introductory timing would be analogically transferred to E-Books by novices but not by experts.

Discussion
Taken together, the results of our study provide evidence for differences in new product introduction expectations for experts and novices. The findings also suggest a connection between these expectations and purchase interest and likelihood. Importantly, although experts and novices in our study began with similar expectations for the intergenerational timing of palmtop computers, only novices seemed willing to apply those expectations to developing expectations for a novel product resembling the E-Book.

Theoretically speaking, our data contribute to the developing literature on new product purchase decisions. More broadly, the current findings add to our still-growing knowledge of differences in information processing strategies between experts and novices (e.g., Alba & Hutchinson 1987; Sujan 1985) and provide further
evidence of the importance of consumer expectations in purchase decisions.

With respect to the analogical reasoning literature, the current study adds to emerging evidence that use of the analogical process often differs for experts and novices (e.g., Gregan-Paxton and Roedder John 1997). Recent research has, for example, suggested that when given analogical comparisons between items that share few surface attributes but do share deeper functional similarities, experts are more likely to complete the analogy than novices (Roehm and Sternthal 1999). Conversely, the present research suggests that when an analogical comparison holds primarily at the level of surface attributes, novices are more likely than experts to complete the transfer of information.

Looking forward, future research is needed to more closely examine the expectation formation process of experts. While our results are enlightening with regard to novices, experts remain something of a mystery at this point. An additional, and important, future direction is to examine cultural influences on the expectation process. Does, for instance, the past- versus future-orientation of a culture serve as a qualifier of the current findings?

REFERENCES


### APPENDIX

Time Listings in “Experiment 1”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>DATE OF INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>TIME SINCE PREVIOUS INTRODUCTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Version 1</td>
<td>October 1994 (Sept 1992)</td>
<td>11 months (18 mos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version 2</td>
<td>September 1995 (Mar 1994)</td>
<td>11 months (18 mos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version 4</td>
<td>June 1997 (Mar 1997)</td>
<td>11 months (19 mos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version 5</td>
<td>September 1998 (Sept 1998)</td>
<td>12 months (18 mos)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AVERAGE 11 months (18 mos)

*Note: Times for the short-time prime condition are listed outside parentheses, and times for the long-time prime condition are listed inside parentheses.*

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Christian Derbaix, LABACC, FUCAM, Belgium
Ingrid Poncin, LABACC, FUCAM, Belgium

ABSTRACT
In this research we use 2 complementary non verbal methods to measure the affective reactions elicited by commercials: the feelings monitor and the coding of facial expressions of emotions. We investigate the impact of variables coming out these two methods on the ad effects of advertising effectiveness: attitude toward the ad (Aad) and attitude toward the brand (AB). We replicate results obtained by Baumgartner et al. (1997) and for the first time the impact of coding facial expressions of emotions on Aad and AB is clearly assessed.

INTRODUCTION
Since the seminal and controversial work of Zajonc (1980), a rich body of empirical studies in marketing has been devoted to understanding how ad-evoked feelings influence advertising responses (e.g. Batra and Ray, 1986; Edell and Burke, 1987; Burke and Edell, 1989; Derbaix, 1995). In these studies it has been established that the affective responses, as subjective states of the consumer, can be clearly distinguished from evaluative judgments of advertisements (Edell and Burke, 1987; Holbrook and Batra, 1987) and impact on Aad and AB generally considered as dependent variables.

In this paper, we bring to the fore a more micro perspective by focusing on the dynamics of the ad-evoked affective reactions. As stressed by several authors (e.g. Vanden Abeele and Maclachlan, 1994), affective reactions are rather volatile; they respond to, and change with, variations in external conditions. So their essential properties (intensity, valence and content; Kroeber-Riel, 1982) can vary in the course of a single commercial.

MEASURING AFFECTIVE REACTIONS
Post exposure verbal responses are undoubtedly the most often used approaches to assess affective reactions elicited by commercials. They are easy to administer, have the capacity to tap affective reactions but require that the respondent provide a summary of an experience that extends over 30, 45 or even 60 seconds. Nobody knows exactly what do provide these self-report measures: a modal, an average, a final reaction or an unclear mixture of all these reactions? “The changeability of affective reactions means that a single measure purporting to cover the entire commercial may be very misleading” (Fenwick and Rice, 1991, p.24).

Interruptions in order to grasp the dynamics of the reactions are not the solution. Indeed, when the subject is responding to a TV ad, interruptions can be obtrusive, disrupting the dynamics of the responses.

“Process tracing methods are a better solution to the extent that they offer the opportunity to examine patterns of response to transient external stimuli over time” (Vanden Abeele and Maclachlan, 1994, p.597) and can help identify the precise features of the ad that might inhibit or enhance that ad’s effectiveness. So, measurement of affective reactions should be as contemporaneous as possible with the advertisement eliciting these reactions. Such methods are real-time methods. “Real-time methods provide rich, process oriented measures of subject reactions to dynamic messages. They provide the opportunity to perform individual level diagnostics on the process of interest. They are preferable to post exposure measures in that individuals are unable to provide retrospective responses about early points in a communication without bias due to having seen the rest of the message” (Hughes, 1991). Instead of overall reactions to ads, real-time responses to transitory elements of ads are of interest. They may reveal how the commercial is processed and hence contribute to a better understanding of its effectiveness (Boyd and Hughes, 1992; Fenwick and Rice, 1991; Hughes, 1992; Rothschild et al., 1988; Stewart and Furse, 1982).

The warmth-monitor is a well-known example of such methods (Aaker et al., 1986). However the study achieved by Vanden Abeele and Maclachlan (1994) highlighted questions regarding this construct’s meaning (“warmth”) and valid measurement.

So we are looking for an ideal (?) measure of affective reactions. Such a measure has to be continuous or at least in real-time, as spontaneous as possible, objective, disguised, assessing intensity, valence and content, metric if possible in order to allow subsequent statistics and of course valid and reliable. Reviewing the extant literature on the measurement of affective reactions did not pinpoint such an ideal (Derbaix and Poncin, 1998). However two measurement tools appeared to be particularly attractive as well as complementary.

Baumgartner, Sujan and Padgett (1997) assessed moment-to-moment affective responses with a computerized procedure they called the “feelings monitor”.

“Initially, the computer screen displays the anchors for the feeling scale, which range from “strong negative feelings” to “neutral” to “strong positive feelings”. By pressing the left mouse button, the participant activates the cursor at the start of each advertisement. The cursor moves down the screen at a constant speed and participants can control only the cursor’s horizontal position by moving the mouse to the left or right and indicating to what extent the advertisement elicits positive or negative feelings at any given moment. The computer displays the charted affect pattern on the screen and automatically records responses every second. The computer is programmed so that the screen with the feelings monitor disappears after a commercial is over. Just before the beginning of a new advertisement, a start signal appears on the television screen and by pressing the left mouse button, the participant activates the feelings monitor and starts the cursor moving down the screen from the neutral position” (Baumgartner, Sujan and Padgett, 1997, p.222).

The ability to register affective responses almost continuously, its attractive simplicity and low cost were criteria for its selection for our study. This procedure—clearly inspired from the one used with the warmth monitor—has also the benefits of the directness of the task and of a well-exercised behavior (similar to the drawing of a line). However it does not precise the content of the affective response, a criticism shared by most continuous measures which only allow respondents a selective response range.

The disguised observation of facial expressions of emotions (a motor behavior) offers the possibility of identifying some affective reactions elicited by the ad in real-time and in a non-reactive manner. It has now been accepted that, in some circumstances, the
face is home to a system of rapid, emotion-revealing signals (Ekman, 1972; Ekman and Friesen, 1978; Ekman, 1993). Coding facial expressions recorded in a well-known context (in order to know the causal factors, such as in a lab-setting) has also numerous advantages. It needs no retrospective nor introspection. It also allows the recording of the chronological appearance of emotions. As for the inconveniences, three seem important: the necessity to possess costly equipment to be able to film the face precisely and without being seen, complex decoding which entails long and difficult training and a low probability of being able to observe weak affective reactions. As underlined by Derbaix and Bree (1997), the first condition to use a method based on facial expressions of emotions postulated to be universal, is to admit that this thesis is one of the best plausible alternative. In its most restrictive form, this thesis means the existence of separate specific facial configurations corresponding to the same number of separate specific emotions, easily recognized by all humans. In an insightful discussion of the extant literature, Russell (1994) underlined methodological problems found in studies leading to the conclusion of the universality thesis. In our study reported hereunder we tried to minimize these deficiencies. We worked indeed with spontaneous and dynamic facial expressions; we knew the expresser’s context (a lab-setting where the respondent was shown different ads); our judges did not give a code to every facial movements. Moreover partial coding of secretly videotaped faces illustrates the fact that our judges did not interpret facial expressions dichotomously. Finally implementing our experimentation (in a pure occidental context) with one respondent at a time and knowing the setting make it possible to disentangle face-emotion knowledge from face-situation knowledge.

The main advantages and drawbacks of the two measurement methods we selected are summarized in the tables 1 and 2.

So, in this research, we rejected verbal measurements whose potential reactivity might induce distortions relating to social desirability, evaluation apprehension as well as bias towards more cognitive than affective reactions. As appeared in tables 1 and 2, the 2 methods we plan to use appear to be complementary by providing—if used simultaneously—the polarity, the intensity as well as the content of affective reactions. In fact using these 2 methods simultaneously serves to lessen their respective drawbacks. Moreover using the outputs of the feelings monitor as well as the ones of coding facial expressions (2 non-verbal but different methods), as potential explanatory variables of our 2 macro-constructs (Aad and AB), minimizes the problem of shared method variance encountered when using multiple verbal report methods with question formats perceived to be similar by respondents (Feldman and Lynch, 1988).

Baumgartner, Sujan and Padgett (1997) developed several hypotheses dealing with the integration of moment-to-moment emotional responses into overall ad judgments. The results of the 3 empirical studies they achieved, using the feelings monitor, were essentially that consumers evaluate commercials in terms of proxy measures of the moment-to-moment affect trace. Specifically, they found that consumers prefer commercials that have high peaks (the most extreme experience in the affect trace), end on a strong positive note and exhibit sharp increases in the trend of affective experiences over time. They stressed that the latter result might reflect the same process as the preference for high peaks and ends, because steeper slopes contribute to higher peaks and ends. On the other hand, total ad duration was related only weakly to overall judgments. They also showed that people’s preference for these specific patterns of emotional experience generated by advertisements not only apply to ad liking but also to brand liking and brand recall.

Our coders did focus on different areas of the face and then interpret the whole facial expressions on the basis of Ekman, Friesen and Tomkins (1971), Ekman (1972) and Ekman and Friesen (1975) works.

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Process Tracing of Affective Reactions Elicited by Commercials

TABLE 1
Facial expressions recorded during exposure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• real-time measurement</td>
<td>• costly equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• if disguised, observation of this spontaneous motor behavior provides the valence and the content</td>
<td>• complex decoding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• one of the purest affective method</td>
<td>• limited to core emotions (Is the magic number 7?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• applicable to very different audiences (the adults, the children, the elderly)</td>
<td>• controversy about the Universality thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• intensity has to be assessed by the coders (e.g. in EMFACS, FAST)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• necessity to know exactly the context in order to label the expressions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2
Feelings Monitor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• contemporaneous method of measurement</td>
<td>• does not provide the content of the affective reactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• all the changes even the weakest are recorded</td>
<td>• disguised use impossible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• provides intensity and polarity</td>
<td>• generates probably less pure affective reactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• easy to implement and to analyse</td>
<td>• risk of reactivity (less spontaneous)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• metric information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the whole spectrum of affective reactions (e.g., surprise), these ads being targeted at both men and women. These advertisements were selected to cover a broad range of products. A pretest had indicated relatively low variance in the ratings of affective responses for the same advertisement (to ensure that the stimulus generated fairly homogeneous affective responses) for 20 out of 25 commercials and high variance across the different ads. So in this study we treated people as replicates.

For the analysis of the data coming from the feelings monitor, for each commercial, we charted a “mean curve”, i.e. a curve on which each point (score) was the average of the momentary affective experience computed for all the subjects, second by second. The following variables coming from the feelings monitor were computed for each commercial:

SSM: sum of the scores (points) on the mean curve divided by the length of the commercial.

PE: peak experience (highest score on the mean curve).
EN: end note (final moment) on the mean curve.
TTP: time to peak (i.e. time elapsed before the peak experience).
TAP: time after peak.

For the facial expressions, the outputs of our procedure were computed as follows (for the 4 emotions which were expressed and coded, i.e. Joy=J, Positive Surprise=PS, Negative Surprise=NS and Disgust=D). Taking VALSER (a commercial for a mineral water; 45") as an example the score computed for joy was:

Respondent n° 1: joy from seconds 2 to 15 with an intensity of 2; from 15" to 24" (joy with an intensity of 3); from 38" to 45" (joy with an intensity of 3). So for this respondent the score of joy was (13 (seconds) * 2) + (9 * 3) + (7 * 3) = 74. We did the same for all the other respondents. We summed all these scores, then divide by the

2For several of our ads, one or two “outliers” (subjects) were disregarded on the basis of completely different affect traces. For each ad, we computed Cronbach α in order to check the homogeneity of the affective traces across our respondents. With the exception of the ad for IKEA, all of our alphas for the affect traces were between .673 and .941 with a mean of .865.

3Only one respondent exhibited the expected pattern of facial expression for sadness, and 2 respondents for anger and only in the case of one commercial. These respondents were disregarded from our analyses for this commercial.

4The intensity for each facial expression of emotion was coded on a 3 points (so from 1 to 3) scale by our 2 coders. In case of disagreement, a third coder was requested to solve the problem.
number of respondents and finally divide by the length of the commercial (in this example 45).

On the basis of all the computed explanatory variables, we first estimated what we called the total affective model (see Table 3):

\[
Aad = \text{constant} + SSM + PE + EN + TTP + TAP + J + PS + NS + D
\]

To pinpoint the significant variables in all the estimated models, a screening procedure (a step-by-step regression in descending order) was applied. This procedure was based on three criteria: value of the t-test; standard/mean of the variable and tolerance. Tolerance is one minus the squared multiple correlation between each predictor and the remaining predictors in the equation. Low values of tolerance indicate that some of the predictors are highly intercorrelated. In short, this led to eliminating one variable at a time and reestimating the equation each time until all the predictors were significant.

Table 4 (hereunder) provides the results of this screening procedure, first applied to the total affective model (left side of the table) then to the facial affective model (right side of the table). Our starting equation for the latter was (taking into account only the variables coming from the coding scheme): \(Aad = \text{constant} + J + PS + NS + D\).

probably due to a very high correlation (.99) between SSM and PE, the sign of the SSM regression coefficient was contrary to our expectations in the total affective model. So we regressed Aad on the sole PE and obtained the results presented in table 5. Consequently the “Peak Experience” appeared in our investigation as the strongest predictor of Aad and therefore as a very good proxy of the affect trace. As one realizes, the contribution of facial expressions seems more limited at the end of this procedure.

Although the results obtained with the facial affective model are less significant than the ones obtained with the total affective model (pinpointing essentially variables coming from the feelings monitor), they are much more significant than the ones produced in previous advertising studies where facial expressions were coded (e.g. Derbaix, 1995; Derbaix and Bree, 1997). The reasons of the better results obtained here are perhaps:

- the fact that the intensity (noted “subjectively” by the coders but taking into account descriptions differing in intensity of facial expressions of emotion published in Ekman and Friesen (1975); for instance for joy on page 104) was here taken into account (which had not been done before).
- we used the ad as unit of analysis.

Focusing on our other macro construct (\(A_B\)) and following the same screening procedure led to the results presented in table 6.

These final results are very interesting to the extent that 2 proxy variables of the affect trace (feelings monitor) and a variable

\[\text{FIGURE 1}
\]

The Design

| T1 | Appointment (call) in order to come in the LAB |
| T2 | Warming up tasks (Verbal explanations about how to use the feelings monitor + 30 seconds of Training with the mouse + testing with a real commercial) |
| IN | First commercial |
| THE | Second commercial |
| LAB | Third commercial |

\[
\text{Commercials: 4 to 11} \quad (1) + (2); \text{measurement of Aad after each commercial and measurement of } A_B \text{ every three commercials}
\]

\[
\text{Commercials: 12 to 20} \quad (1) + (2); \text{measurement of Aad after each commercial and measurement of } A_B \text{ every three commercials}
\]

| \[5\text{When adding SSM to PE, the squared multiple R jumped from .901 to .926. The F}_{ADD} \text{ statistic (Kerlinger and Pedhazur, 1973) was not significant at } p=.025. \text{ This statistic tests whether the increase in } R^2 \text{ from adding a variable to a model is statistically significant.} \]
Process Tracing of Affective Reactions Elicited by Commercials

emerging from our coding of facial expressions of emotions impact on the attitude toward the brand, a variable more closely linked to managerial interests than Aad. However, one more time we have to record an important collinearity between 2 of our explanatory variables (SSM et EN), this multicollinearity being probably at the origin of the unexpected sign of the SSM coefficient. Let us also stress that another important correlation between explanatory variables (between PE et EN) appeared in our research. Examining the affect traces, we of course found that in many instances, PE and EN were superimposed. This fact justifies that in the last regression EN—after the screening procedure—remains highly significant “instead” of PE.

Finally, we tested the possible mediating role of Aad with respect to the impact of our affective variables on $A_B$, in accordance with Baron and Kenny’s (1986) method. After the 3 needed regressions, we found that SSM and PE are non significant in explaining $A_B$ once Aad is included among the explanatory variables.

Discussion and Conclusion

As clearly shown by our results, 3 of the outputs of the feelings monitor, i.e. the peak experience, the end note and the sum of the scores, were highly significant in our study. Let us stress that—contrary to Baumgartner et al. (1997)—some portions of our affect traces were on the negative side of the chart and that 3 of the peak

### TABLE 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>Level of significance of t-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>-.3291</td>
<td>.4073</td>
<td>-.8080</td>
<td>.4658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSM</td>
<td>-.0252</td>
<td>.0115</td>
<td>-2.2422</td>
<td>.0244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>.0290</td>
<td>.0155</td>
<td>1.8740</td>
<td>.0452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EN</td>
<td>-.0003</td>
<td>.0119</td>
<td>-.0290</td>
<td>.4887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTP</td>
<td>.0217</td>
<td>.0133</td>
<td>1.6376</td>
<td>.0663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAP</td>
<td>.0008</td>
<td>.0331</td>
<td>.0243</td>
<td>.4905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>-.5788</td>
<td>.4901</td>
<td>-1.1810</td>
<td>.1325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>16.5938</td>
<td>12.9707</td>
<td>1.2793</td>
<td>.1148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>-6.2405</td>
<td>6.9723</td>
<td>-.8950</td>
<td>.1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>-5.0673</td>
<td>7.3871</td>
<td>-.6860</td>
<td>.2542</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>Level of significance of t-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>.0916</td>
<td>-.6867</td>
<td>.2508</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSM</td>
<td>-.0228</td>
<td>.0096</td>
<td>-.23755</td>
<td>.0148</td>
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<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>.0273</td>
<td>.0065</td>
<td>4.1941</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total affective model:
Aad = constant + SSM + PE

The facial affective model:
Aad = constant + J + D

R² = .9259; Adjusted R² = .9173; F-test (2,17) = 106.36; p<.001
n = 20

R² = .577; Adjusted R² = .528; F-test (2,17) = 11.625; p<.001
n = 20

Discussion and Conclusion

As clearly shown by our results, 3 of the outputs of the feelings monitor, i.e. the peak experience, the end note and the sum of the scores, were highly significant in our study. Let us stress that—contrary to Baumgartner et al. (1997)—some portions of our affect traces were on the negative side of the chart and that 3 of the peak
TABLE 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>Level of significance of t-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>-0.967</td>
<td>0.1015</td>
<td>-9.528</td>
<td>0.1766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>0.0119</td>
<td>0.0009</td>
<td>12.8302</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total affective model:
AB = constant + SSM + EN + D

R² = .7515; Adjusted R² = .7049;
F-test (3,16) = 16.128; p<.001
n = 20

TABLE 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>Level of significance of t-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>0.9034</td>
<td>0.2479</td>
<td>3.6446</td>
<td>0.0011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSM</td>
<td>-0.0337</td>
<td>0.0101</td>
<td>-3.3362</td>
<td>0.0021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EN</td>
<td>0.0275</td>
<td>0.0698</td>
<td>3.9425</td>
<td>0.0006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>-30.4719</td>
<td>9.3774</td>
<td>-3.2508</td>
<td>0.0025</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The facial affective model:
AB = constant + D

R² = .4582; Adjusted R² = .4281;
F-test (1,18) = 15.2226; p<.001
n = 20

experiences and 3 of the end notes (for the same commercials) were negative. The greater impact of the proxy variables of the affect trace with respect to the outputs of our coding of facial expressions can perhaps be explained as follows. Feelings recorded with the monitor as well as Aad and AB are less spontaneous and more cognitive than the facial expressions. So we can not ruled out a “shared method variance” explanation for partially justifying the greater impact on our more macro constructs (Aad and AB) of the variables coming out the feelings monitor. Let us also stress that with the feelings monitor the measurement of the intensity is more direct, does not require the “subjectivity” of coders and is perhaps more precise than the measurement of the intensity with coding facial expressions of emotions. Moreover let us one more time underline that many commercials do not perhaps have the potential to generate strong affective reactions (i.e. emotions for which there are facial counterparts in the coding systems elaborated by Ekman and his collaborators). Nevertheless, our facial affective model highlights significant variables emerging from our coding schema of facial expressions of emotion.

Due to the simultaneous use of 2 non verbal methods, it is also possible in our investigation to try to interpret, i.e. to label, the affect traces. For the 3 negative peak experiences it was easy to diagnose that disgust was at their origin. On Graph 1 we reproduce the patterns for respondent n° 11 and for the VALSER commercial (an unknown ad for an unknown brand of mineral water) coming from the feelings monitor (•) and from the coding of the facial expression of Joy (•). We observe a good similarity between the affect trace recorded by the feelings monitor and a comparable chart we built for joy (rescaling the figures for joy). In a near future we will investigate all these possible pairs of charts, i.e. at least 20 (commercials) by 24 (respondents) charts. These 480 charts are a minimum to the extent that in some cases we have different expressions of emotions appearing chronologically during the same commercial.
Moreover having video-taped not only the facial expressions of emotions but also what appeared on the TV screen, i.e. the commercials, while the respondent was displaying a facial expression of disgust, for instance, it is now possible to find out the exact elements of the commercial which could be at the origin of this emotion. From a practical point of view polarity and intensity of affective reactions are of course crucial but adding content (due to the coding of facial expressions) is undoubtedly an interesting plus. Furthermore we have to be careful with hypotheses regarding the impact of the polarity of affective reactions on Aad and AB. Commercials eliciting sadness, for instance, may well be liked.

A substantial interest in the role of affective reactions and states was sparked by influential studies in the 1980’s and 1990’s (see Brown S.P., P.M. Homer and J.J. Inman (1998) for a synthesis) and have to some extent compete with the study of the higher cognitive processes that have been the mainstay of consumer behavior research. In this study, we replicate the compelling demonstration of Baumgartner et al. (1997) concerning the predictive power of the peak experience and the end note of the affect trace. Moreover and, to our knowledge, for the first time in the marketing literature the impact of facial expressions of emotions on Aad and AB was clearly assessed. Our results can serve as a suggestive point of departure concerning the validity of the affect trace. In a next future we will compare—as in Graph 1—the respective graphs emerging from the outputs of our 2 non verbal methods in order to progress in validly interpreting affect traces elicited by ads, investigate sequence effects, effect of repetition on affective reactions and build new explanatory variables applicable in specific cases (i.e., when we have during the same commercial positive and negative affective reactions), ...

REFERENCES


Irritation-, Stress-, and Dejection-Alleviative Consumption: Initial Tests of Working Hypotheses
Harri T. Luomala, University of Vaasa, Finland

ABSTRACT
This study investigates irritation-, stress-, and dejection-alleviative consumption empirically. The empirical investigation encompasses initially the testing of certain working hypotheses. This paper seeks to contribute to consumer behavior research by producing empirical insights that can serve as theoretical building blocks in advancing the construction of a theory or model of mood-alleviative consumption. A survey methodology is harnessed to tap the spectrum of irritation-, stress-, and dejection-alleviative activities people possess. It is discovered that irritation-, stress-, and dejection-alleviative activities are different in character and that people differ with regard to their typical ways of coping with distinct negative moods, and that certain aspects of personal characteristics moderate engagement in mood-alleviative consumer behaviors. Finally, theoretical and managerial implications based on the empirical examinations are discussed.

INTRODUCTION
The belief that negative moods play a major role in the lives of people in general and in their consumer behavior in particular seems well-warranted; the multitude of mood-alleviative habits (Rippere 1977; Parker and Brown 1982; Cunningham 1988; Thayer, Newman, and McClain 1994) lends support to the significance of the role of mood experiences in human life. In the words of Thayer et al. (1994, p. 910): "...mood is now recognized as a central element of human behavior."

As implied above, negative moods are not only experienced, they are handled as well (Frijda 1986, p. 401). People’s drive to self-regulate their negative mood experiences may be a rather basic human motive in maintaining general welfare (Schaller and Cialdini 1990, p. 281). Consumption, in one form or another is a major mood-alleviative device in modern western societies (cf. Gallup and Castelli 1989; Gould 1991; Kacen 1994; Luomala and Laaksonen 1999). In other words, different consumer behaviors are used to self-regulate the experiences of negative moods.

In consumer research, it has not been usual to view consumer behaviors from a mood-alleviative perspective (cf. McKeage 1992; Luomala 1998). Thus, there is not a solid base formed by past studies on which research concerning mood-alleviative consumer behaviors could be grounded. As a consequence, a need for theory-building research is obvious. On the other hand, there is a study (Luomala and Laaksonen 1997) which offers a few preliminary theoretical conjectures concerning the relation between mood-alleviation and consumption.

Now, three objectives can be set for this paper. First, to introduce a few working hypotheses to guide the empirical examinations of this paper. Second, to initially test these working hypotheses empirically. Third, to offer theoretical and managerial implications on mood-alleviative consumption.

The paper seeks to contribute to consumer behavior research in two ways. First, it brings a neglected area of investigation to the attention of consumer researchers. Second, it offers empirical insights and results that can serve as theoretical building blocks in advancing the construction of a theory or model for mood-alleviative consumption. Thus, in summary, the potential of this study for stimulating further research is high.

This paper is structured in the following way. In the first section, the working hypotheses are introduced. Next, the method and sample are briefly described. Two general working hypotheses are considered in the light of empirical data in the third section of the paper. The results of initial tests of more specific working hypotheses are reported in the fourth section. The paper is concluded by a discussion highlighting theoretical and managerial implications.

WORKING HYPOTHESES
Two general working hypotheses are deduced before the more specific working hypotheses are introduced. First, there are theoretical reasons to believe that, as experiences, all negative moods are not alike, even though consumer research has often treated negative moods as a unitary construct.

Many theorists would accept the following tripartition of negative moods: irritation, stress, and dejection. For instance, according to Johnson-Laird and Oatley (1989), sadness (relates to dejection), fear (relates to stress), and anger (relates to irritation) are amongst the emotions that are most basic (cf. also Watson and Clark 1992). The phenomenology of these moods are different because their “emotional roots” are distinct.

The mood of irritation is a derivative of the emotional family of anger (cf. Shaver, Schwarz, Kirson, and O’Connor 1987; Lazarus 1991). It is a milder version of anger. Irritation has a lot of synonyms. These include: annoyance, hostility, agitation, grouchiness, aggravation, grumpiness, and frustration. A person experiencing irritation is, in terms of Mehrabian and Russell’s (1974) three-dimensional mood model, feeling unpleasant, engaged, and submissive simultaneously.

The mood of stress is a derivative of the emotional family of fear (cf. Shaver et al. 1987; Lazarus 1991). However, stress is subtler than fear. Terms synonymous with stress are also not uncommon. Anxiety, distress, nervousness, jitter, tenseness, apprehension, uneasiness, worry, and restlessness are some illustrations of these terms. In terms of Mehrabian and Russell’s (1974) three-dimensional mood model, a person experiencing stress is feeling unpleasant, engaged, and dominant simultaneously.

It may appear odd that stress is marked by dominance or perception of having too much control (cf. Kacen 1994). However, the oddity is removed when dominance is construed to reflect the perception of having too great responsibility (cf. Ellsworth and Smith 1988; Manstead and Tetlock 1989).

The mood of dejection is a derivative of the emotional family of sadness (cf. Shaver et al. 1987; Lazarus 1991). Once again, dejection has a lot of synonyms: depression, blues, down-heartedness, gloominess, sadness, unhappiness, misery, and woe, to name only a few. In terms of Mehrabian and Russell’s (1974) three-dimensional model, a person experiencing dejection is feeling unpleasant, disengaged, and submissive simultaneously.

In conclusion, past research suggests that the moods of irritation, stress, and dejection are distinct emotional experiences. This conclusion leads to a general working hypothesis: if irritation, stress, and dejection are distinct emotional experiences, then the behaviors aimed at alleviating them are also distinct by their nature.

As regards the second general working hypothesis, the past research on people’s mood-alleviative habits cited in the introductory section of the paper suggests that many individuals have a certain...
TABLE 1
Specific Working Hypotheses

Working hypothesis 1 (personality–stimulus seeking tendency):
Stimulus seekers alleviate their negative moods more consumption-relatedly than stimulus avoiders.

Working hypothesis 2 (personality–screening tendency):
Nonscreeners alleviate their negative moods more consumption-relatedly than screeners.

Working hypothesis 3 (personality–self-monitoring):
Low self-monitors alleviate their negative moods more consumption-relatedly than high self-monitors.

Working hypothesis 4 (values–materialism):
Materialists alleviate their negative moods more consumption-relatedly than nonmaterialists.

Working hypothesis 5 (lifestyle–experimentalism):
People having experiential lifestyles alleviate their negative moods more consumption-relatedly than people having other lifestyles.

Working hypothesis 6 (shopping orientation–recreation):
People with recreational shopping orientation alleviate their negative moods more consumption-relatedly than people with other shopping orientations.

Working hypothesis 7 (involvement–with shopping):
People involved with shopping alleviate their negative moods more consumption-relatedly than people who are not involved with shopping.

Next, the respondents were asked how often they experience irritation, stress, or dejection. The respondents were also requested (in different sections) to write down what they typically did in order to alleviate the felt irritation, stress, or dejection. These mood-alleviative habits were freely elicited (for example, the respondents were not specifically instructed to report habits that are related to consumption). Finally, in this same connection, the respondents were asked to indicate how effective these activities were in alleviating irritation, stress, and dejection.

In the final main section, the respondents were asked to provide some general background information and to respond to a few statements on a Likert-type scale. These statements pertained to the specific working hypotheses in Table 1 and are treated in a more detailed manner when the results of the survey are reported.

The questionnaire was sent to a thousand randomly selected adults in a city in western Finland in the fall of 1996. Originally, the response rate was 23%. A dunning letter was sent and the response rate rose to 37%. The final response rate of 43% was achieved after the second dunning letter. The initial number of the returned questionnaires was 432. However, 78 of the returned questionnaires were not usable, so the final number of usable questionnaires was 354.

The demographic and socioeconomic profile of the sample is provided in Table 2. The representativeness of the sample was looked into (z-test). The sample was significantly biased with respect to gender only. The sample includes significantly more (p-value 0.05) women than the Finnish population in general. This fact must be borne in mind when the results of the survey are presented. Most of the respondents possess vocational, high school, or institute level education. Also people with academic degrees and students are represented in the sample. The respondents’ monthly gross earnings varied evenly. Each of the income classes is more or less equally represented. Most of the respondents were married. Two other important groups are singles and persons living in

METHOD AND SAMPLE
The method used in the present study was survey. The questionnaire consisted of four main sections. The first three sections were devoted to the experiences of irritation, stress, and dejection, respectively. Each of these sections began by a request to read through four (tested) mood scenarios. After reading the scenarios, the respondents were asked to write down what they usually associate with irritation, stress, and dejection. The purpose of these exercises was twofold: first, to orient the respondents to think about irritation-, stress-, and dejection-related matters; second, to lower the respondents’ threshold of reporting their own irritation-, stress-, dejection-alleviative behaviors.
However, after an initial inspection of mood-alleviative behaviors, a matrix that can be utilized in categorizing mood-alleviative activities emerged as a viable candidate in the data reduction process. The activity–passivity dimension has consistently been in the focus of attention in mood theorizing. Thayer et al. (1994, p. 922) support the selection of this dimension by asserting that “These strategies range from active to passive, and this active–passive distinction may be the most important differentiation”. Cunningham’s (1988) work inspired the third dimension: the sociality–asociality dimension. In his study, Cunningham (1988) used sociality as a dimension to categorize different mood-regulatory behaviors.

Combining these three bipolar dimensions yields an 8-cell matrix that can be utilized in categorizing mood-alleviative activities. However, after an initial inspection of mood-alleviative behaviors, it was noted that mental activities are also mentioned. That is why one additional category for mental mood-alleviative activities was added. Thus, the final classificatory scheme comprised nine categories of different mood-alleviative behaviors.

In categorizing, the biggest problem was which mood-alleviative behaviors should be categorized as consumption-related, which as consumption-unrelated, which as active, what as passive, and so on? An absolute solution to this dilemma could not be found. Common sense was used to categorize mood-alleviative activities. For instance, if a mood-alleviative activity was categorized as social, it had to include reference to another person/other persons (e.g. phoning a friend, partying). Otherwise, it was categorized as an asocial activity (e.g. cycling, singing). Similarly, if a mood-alleviative behavior was categorized as active, it had to be related to the expenditure of physical energy (e.g. jogging, going to the sauna). Otherwise, it was categorized as a passive behavior (e.g. sleeping, reading).

Perhaps the most problematic dimension in this respect was the consumption-relatedness–consumption-unrelatedness dimension. What mood-alleviative activities can actually be regarded as consumption-related and what as consumption-unrelated? It seemed that some mood-alleviative behaviors were directly connected with consumption (e.g. going to the movies, going shopping) whereas some mood-alleviative behaviors were only indirectly connected with consumption (e.g. listening to music, tending house chores). There were also mood-alleviative activities that were not judged to be connected with consumption at all (e.g. walking, writing), even though it may be argued that many of these activities too are remotely connected with consumption. For example, to be able to go for a walk, shoes and clothes are needed; to be able to write, pen and paper are needed, and so on.

It seemed reasonable to assume that, for example, buying chocolate is more closely associated with consumption than listening to music, which, in turn, is more closely associated with consumption than going for a walk. Thus, it really is a question of degree rather than kind. Those mood-alleviative behaviors that were judged to be either directly or indirectly connected with consumption were categorized as consumption-related. The rest of the mood-alleviative behaviors were categorized as consumption-unrelated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2</th>
<th>Demographic and Socioeconomic Profile of the Sample (n=354)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Gender</td>
<td>Male 37% Female 63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Age</td>
<td>18-27 26% 28-37 18% 38-47 18% 48-57 20% 58-67 11% over 67 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Education</td>
<td>Elementary or intermediate school 2% Vocational or high school 31% Student 17% Institute level education 31% University level education 19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Monthly income</td>
<td>under 3000 25% 3000-5999 20% 6000-8999 22% 9000-11999 19% 12000 or over 14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Marital staus</td>
<td>Single 24% Companionate marriage 15% Married 53% Divorced 5% Widower 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Number of children</td>
<td>None 31% One 16% Two 33% Three 13% Four or more 7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Companionate marriage. One third of the respondents do not have children and another third have two children. People with one child and three children are well represented in the sample too. There are fewer respondents who have four (or more) children.
FIGURE 1
Frequency Matrices, Dimensional Scores, and Absolute Dimensional Values of Irritation-, Stress-, and Dejection-Alleviative Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Irritation-alleviative activities</th>
<th>Stress-alleviative activities</th>
<th>Dejection-alleviative activities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>social consumption-related active</td>
<td>social consumption-unrelated active</td>
<td>social consumption-related active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>121</td>
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</tr>
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<td>social consumption-related passive</td>
<td>social consumption-unrelated passive</td>
<td>social consumption-related passive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asocial consumption-related active</td>
<td>asocial consumption-unrelated active</td>
<td>asocial consumption-related active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>153</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asocial consumption-related passive</td>
<td>asocial consumption-unrelated passive</td>
<td>asocial consumption-related active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>206</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mental</td>
<td>mental</td>
<td>mental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dimensional scores:
- Activity = 548, Passivity = 286
- Sociality = 131, Asociality = 703
- Consumption-relatedness = 369, Consumption-unrelatedness = 465
- Activity-passivity = 262, Sociality-asociality = -572, Consumption-relatedness-consumption-unrelatedness = -96

Absolute dimensional values:
- Activity-passivity = 262, Sociality-asociality = -572, Consumption-relatedness-consumption-unrelatedness = -96

This study being an initial test of working hypotheses, the author was the sole categorizer. Due to the theory-building nature of the study and the scarcity of resources, this was deemed to be an appropriate and justifiable solution. Moreover, due to the general nature of working hypotheses the author could not, in practice, code different irritation-, stress-, and dejection-alleviative activities in the way which would inevitably verify them. Thus, knowing the hypotheses does not necessarily bias the categorization (made by the author) in this research context. Still, from the perspective of reliability and validity, it is important that multiple coders are used in similar future studies.

Subsequently, each individual mood-alleviative activity of each respondent was categorized as belonging to one of the nine classes. Founded on the resulting categorization, the frequency matrices, dimensional scores, and absolute dimensional values could be generated for irritation-, stress-, and dejection-alleviative behaviors (see Figure 1). The dimensional scores were calculated by adding the frequencies on each of the dimensions. This was done separately for irritation-, stress-, and dejection-alleviative behaviors. Lastly, the absolute dimensional values were calculated by subtracting the dimensional scores from each other.

The total number of irritation-, stress-, and dejection-alleviative responses was counted in order to find whether the irritation-, stress-, or dejection-alleviative responses were significantly over- or underrepresented. Fortunately, only small differences in the total number of irritation-, stress-, and dejection-alleviative responses were detected. The biggest difference (4.9%) was between the number of stress- (980) and dejection-alleviative (932) responses. This difference was not statistically significant.) Thus, these differences were deemed too small to jeopardize the reliability and meaningfulness of the comparative analysis.

The comparative analysis regarding the nature of irritation-, stress-, and dejection-alleviative activities is based on the absolute dimensional values. The x² goodness-of-fit test was performed to see whether the detected differences were statistically significant.

Table 3 summarizes the statistical results of the comparisons and x² goodness-of-fit tests. Eight of the twelve comparisons revealed significant differences in the nature of mood-alleviative activities.
As regards the testing of the second general hypothesis, the way in which each respondent’s mood-alleviative activities were categorized served as a foundation for classifying him/her. Regarding the activity—passivity and sociality—asociality dimensions, an arbitrary fifty percent rule was applied. According to this rule, the respondent is classified as active or as a social mood-alleviator only if he/she has mentioned at least double as many active or social mood-alleviative behaviors as passive or asocial mood-alleviative behaviors. Of course, if the respondent has mentioned at least double as many passive or asocial mood-alleviative behaviors as active or social behaviors, he/she is classified as passive or as a social mood-alleviator. If there is not the fifty-percent dominance, the respondent is not classified in terms of that dimension.

The consumption-relatedness—consumption-unrelatedness dimension received special attention. A special consumption-relatedness index was calculated for the mood-alleviative behaviors of each respondent for two reasons. First, to receive additional confirmation of the results of the frequency-based analysis concerning the consumption-relatedness of irritation-, stress-, and dejection-alleviative behaviors. Second, this kind of index is needed when the rest of the working hypotheses are tested.

The consumption-relatedness index of mood-alleviative behaviors was calculated in the following way. First, each mood-alleviative behavior was given a weight (consumption-unrelated 0, indirectly consumption-related 1, directly consumption-related 2). Then these weights were summed up and divided by the number of mood-alleviative activities. The index was first calculated for irritation-, stress-, and dejection-alleviative activities separately. The magnitudes of these indices confirmed that alleviation of irritation is most closely linked to consumption (index 173.15), followed by dejection-alleviation (index 169.74). Stress relief is most remotely linked to consumption (index 165.74). The separate indices were later added up to form an overall consumption-relatedness index of mood-alleviative behaviors for each of the respondents.

This index was used to classify the respondents in terms of the consumption-relatedness—consumption-unrelatedness dimension. The respondents with an index value smaller than 0.67 were classified as nonconsumption-oriented mood-alleviators. The respondents with an index value from 0.67 to 2 were classified as consumption-oriented mood-alleviators. The border value of the index was 0.67, because the highest possible index value is 2, and a mood-alleviative behavior may be connected with consumption in three ways, as discussed earlier. Table 4 illustrates the classification of the respondents according to their typical ways of alleviating negative moods.

The biggest group by far is the active asocial nonconsumption-oriented mood-alleviators. This implies that almost every third respondent alleviated negative moods by engaging in active, asocial, and consumption-unrelated behaviors. However, if the consumption-
oriented types are added up, the result is that a total of 34% of the respondents used consumption in one form or another to alleviate negative moods. This percentage appears large considering that the mood-alleviative responses were freely elicited. On the other hand, the largeness of the percentage may also be associated with the liberal definition of consumption. At any rate, consumption seems to be an important mood-alleviative vehicle in modern urban societies.

The gender distribution within each type of negative mood alleviators was also looked into. The $x^2$ goodness-of-fit test failed to detect any statistically significant gender-related differences. Thus, one cannot say that men usually alleviate their negative moods in one way and women in some other way. One main conclusion can be drawn at this stage: initial empirical evidence was found for the two general working hypotheses.

### TESTING SPECIFIC WORKING HYPOTHESES

The specific working hypotheses listed in Table 1 were also preliminarily tested. The test to be reported is a tentative one and its results are suggestive. The major reason for this cautiousness is the fact that the stimulus seeking tendency, the screening tendency, self-monitoring, materialism, experiential lifestyle, recreational shopping orientation, and shopping involvement are complex psychological phenomena which in the questionnaire are measured only by one item (see Table 5). Rigorous measurement of these phenomena requires the utilization of sophisticated multiple-item scales. In other words, the single-item measurement has poor reliability. Still, the single-item measurement was selected to keep the time required for filling in the questionnaire as short as possible, which in turn was expected to enhance the response rate.

The statements used are adapted from studies dealing with these personal characteristics (see Luomala and Laaksonen 1997). In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to indicate whether they completely agree (1), to some extent agree (2), to some extent disagree (4), or completely disagree (5) with the statements. They were also allowed not to take a stand on the statements (3).

To test the working hypotheses, the respondents were divided into two groups according to the way they responded to the statements. For instance, in the case of a recreational shopping orientation, the first group was formed by the respondents who completely or to some extent agreed with the statement. The other group was formed by the respondents who completely or to some extent disagreed with the statement. They were also allowed not to take a stand on the statements (3).

To test the working hypotheses, the respondents were divided into two groups according to the way they responded to the statements. For instance, in the case of a recreational shopping orientation, the first group was formed by the respondents who completely or to some extent agreed with the statement. The other group was formed by the respondents who completely or to some extent disagreed with the statement. These two groups were then contrasted with regard to the value of their overall consumption-relatedness index of mood-alleviative behaviors. A t-test was performed to verify or invalidate the working hypotheses. The first, third, and fourth hypotheses did not receive empirical support.

In turn, the second, fifth, sixth, and seventh working hypotheses received empirical support. Nonscreeners were found to alleviate their negative moods more consumption-relatedly than screeners (difference significant at the 0.002 level). People having an experiential lifestyle were found to alleviate their negative moods...
more consumption-relatedly than people having other lifestyles (difference significant at the 0.006 level). People with recreational shopping orientation were discovered to alleviate their negative moods more consumption-relatedly than people with other shopping orientations (difference significant at the 0.007 level). Lastly, people involved with shopping were found to alleviate their negative moods more consumption-relatedly than people who are not equally involved with shopping (difference significant at the 0.07 level).

**DISCUSSION**

In this section of the paper, the theoretical and managerial implications are discussed. The theoretical implications are tackled first. Firstly, what could explain the detected differences in the nature of irritation-, stress-, and dejection-alleviative behaviors? It was discovered that stress-alleviative activities can be characterized as less mental than irritation- and dejection-alleviative activities. A plausible explanation for this may be the fact that irritation and dejection typically originate from uncontrollable sources; nothing can be done about them. Thus, mental maneuvers may be a more natural way to alleviate them than stress, which is often characterized by the perception of being personally responsible for something self-relevant.

Stress-alleviative behaviors appeared to be more active than irritation-alleviative behaviors (which were the least active of the three). Irritation-alleviative behaviors are probably least active, because they work against high activation, which is a mark of the irritation experience. Similarly, dejection-alleviative behaviors may be more active than irritation-alleviative behaviors, because they work against low activation, which is a characteristic of the dejection experience. Stress-alleviative behaviors are likely to be most active, because stress is typically associated with the perceptions of being in a hurry and being personally responsible for something self-relevant. Thus, a way to get rid of stress is to work actively to solve a problem or achieve a goal.

Dejection-alleviative activities were found to be more social than irritation-alleviative activities (which were least social). The social and emotional support may be resorted to in dejection, because it is characteristically associated with uncontrollability and feeling of overwhelmingness. Stress-alleviative activities are the least social probably for the same reason that they are the most active (see above). Irritation-alleviative activities may be less social than dejection-alleviative activities because irritation is more fleeting and an irritated person may feel hostile toward other people. On the other hand, irritation-alleviative activities can be more social than stress-alleviative activities, because an irritated individual typically experiences that he or she has suffered injustice. The perception of experienced injustice pushes the irritated person to get social support and confirmation of the righteousness of his or her irritation.

According to the findings of the present study, irritation- and dejection-alleviative behaviors are related to consumption more closely than stress-alleviative behaviors. The underlying reasons for this result are hard to uncover. However, two potential explanations are offered. First, since many people associate stress with being in a hurry and expending a lot of physical and mental energy, a superficial explanation could be that stressed persons simply do not have the time and energy to alleviate stress through consumer behaviors which require both these resources.

Another, a more profound explanation, may be connected with the fact that the experiences of irritation and dejection are marked by uncontrollability or perception of powerlessness while in the stress experience a person is still aware of being able (even though just barely) to take on self-relevant responsibility. Engaging in a consumer behavior reasserts the feeling of being in control, especially when the consumption activity is linked to the area in which a person has expertise and is involved. In other words, engaging in a consumption activity can be seen as the exertion of power over that situation and sales people. For instance, Barnes and Ward (1995, p. 207) discovered that feeling dominant, in control of the service environment, is one of the strongest antecedents to a good mood.

Secondly, the results of the survey tentatively show that certain personal characteristics (screening tendency, experiential lifestyle, recreational shopping orientation, shopping involvement) moderate the extent to which an individual’s mood-alleviative behaviors are linked to consumption. A better understanding of the moderating role of different personal characteristics and other factors requires additional theoretical elaboration (e.g. concept identification and relation specification) and more stringent empirical tests.

Thirdly, there are a few more specific theoretical implications. First, it would be interesting to see to what extent mood-alleviative consumer behaviors are deliberately (or spontaneously) engaged in. The ability of the respondents to report different mood-alleviative consumer behaviors suggests that they are engaged in a more deliberate than spontaneous way (cf. also Luomala and Laaksonen 1999). However, the utilization of a methodological approach that is based on self-reporting may have been a biasing factor. Second, what is the influence of different cultures on negative mood experiences and the way they are coped with? For instance, are there differences in the way in which and the extent to which negative moods are alleviated through consumer behaviors in dissimilar cultures?

Third, it seems that loneliness is akin to dejection (cf. Forman and Sriram 1991, p. 230). Generally, it would be useful to know to what extent lonely people feel dejected and what they usually do about it. For example, Forman and Sriram (1991, p. 239) suggest that the segment of the population that is characterized as lonely relies on the retailing encounter as a means of social contact. In other words, it may be that lonely people often feel dejected and use consumer behaviors as dejection-alleviation. This issue clearly requires empirical attention. Fourth, it would be interesting to find out how the degree of sophistication of the supply structure (e.g. in rural areas vs. small cities vs. big cities) affects the forms and intensity of mood-alleviative consumer behaviors. Finally, it is important that future research tries to replicate the results and findings of the present study by using diverse samples from different settings.

If marketers wish to design and implement marketing concepts that appeal to consumers wanting to self-regulate different mood states, they need to know in what kind of situations different negative moods are experienced, what are the characteristics of these negative mood experiences, and what is typically sought by consumers in different negative mood states. Moreover, information on the ways in which different consumption situations affect the emotional states of consumers would also be useful to marketers.

On the basis of this information, marketers can create product offerings whose marketing exclusively serves the idea of irritation-, stress-, and dejection-alleviation. Furthermore, for retail marketers, specialty storekeepers, and gift storekeepers, the purposeful utilization of atmospherics is a potential tool in facilitating the realization of mood-alleviative consumer behaviors. For example, if a specialty store operates solely on the basis of the idea of mood-alleviation, then every aspect of the atmospheric solutions of the store should be used to serve the ideas of mood-alleviation and therapy. In turn, retail managers could apply zoning (cf. Yalch and Spangenberg 1993). In zoning, smaller thematic departments are
constructed within bigger premises. These departments are decorated in a manner that exclusively supports the theme. Perhaps special “therapy” departments would be worth creating.

Secondly, through advertising marketers can harness and legitimize consumption as a mood-alleviative instrument and try to change the moral climate, since it has traditionally been morally reprehensible in most Western countries to use consumption to treat emotional problems. Marketers could plan and carry out advertising campaigns aiming at reducing the feelings of disapproval, shame, and guilt that are associated with engaging in mood-alleviative consumer behaviors. As a consequence, the threshold of pursuing mood-alleviative consumer behaviors could be lowered and consumers could feel more encouraged to execute these behaviors in an open way.

Thirdly, since the results of the survey indicate that people differ in terms of the degree to which their mood-alleviative activities are related to consumption, segmentation is an additional managerial implication. It was found that a significant proportion of activities are related to consumption, segmentation is an additional

differ in terms of the degree to which their mood-alleviative consumption-oriented mood-alleviators have a certain type of demographic and psychographic profiles. For retail marketers, development of an instrument for identifying different kinds of mood-alleviating individuals is clearly desirable.

REFERENCES
ABSTRACT

We asked consumers to report the sources of stress they encounter while purchasing, using and disposing off consumer products and services, and the strategies they use to cope with these stresses. We also examined the mediating role of consumer self-efficacy on the use of coping strategies, and found that efficacy results in a broader range of coping strategies as well as the use of particular coping strategies (e.g., planning and prioritizing). We discuss our findings from the standpoint of marketer interventions to help consumers deal with their stress, and the importance of implicit theories in understanding consumer stress management.

Modern life is full of stress, created by the appraisal of threat, challenge or loss (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). There has consequently been a growing literature on what creates stress and how people cope with it (see Scheier and Carver 1992). Research in consumer behavior on stress and coping is relatively new. In one of the few studies on the issue, Luce (1998) focused on stress associated with choice. She evaluated how stresses created by difficult choice trade-offs affect the coping strategies consumers use—especially the strategy of avoiding making a choice. We investigate the stresses consumers feel while making choices as well as the stresses they feel while buying, using and disposing off products and services. We do this from a phenomenological, rather than an experimental, standpoint examining consumers’ own theories of what causes them to feel stress and what enables them to cope with this aversive state.

In examining consumers’ responses to a broad range of stresses we evaluate the effects of two factors—level of perceived stress and self-efficacy. The former corresponds to what Lazarus (1991) defines as primary appraisal of threat or harm and the consequent perceptions of stress. The latter corresponds to secondary appraisal or the assessment of personal resources available for managing the potential stress. Self-efficacy is the belief that an adequate coping response is available. Both factors should relate to the strategies consumers use to cope. Specifically, we hypothesize that while perceived stress should enhance the range, or repertoire of coping strategies accessible for dealing with consumption stresses this occurs particularly when self-efficacy is high. This hypothesis is interesting because of the context we chose to evaluate stress in. Previous research has examined consumers’ coping strategies in the context of a single specific source of stress, and thus has found that specific strategies relate to enhanced coping. By examining multiple stresses together, we are likely to provide insight into whether or not a broad repertoire of strategies is also needed for effective coping.

Further, the choice of specific strategies for dealing with high levels of stress is likely to be different between more and less efficacious consumers; more efficacious consumers might focus on problem-solving strategies and less efficacious consumers on strategies to deal with the negative emotions stress creates. Though this preference for problem-focused strategies by efficacious individuals has been reported in the literature (e.g., Bolger and Eckenrode 1991), the specific strategies less efficacious consumers use are likely to be different.

In this research, we use consumers’ own perceptions to determine their assessment of efficacy and stress. Individuals’ own implicit theories of their abilities and their task environments have been shown to powerfully impact their behavior (Sternberg and Zhang 1995; Kover 1995). Similarly, we use consumers’ own descriptions of how they cope with their stress. We attempt to relate findings from our phenomenological study of consumers’ implicit theories of stress and coping to the theoretical findings from previous research.

THE STUDY

Subjects and Procedure.

We conducted a survey of 58 business undergraduate students at a large northeastern university. Subjects were told that the purpose of the study was to understand the kind of stresses they felt as consumers. They were asked to think about the different kinds of stresses they felt as consumers and write down a short phrase describing each type of stress. They then wrote down their strategies for coping with each type of stress. Finally, they rated themselves on perceived stress and self-efficacy. The items for perceived stress (three items, coefficient alpha=0.70) measured how easy or difficult they found purchasing consumer products and services, using consumer product and service and disposing off consumer products and services. They also evaluated their self-efficacy as consumers, rating four items (coefficient alpha=0.63) such as “I get value for my money”. The entire procedure took 25 minutes.

Coding and Measures.

Two independent judges who were blind to the hypotheses coded the protocol provided by each subject. For each subject, the stresses reported were coded (inter-judge reliability=0.84) and counted, and for each stress the strategies listed were coded (inter-judge reliability=0.78) and counted. Disagreements were resolved through discussion. We also counted the number of distinct strategies produced by each subject across all stresses. Thus, for each subject we had information on the number and type of stresses and the number and type of coping strategies.

Subjects were given two scores based on their self-ratings, one which identified their perceived level of stress, and the other their perceived level of self efficacy. Median splits were performed on each factor resulting in four groups: high stress, high efficacy; high stress low efficacy; low stress, high efficacy; and low stress, low efficacy. The groups varied in size from 12 to 20. The correlation between the two factors was low (0.21, p<.11).

RESULTS

Types of Stresses.

The perceived stresses felt by consumers are given in Table 1. Of all the stresses relating to consumption activities mentioned by
subjects the two largest categories of stresses were in-store ambient stresses and choice related stresses.

In-store ambient stresses such as long lines, messy shelves, pushy or slow personnel and parking hassles accounted for a little less than half (45%) of all stresses mentioned. Choice related stresses such as the stress of too many brands, deciding which brand is best, comparing across brands, unclear warranties and other product information and deciding how much to buy accounted for a third (32%) of all mentions. Stresses of using (e.g., product doesn’t work) and disposing of products (e.g., recycling, giving away) together accounted for about 10% of mentions, as did the pressures relating to prioritizing (deciding what to do or buy first) and lack of time (e.g., finding time to shop, finding time to make a good decision). In-home marketer induced stresses (e.g., having to clip coupons, being exposed to annoying ads and telemarketers) made up a small proportion (2%) of all mentions. Thus the focus on choice related stresses in the consumer behavior literature seems warranted (e.g., Luce 1998).

**Number of Stresses.**

Table 2 provides data for each of the four groups on the number of perceived stresses and the number of coping strategies available to deal with these difficult consumption-related situations. As can be seen from the table, the effect of perceived stress on the number of stresses listed was significant. The two high stress groups listed more stresses, 7.3 stresses on average, compared to 5.8 stresses on average for the low stress groups. The effects of self-efficacy and the interaction of the two factors on the number of stresses were not significant.

---

**TABLE 1**

Perceived Stresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF STRESS</th>
<th>PROPORTION MENTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHOICE RELATED</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Too many brands”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Deciding which brand is best”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Comparing information across brands”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Unclear warranties”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Deciding how much to buy”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Don’t know enough”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAGE/CONSUMPTION RELATED</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Product doesn’t work”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Manual difficult to understand”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISPOSING RELATED</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Recycling”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Giving away stuff”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME PRESSURE</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Finding time to shop”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Finding time to make a good decision”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIORITIZING</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Deciding what to do/buy first”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN-STORE AMBIENT STRESSES</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Long lines; messy shelves”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Pushy, slow personnel”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Product unavailable”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Parking:”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN-HOME AMBIENT STRESSES</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Clipping coupons”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Annoying ads”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Telemarketers”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both for the average number of strategies per stress and the average number of strategies reported across all stresses (without double counting multiple mentions of a strategy), there were significant interactions between self-efficacy and perceived stress. The average number of strategies listed per stress was higher when self-efficacy was coupled with perceived stress (1.9 strategies per stress compared to 1.1 in the other three groups). Similarly the average number of total strategies available for coping was higher when both self-efficacy and perceived stress were high (7.2 versus 4.5 in the other three groups). These data suggest in a context in which multiple stresses are encountered a broader repertoire of strategies is indeed related to efficacious coping.

Coping Strategies for Choice Related Stresses.

We examined strategy use for the two dominant types of stresses—choice related stress and in-store ambient stress. For each type of stress we examined differences in coping strategies across the four groups. For each group we counted the number of mentions for each type of strategy, and then, given the differences in the total number of strategies across groups, we computed proportions of mentions for each strategy. We analyzed differences in proportions across groups using chi-square.

Coping strategies for choice-related stresses are given in Table 3. As can be seen from the table, coping strategies are affected by perceived stress, efficacy and the interaction of these variables. High perceived stress is related to both problem-solving (approach) and defer (avoidance) coping strategies. In a choice context, these cognitive, problem-focused strategies include planning (e.g., prioritizing) and searching and processing information (e.g., reading labels, comparing brands). Self-efficacy moderates the use of the specific problem-focused strategy. Under high stress, high efficacy leads to more planning compared to low efficacy (18% mentions versus 3% mentions) but less search and process (44% versus 71%). However, efficacy does not moderate the use of avoidance strategies. Under high stress both high and low efficacious consumers use defer as a strategy more so than the low stress groups (14% versus 2% under low stress). Thus, efficacious and not so efficacious consumers perceive that stress requires the use of a range of strategies—both problem-solving and avoidance strategies.

In other words, efficacy does not affect the mix of strategies across problem-focused and avoidance, but rather the specific problem solving strategies employed.

Low stress is related to a combination of search and process strategies and simplifying strategies (e.g., heuristics such as pick the first, rely on past experiences and buy reputed brands only). Whether consumers search for and process information or simplify the choice task depends on efficacy. Under low stress, when perceived ability as a consumer is high, subjects report the use of search and process strategies more so (61% versus 40%) and simplifying strategies less so (15% versus 36%) than when perceived ability or efficacy is low.

These data together suggest that self-efficacious consumers have a range of strategies to deal with consumption related stress. They prioritize under high stress and thus on occasion defer the decision. Under low stress they search and process (shop around) possibly to maximize utility. Conversely, consumers with low self-efficacy attempt to deal with high stress by searching and processing information and consequently, possibly, enhance the negative emotions associated with stress. They too use defer as a strategy under high stress possibly to mitigate the negative emotions of stress. Although all consumers simplify under low stress relative to high stress, low efficacy magnifies this effect. The data also suggest that though emotion focused strategies, such as venting rage, are not dominant strategies for choice-related stresses, they are engaged in to a greater extent by consumers low in efficacy (8% mentions under low efficacy versus 4% under high efficacy). Finally it is important to note that given the correlational nature of our data no claims can be made regarding the causality of relationship between efficacy and stress and strategy use. It is just as likely that it is the use of these strategies that produces the concomitant stress (e.g., simplification mitigates stress) and feelings of efficacy (e.g., prioritizing produces feelings of competence and venting feelings of incompetence).

Coping Strategies for In-Store Ambient Stress.

Coping strategies for in-store ambient stresses are given in Table 4. As can be seen from the table, coping strategies are influenced both by perceived stress and self-efficacy.

### Table 2

Some Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUPS</th>
<th>Perceived Efficacy</th>
<th>Perceived Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Above</td>
<td>Below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Above</td>
<td>Below</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Below</td>
<td>Above</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below</td>
<td>Above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of stresses</th>
<th>No. of strategies/stress</th>
<th>No. of distinct strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.6a</td>
<td>1.2a</td>
<td>4.4a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3b</td>
<td>1.9b</td>
<td>7.2b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1a</td>
<td>1.1a</td>
<td>4.6a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3b</td>
<td>1.1a</td>
<td>4.8a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Means with different superscripts are significantly different from each other at p<.05.
As with choice related stresses, high stress is associated with deferring strategies and low stress is associated with simplifying strategies. These effects are not qualified by efficacy. Efficacy instead is independently related to the greater use of interpersonal strategies enacted within the store such as asking for help, complaining and taking others along. One important aspect of these interpersonal strategies, at least of the ones reported here, is that they are examples of how single strategies can serve multiple needs—both problem-solving and emotional needs. Thus it appears that the distinction between problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies generally made in the literature is simplistic and that efficacy in consumption contexts may be related to the use of highly efficient and effective coping skills that meet multiple needs (Luce 1998).

Finally, high efficacy and low stress are independently associated with better time management and reduced reliance on emotion-focused strategies. Time management strategies such as using lists are reported to a sizeable extent, especially by high efficacy consumers who perceive little stress (19%). Conversely, low efficacy consumers who perceive high stress report emotion-focused strategies, such as venting rage and completely avoiding the shopping experience, to a sizeable extent (28%).

**Discussion of Findings.**

The findings are limited, among other problems, by the use of correlational data based on self-reports from consumers in a laboratory study. These results based on retrospective recollections of stress and coping might not match actual stresses and coping strategies in real-world environments. Despite these limitations, this study takes a step towards examining how consumers perceive their own stress—what causes it and how to deal with it. It suggests that consumers’ stress, primarily, is caused by choice-related and ambient stresses. It suggests a set of strategies that consumers use to cope with their stress. These strategies easily classify under conventional taxonomies such as the one created by Carver, Scheier and Weintraub (1989): they can be identified as being either problem-focused (e.g., plan), emotion-focused (e.g., vent) or escapist (e.g., defer). However, our findings indicate that these broad distinctions might be too simple. It appears important to distinguish between different problem-focused strategies, as some are associated more so with efficacy that others (prioritizing compared to searching and processing). Further, some strategies (in-store interpersonal strategies) might serve multiple purposes, i.e., both problem-solving and emotional management functions, especially for high efficacious consumers. Consistently, more recent theoretical work in the domain of stress and coping has been finding distinctions between the effects of different problem-solving strategies (e.g., Carver and Scheier 1994).

Our findings also point to the need for examining both stress and efficacy within a single framework of coping (Lazarus 1991). Efficacy, we found, moderates the use of specific coping strategies for choice-related stress, under both high and low stress. Further, our study findings indicate that efficacy is associated with a broader range or repertoire of coping strategies for high stress. The strength of this finding might also be related to the fact that we studied coping in a context in which consumers are faced with multiple stresses.

**TABLE 3**

Coping Strategies for Choice Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF STRATEGY</th>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>PERCEIVED STRESS</th>
<th>CHI-SQUARE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy HI</td>
<td>HI LO</td>
<td>LO HI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Stress</td>
<td>LO HI</td>
<td>LO HI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Plan | e.g., “Prioritize” “Decide what is needed” | 3 18 10 3 | * |
| Search and Process | e.g., “Read Labels” “Compare brands” “Shop around” | 61 44 30 71 | * |
| Simplify | e.g., “Pick the first” “Rely on past experiences” “Buy reputed brands only” | 15 8 36 2 | * * * |
| Defer | e.g., “Postpone choice for now” “Cut short the trip” | 4 16 0 12 | * |
| Emotion Focused | (Accept, Vent, Avoid) | 2 6 10 7 | * |
| e.g., “Take a deep breath” “Kick the racks” “Just don’t go” | |

Note: “*” indicates significance at *p < 0.05*
TABLE 4
Coping Strategies for In-Store Ambient Stresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF STRATEGY</th>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>CHI-SQUARE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EFFICACY</td>
<td>STRESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERCEIVED STRESS</td>
<td>HI LO</td>
<td>HI LO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplify Store Choice</td>
<td>12 9 3</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g., “Shop only at few known stores”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defer Shopping Trip</td>
<td>10 9 31</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g., “Cut trip short”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal in-store</td>
<td>49 30 22</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g., “Ask for help”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Be rude / Be firm”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Complain”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Take others along”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td>19 8 6</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g., “Make lists”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion Focused</td>
<td>4 14 28</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Accept, Vent, Avoid)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g., “Take a deep breath”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Kick the racks”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Just don’t go”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: “*” indicates significance at p<.05

These ideas though preliminary and limited by methodological problems are provocative and suggest that further research on consumers’ implicit theories of stress and coping is likely to be both theoretically useful and eminently practical. It is possible to envision future studies that better measure (or manipulate) the multiple stresses consumers feel, examine their coping strategies and determine the effects of marketing interventions that either lower stress or raise consumers’ feelings of efficacy. These findings suggest that marketers have a host of possibilities for reducing perceived stress both for making choices and navigating the in-store environment. Marketers can be proactive and make specific coping strategies (e.g., through providing in-store personnel) more accessible to consumers. The effects of these interventions on consumer satisfaction need to be carefully determined as these findings suggest that some strategies (e.g., venting) might in fact be dysfunctional and are associated with reduced perceptions of self-efficacy. Thus careful research into stress management in consumer contexts is warranted.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Identification of Coping Strategies.
Through our investigation we uncovered a diverse range of coping strategies that consumers use to deal with their stresses. This range overlaps to an extent with the coping strategies that have been identified outside the consumer domain. For example, we found planning to be an important way for consumers to effectively cope: planning has been identified as a way to cope in other types of stressful situations. However, we also identified strategies that appear unique to the consumer choice context. For example, we found the strategy of search and process to be extensively reported as a way of dealing with consumer stress. Other coping strategies, generally identified, did not appear among consumers’ implicit theories for coping. Further research is needed to investigate whether or not these strategies are useful for consumers. Some of these strategies seem to be low in relevance for the consumer context, for example, the strategy of passive acceptance of external threats, challenges and losses. Consumers, at least in the U.S., appear to be unwilling to take the point of view that they must passively accept adverse marketer-induced circumstances. However, there are coping strategies, not identified in consumers’ implicit theories, which appear relevant for consumers. An example is practicing restraint. While consumers did not mention this strategy among their implicit theories, restraining one’s self, for example from buying compulsively, may be important for consumers to manage the stress associated with having to prioritize and budget. Alternatively, the strategy of compulsive buying, and more generally of consumption and purchase, may be a way for consumers to relieve the stress in other domains of their lives. The complex relationships among the multiple stress situations in life and the repertoire of coping strategies implemented by individuals seem to be a rich area for study.
The Development of Consumer Self-Efficacy.
In our study we found that self-efficacy or perceived confidence as a consumer enables a wider variety of coping strategies. An important task of future research, consequently, is identifying how people can develop their consumption self-efficacy. Many suggestions exist in the literature on what might enable people to become more self-efficacious (Maddux 1995). The setting of difficult but achievable goals, encouragement to achieve these goals, and the selection of environments suitable for higher achievement are considered important ways to increase self-efficacy. The translation of these ideas into the consumer domain requires assessment.

Marketer Interventions for Consumers Stress and Coping.
As suggested earlier, marketers can help consumers cope with their stresses by enabling them to use more effective strategies for coping. For example, retail stores can provide more in-store personnel that stressed consumers can approach for help. Additionally, marketers can facilitate the development of consumer self-efficacy through the environments they create. One way to achieve this may be through consumer educational programs (at the point of purchase, over the web) that teach consumers skills by which to make better buying choices, use products more appropriately and to dispose them more responsibly.

The Value of Implicit Theories of Coping and Stress.
Current research on stress focuses on experimentally providing consumers with a specific source of stress and measuring their emotional reactions and their coping strategies (e.g., Luce 1998). Instead, we chose to ask consumers to themselves report the sources of stress they encounter in their consumption lives. This method which measures implicit theories provides us with a view of stress and stress management from lay consumers’ perspectives. It serves as a worthwhile complement to explicit theory testing (see, for example, Sternberg and Zhang 1995; Kover 1995).

In sum, we show that consumers encounter a broad range of stresses. They have a repertoire of coping strategies to deal with these stresses. Self-efficacy affects the range of strategies consumers use; it also affects the use of particular coping strategies. Our findings are relevant from the standpoint of marketer interventions to help consumers deal with their stress. Our use of implicit theories to understand consumer stress management complements existing research.

REFERENCES
SESSION OVERVIEW

Numerous contributions have pointed out the pivotal role of aesthetics in marketing practices. Aesthetics largely influences the way companies design products, services and places as well as the way consumers perceive, select, purchase and use goods. Also the experiential approach to consumption explicitly implies a move from rational criteria to more affective and emotional ones. It thus seems important to analyse to which extent rational and aesthetic criteria may be combined in the contemporary system of consumption.

The diffusion of aesthetics in marketing practices requires the definition of methodological strategies to assess its role, both in the offer definition by companies and in the offer perception by consumers. A specific methodological framework may be necessary in order to evaluate the various dimensions of aesthetics.

This session articulates three perspectives on aesthetics: aesthetics as perceived by consumers (paper #1), aesthetics as perceived by the researcher (paper #2) and aesthetics as defined by companies (paper #3).

The first paper by Frédéric Brunel uses two experiments and two distinct measures of aesthetic evaluation to establish that aesthetic evaluation mediates the effect aesthetics produces on product attitudes. As part of a proposed dual mediation model, it is also argued that this mediating role can also influence product beliefs, which in turn affect product attitude’s cognitive component. A discussion of the findings, their limitations and implications for future research follow.

The second paper by Lisa Penaloza shows the essential role of fieldnotes and photographs as data collection methods to study the role of aesthetics in consumption. It also shows that both fieldnotes and photographs bring to light aspects of consumption phenomena overlooked through the use of other methods. A need for more methodological creativity and innovation in the writing of consumer ethnographic texts is pointed out.

The third paper by Patrick Hetzel uses a socio-semiotic approach on four examples of service places in order to show that the aesthetic reference to the past is a multi-dimensional concept. A link is thus outlined between the world of the sign “expression” and the role of consumption in constructing and maintaining a sense of the past for consumers (also called nostalgia).

The Mediating Role of Product Aesthetics Evaluation on Attitude Formation

Frédéric F. Brunel, Boston University, U.S.A.

Product design and aesthetics are important business concerns that remain largely under-researched. This research combines recent developments in marketing, psychology and the visual arts to study product aesthetics (shape, color, texture etc.). For instance, advertising research has shown that an affective reaction to the advertisement (Attitude towards the Ad) is a significant mediator of the impact of the advertisement on the attitude towards the product (see Brown and Stayman, 1992, for a review). In the context of the evaluation of product form, some similar discussion can be advanced. Aesthetic evaluation is based on the intrinsic aesthetics attributes of the products. It derives “from the design and sensory properties of the product rather than its performance or functional attributes” (Bloch, 1995, p.20.) Aesthetic evaluation can be measured for instance with the scales developed by Ellis (1993) or Hirschman (1986). These instruments are measures of the degree to which an object arouses one’s emotions and the extent to which it is perceived attractive and desirable. It is argued that when consumers confront a product and evaluate it, they form an affective (like/dislike) reaction (i.e. aesthetic evaluation). Aesthetic evaluation is conceptualized as a mediator between the product’s physical appearance, and the consumer’s overall attitude toward this product. This mediation role is further justified by the fact that aesthetic evaluation should be seen as a distinct construct from product attitude. Although it is true that aesthetic evaluation is expected to influence product attitudes, product attitudes should be seen as being the consequences of more than just product aesthetics. Other elements (e.g. features, past experiences etc.) also have an impact on product attitudes.

Two experiments were designed to manipulate the aesthetic properties as well as the functional properties of wall clocks. Study one was a 2x2 (aesthetics and functions respectively) between subjects design and used Ellis (1993) aesthetic evaluation scale. Study two was a 3x2 (aesthetics and functions respectively) between subjects designed and used Hirschman (1993) aesthetic evaluation scale. Following their mediation effect testing methodology outlined by Baron and Kelly (1986), analyses of the findings in each study showed that aesthetic evaluation mediates the effect of product physical appearance on product attitudes. These results suggest that consumers systematically process product aesthetics elements, and used it as a basis for product judgements. Also, it should be noted that as expected, aesthetic evaluation was not influenced by the product functional description.

Discussion of these results and direction for future research lead to the consideration of a dual mediation model, where aesthetic evaluation can lead to cognitive elaboration. It is argued that aesthetic evaluation can mediate not only the overall attitude toward the product but also beliefs about it, and in the beliefs about the product in turn influence the overall product judgment. The evaluative weight of each mediation path can vary based on the situational context and/or individual’s personality traits.

Aestheticization of the Present Using the Past: A Socio-Semiotic Analysis of Some Service Places in Contemporary Markets.

Patrick Hetzel, Robert Schuman University, Strasbourg, France

There are many authors, if not all, who, in the context of the current post-modern environment of marketing and consumption, agree that the aestheticization of everyday life is one of the most striking features of our present times. Very often, this is emphasized by the increasing use of themes in everyday life and especially in the case of commercial spaces like shops, restaurants or hotels (Gottdiener, 1997). One very widespread theme is for example: “the past”. In this case, the service places are presenting the appearance of a way of life that no longer exists (Rybczynski, 1986). But whether the way of life is remembered, or simply imagined, it nevertheless signifies a widely held nostalgia (Holbrook, 1990). A study of the literature allowed us to figure out that one hand the theme of nostalgia had been widely studied in different areas of consumption like advertising (Stern, 1992) or product possessions (Belk, 1990) and that on the other hand, the concept of
place in contemporary markets already led to important contributions in the area of consumer research (Sherry, 1998). Therefore, we thought that the question of romancing the past in contemporary service places could probably be studied somewhat more.

Some questions remain to be asked. Is it simply a curious anachronism, this desire for tradition, or is it a reflection of a deeper dissatisfaction with the surroundings that our modern world had created after world war two? What are we missing so much that we look so desperately for in the past? Of course, those questions are very difficult to answer but in order to provide a new interpretation of the problem of the aestheticization of the present by using the past, we are going to work in parallel on a study in two directions. On the one hand, we shall conduct a socio-semiotic analysis of four different service places in Lyon (France); on the other, we shall attempt to create a link between the world of the sign “expression” (the service place) and the role of consumption in constructing and maintaining a sense of the past for consumers (so called “nostalgia”) (Havlena and Holak, 1991, Holak and Havlena, 1992).

The four service places are the following:

- a bakery called: “Boulangerie Pozzoli”
- a bar called: “Panorama Café”
- a home furniture shop called: “la Maison de Jeanne”
- a restaurant called: “la Commanderie des Antonins”.

These four examples will help us to explain that the reference to the past is a multi-dimensional concept. That it does not lead to one single reality of the aestheticization process of service places. One can create an entirely new place using the reference to the past as a stage (Maison de Jeanne). One can also renovate an old place, trying to make sure that it is as similar as possible to what it was a few centuries ago, which brings back to authenticity as the conjoint theme (Commanderie des Antonins). One could also use an old place and renovate it, thereby trying to keep some elements of the previous function of the place and its new function (Panorama Café). This bar was previously a movie theater. Therefore, “cinema” was used as a theme for the new function of the place but most of the “signifiers” were related to the present. And finally, one could mix elements of the present and the past but instead of relating the visual signifiers to the present, most of them can be related to the past (Boulangerie Pozzoli).

If we think about the implications of what we were previously mentioning, the following aspects can be noticed:

- the codes of the present and the past are more and more brought together
- contemporary aesthetics tell us that everything goes
- contemporary service places contribute to the crises of the logical distinction between the present and the past

Writing Pictures/Taking Fieldnotes: An Exploration of the Properties and Relative Roles of Fieldnotes and Photographs in Studying Market Aesthetics

Lisa Peñaloza, University of Colorado, U.S.A.
Julien Cayla, University of Colorado, U.S.A.

Visuals are pervasive as both metaphor and epistemology in social research. The words, “I see” are used interchangeably for “I understand.” Visual methods have a rich tradition in the social sciences; examples include participant observation, photography, documentary film, and archaeological artifact and site studies. In contrast, in the field of consumer behavior we paradoxically have a sophisticated sense of consumers’ use of visuals, yet very limited sense of visuals’ usefulness as data on consumption. The use of visuals has been largely limited to object of study in the analysis of advertisements (Scott 1994; Kassarjian 1977), stimulus in eliciting experimental responses (Mitchell 1986; Edell and Staelin 1983) and interview data (Heisley and Levy 1991), and illustration of interpretive findings (Belk, Sherry and Wallendorf 1988; Wallendorf and Belk 1987). These predominant uses in generating other forms of data or communicating results belie the potential contributions of visual studies of consumer behavior (Collier and Collier 1986).

Even ethnography, which specializes in fieldwork, has relied more on interviews than fieldnotes or photographs as primary data (Belk, Sherry and Wallendorf 1988; Arnould 1989; Peñaloza forthcoming; Holt 1995). In doing so we have privileged what consumers say over what we see them do in our operationalizations of consumption phenomena, and limited our ability to compare the two, which is one of the strengths of fieldwork (Spradley 1980). When used at all, fieldnotes and photographs most often have set the context, framing the research for the “real” data to follow, largely in the form of interview responses. The result is an implicit epistemology-a consumer mediated phenomenology-if you will, that severely limits the ethnographer to reflecting upon consumer testimony (Wallendorf and Brucks 1993). This presentation draws from ethnographic studies of Niketown, Chicago, a Latino marketplace site, and a western stock show in comparing and contrasting the respective strengths and weaknesses of fieldnotes and photographs as a form and mode of representation.

Both fieldnotes and photographs are well suited to behavioral studies of consumption in situ, as they attend to experiential aspects of consumption (e.g., movement and activities), consumption environments (e.g., mall, store and home design and decor), material cultural artifacts (e.g., advertisements, product design and features) and interpersonal proxemics. In ethnographic research both fieldnotes and photographs are used to learn about a particular consumption phenomenon, and both aspire to accurate representations. Generally, photographs provide more detailed observation than fieldnotes, yet they are quite limited in studying consumers’ cognitive processes. On the other hand, fieldnotes are written records of the multisensorial experiences of ethnographers, and their greater use in consumer ethnographic accounts entails a corresponding increase in the incorporation of researchers’ subjectivity in our field.

Issues of representation differ between fieldnotes and photographs, as the result of the manner in which each is understood to represent reality. Sontag (1977) noted how photographs were a presumed measure of veracity even as they were recognized to idealize, both in their way of seeing and the substantive content they represent. Photographs both certify and refuse experience, as their conventions influence people’s judgments of what is worthy of remembering and what is not. They communicate based on a visual code, altering and enlarging “notions of what is worth looking at and what we have a right to observe” (Sontag 1977, p. 3). In contrast, fieldnotes raise differential issues of representation linked to their various uses in recording events and impressions of consumer behavior and marketplace aesthetics. Interestingly, despite the central, indeed formative role that fieldnotes play in ethnography, they have only recently been brought under critical attention, with wide variation noted in their form, content, uses, and confidentiality across ethnographers, and across time (i.e., over the life of the project and beyond it) (Sanjek 1990). The most serious limitation of field notes and photographs alike is the selective perception and intentionality of their collection (Collier and Collier 1986; Harper 1994). Rigor in writing fieldnotes and taking pictures requires the researcher become aware of his/her own way of approaching, accessing and recording a social phenomenon in order to alter each over time to yield more complete representations.
Finally, there is some evidence to suggest that fieldnotes and photographs capture different aspects of the phenomena under study both in data collection and forms of presentation. Bateson and Mead (1942) noted they had gained new insights through the use of photographs after ten years of fieldwork in Bali. As a part of culturally informed observation, their photographs’ strengths lie in providing detailed and complete physical records, integrating the study of culture through investigating images and text, and communicating “aspects of culture never successfully recorded by the scientist, although often caught by the artist” (Bateson and Mead 1942, p. xi). Both fieldnotes and photographs play an important role in bringing to light aspects of consumption phenomena overlooked through the use of other methods. As importantly, fieldnotes and photographs disrupt objective, linear conventions of reading studies of consumption behavior. Taussig (1987) resorted to montage in an effort to create special modes of presentation that disrupted the imagery of the natural order through which, in the name of the real, power exercises its dominion. In closing the presentation, greater balance is called for in the use of informant testimony, fieldnotes and photographs as ethnographic data; as is greater creativity and innovation in the writing of consumer ethnographic texts.

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SEASON OVERVIEW

Marketers rely extensively on attitude and intentions measured via surveys, both for making management decisions and for theoretical research on consumer judgment and decision processes. In this session, we explored some new insights into measuring attitudes and intentions. Specifically, the papers in this session examined how questionnaire design and individual difference factors affect responses to attitude questions and subsequent behavior and the implications of these effects for survey design and data analysis. In addition, we touch on the more general implications of this research for the formation and structure of consumer attitudes and the relationship between attitudes and behavior.

We began the session by examining how two characteristics of a survey—question order and question framing—affect reported attitudes and opinions. In the first paper, titled “Hong Kong 1997 in Context”, Priya Raghubir and Gita Johar examine these issues in the context of attitudes toward the change in sovereignty in Hong Kong for one’s own and other countries. They examine part-part order effects and find attitude polarization such that positive attitudes regarding the effect of the transition on the future of Hong Kong (China) become more extreme if they are elicited after similar responses regarding a related entity, China (Hong Kong). They also find evidence of carryover effects from responses to specific questions on subsequently posed general questions. Finally, they examine the effect of framing the transition issue as a “reunification”, “handover” or “takeover” on attitudes toward the effect of Hong Kong’s transition on Macau and Tawain. The negative “takeover” frame elicits less favorable responses when respondents are motivated to hold attitudes perceived as valid (i.e., for attitudes toward one’s own country), but not otherwise. These findings have important implications given that issues such as the future reunification of Taiwan with the People’s Republic of China may be based on public opinion collected through a referendum.

The second paper, titled “How Response Styles Weaken Correlations from Rating Scale Surveys”, by Eric Greenleaf, Barbara Bickart, and Eric Yorkston, further explores the effects of individual differences on attitude measurement. This paper shows how response styles weaken correlations between two attitude measures. The authors examine the source and size of this weakening in two large studies of consumers’ attitudes, interests, and opinions, conducted in Australia and the United States. The results indicate that weakening due to response styles is often as large, or larger than, weakening from scale discreteness, so that actual weakening in survey data is at least twice as large as previously suspected. Further, they provide evidence that response style weakening represents measurement error and not differences in true correlations. In another study, the authors show how response style weakening can distort comparisons made between individuals with different response styles. In particular, comparisons of the relative weight given to attributes or beliefs in predicting attitudes can vary significantly depending on whether or not the correlations are adjusted for this weakening. The authors recommend a method to adjust for response style weakening when comparing correlations across groups and individuals.

The final paper, titled “The Mere-Measurement Effect: Why Does Measuring Purchase Intentions Change Actual Purchase Behavior?”, by Vicki Morwitz and Gavan Fitzsimons, examines how responding to a purchase intent question affects subsequent behavior. The results of seven experiments provide both further support for the occurrence of the mere-measurement effect and a more clear understanding of the cognitive mechanism through which it operates. The authors find that when asked to provide purchase intentions, consumers are more likely to choose brands for which they hold positive and accessible attitudes, and are less likely to choose brands for which they hold negative and accessible attitudes, compared to a control group of consumers who are not asked an intentions question. These results provide support for the hypothesis that the mere-measurement effect operates through an increase in attitude accessibility.

The papers in this session focus on major issues in attitude measurement. These issues include questionnaire design, dealing with individual response styles, and the effects of responding to intention questions on the accessibility of related attitudes and subsequent behavior. All three papers point to the constructive nature of the attitude measurement process and describe some of the outcomes of this process. Further, the papers provide some insight into how the error associated with attitude measures might be minimized, either through questionnaire construction, question wording, or data analysis. We feel that the field of attitude measurement could benefit from a clearer understanding of attitude formation and structure and vice versa. We hope the papers presented in this session and the subsequent discussion have helped to further this dialogue.

Hong Kong 1997 in Context

Priya Raghubir, University of California, Berkeley, U.S.A.
Gita Johar, Columbia University, U.S.A.

On July 1, 1997, Hong Kong ceased to be a British colony and became the first Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). We report the results of three field experiments, conducted in Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan (n=1250) from June to August 1997, that examine attitudes toward the impact of Hong Kong’s transition as a function of question order and framing. We invoke two aspects of attitudes: (1) whether they are stored in a memory network, and (2) whether their validity is important to the respondent, to predict when order and framing effects are most likely to occur. Experiment 1 examines part-part order effects and reveals attitude polarization such that positive attitudes regarding the effect of the transition on the future of Hong Kong (China) become more extreme if they are elicited after similar responses regarding a related entity, China (Hong Kong). Experiment 2 focuses on part-whole order effects and finds evidence of carryover effects from responses to specific questions on subsequently posed general questions. Experiment 3 examines the effect of framing the transition issue as a “reunification” “handover” or “takeover” on attitudes toward the effect of Hong Kong’s transition on Macau and Taiwan. The negative “takeover” frame elicits less favorable responses when respondents are motivated to hold attitudes perceived as valid (i.e., for attitudes toward one’s own country), but not otherwise. We conclude by suggesting that reliance on survey data in making policy decisions could result in the implementation of decisions that are, objectively speaking, unpopular when the survey instrument evokes response biases.
How Response Styles Weaken Correlations from Rating Scale Surveys

Eric Greenleaf, New York University, U.S.A.
Barbara Bickart, Rutgers University—Camden, U.S.A.
Eric Yorkston, New York University, U.S.A.

Market researchers need to understand data distortions created by survey measures and how to compensate for them. This paper examines how response styles weaken true correlations between marketing variables measured with rating scales. This adds to already recognized correlation weakening from scale discreteness. We examine both kinds of weakening in two surveys completed by large and representative samples of the adult populations of Australia and the United States. We find that correlation weakening caused by response styles is often as large as, or larger than, weakening from scale discreteness, so that actual weakening in survey data is at least twice as large as previously suspected. We also verify that response style weakening represents measurement error and not differences in true correlations. We show that one important consequence of this weakening is that it reduces statistical power in survey research. Another consequence is that it causes distortions when researchers compare individuals with different response styles. We recommend a method to adjust for response style weakening when comparing correlation-based models across such individuals. We describe how a similar distortion can affect analyses that compare groups with different response styles, such as in demographic segmentation.

The Mere-Measurement Effect: Why Does Measuring Purchase Intentions Change Actual Purchase Behavior?

Vicki G. Morwitz, New York University, U.S.A.
Gavan J. Fitzsimons, University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

What is the outcome of asking a consumer to report his or her intention to perform a specific action? Traditional wisdom dictates that respondents retrieve pre-existing intentions and that these intentions should be good predictors of their subsequent behavior. However, recent research has shown that the actual process may be more complicated (Fitzsimons and Morwitz 1996; Kalwani and Silk 1982; Morrison 1979; Morwitz, Johnson, and Schmittlein 1993). Several studies have shown that respondents may not retrieve a pre-existing intention but rather may construct a response to an intentions question only after the question is asked (Feldman and Lynch 1988; Simmons, Bickart, and Lynch 1993). Furthermore, a number of studies have demonstrated that the act of forming and reporting a response to an intentions question can alter respondents’ subsequent behavior (Fitzsimons and Morwitz 1996; Greenwald, Carnot, Beach, and Young 1987; Morwitz et al. 1993; Sherman 1980).

Several different alternative explanations have been proposed to explain why this “mere-measurement effect” occurs. However, these explanations have not been tested to date. The purpose of this paper is to test several competing explanations for why measuring intentions changes behavior.

The results of seven experiments provide both further support for the occurrence of the mere-measurement effect and a more clear understanding of the cognitive mechanism through which it operates. We find that when asked to provide purchase intentions, consumers are more likely to choose brands for which they hold positive and accessible attitudes, and are less likely to choose brands for which they hold negative and accessible attitudes, compared to a control group of consumers who are not asked an intentions question. We argue that these results provide support for the hypothesis that the mere-measurement effect operates through an increase in attitude accessibility.
The Influence of Warnings on Product Placements
Michelle Bennett, University of Western Australia, Australia
Anthony Pecotich, University of Western Australia, Australia
Sanjay Putrevu, University of Western Australia, Australia

ABSTRACT
In recent years, product placements have become increasingly common. Public policy analysts have suggested that such subtle promotional strategies could deceive/misinform consumers and have called for the inclusion of warnings to alert viewers about the incidence of product placements. This study investigates if such warnings have any detrimental effects on the placed brands. The results show that the inclusion of a warning enhances recall but has no impact on the liking for the placed products. These findings suggest that the warnings might be counter-productive as they help the advertisers rather than protect the consumers.

INTRODUCTION
An increasingly common way to promote a product is to show the actual product or a commercial for it in a movie or television program, a practice referred to as product placement. Product placement has experienced such rapid growth in recent years that movie studios have established rates for the various types of exposure (Lipman 1991; Rothenberg 1991). Placements of branded products can be seen in several thirty movie placements (Seinfeld, Melrose Place, The Tonight Show, etc.) and popular television programs (Seinfeld, Ace Ventura Pet Detective, Top Gun, etc.).

While advertisers primarily think of product placements as an alternative strategy to promote their products, those interested in public policy are concerned about the ethical nature of this approach (Wasko, Phillips and Purdie 1993). Product placements have the potential to potentiate the consumer’s traditional defense against advertising because the consumer may not be aware that the featured product is a paid commercial insert. Therefore, several analysts have proposed that a warning precede the program/film listing the paid placements (Jacobson 1991; Lallande 1989).

The objective of this research is to investigate the effects of including such a warning alerting viewers about the incidence of product placements in the movie they are about to see. Specifically, the impact of such warnings on memory (measured as recall) and affect (measured as liking) towards the placed products is studied using an experimental design. The stimulus for the experiment was a recent film containing over thirty product placements. Such a design has the advantages of both internal and external validity—acceptable internal validity due to the use of a controlled experiment and acceptable external validity through the use of a real-life film.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Warning Research
Given the increasing calls for including warnings alongside product placements, it is worthwhile to explore the effectiveness of warnings in other realms. The focus of most of the literature on warnings relates to the use and disposal of potentially hazardous products (Cox et al. 1997). This is understandable given that over the last century products, equipment, and environments have become increasingly complex resulting in many potential hazards. In addition, the public’s increased concern about issues relating to safety and health has played a significant role in this trend towards more information—both voluntarily as well as through legislation.

Most of the articles in this area discuss the social and legal environment of warnings, industry standards, or procedures involved in designing warnings. It is remarkable that although warnings appear on thousands of consumer and industrial products, little empirical research has been conducted in this area. In a recent review of literature, Cox et al. (1997) identified only about a dozen empirical studies that addressed the central question of whether the presence of a warning improved the safe use of the products. It is unclear why the marketing discipline has not rapidly embraced empirical warnings research, especially since it has a rich history of studying persuasive communications. Also, the large body of literature using information processing models and associated experimental procedures seems well suited to this research area.

Recent work in the area of warnings research attempts to overcome some of the above shortcomings by using established consumer behavior theories and testing the emerging hypotheses in an experimental setting. A recent review of the effects of the alcohol warning labels suggests that consumers have high awareness and knowledge of their content (MacKinnon 1995). Studies have found a consistent relationship between alcohol-related communications and attitudes/consumption in non-experimental settings (Grube and Wallack 1994; Strickland 1983) but the results from experimental studies have been inconclusive. In their experiment, Snyder and Blood (1992) found that warnings led to a boomerang effect such that drinkers perceived alcohol as having more benefits when a warning was present. Bushman and Stack (1996) found a similar effect for violence warning labels preceding television programs suggesting that the warning labels might be counter-productive. However, others have found that warning labels decrease the attractiveness of cigarettes (Loken and Howard-Pitney 1988) and music videos (Christenson 1992). This mixed pattern of results suggests the existence of variables that might moderate the effects of warning labels.

In summary, while there is significant evidence that product advertisements lead to greater perceived benefits and lower perceived risks, it is unclear if the use of warning labels influences risk perceptions or alters behavior. Also, moderator variables that could influence the effectiveness of warning labels have not been identified.

Deceptive Advertising
An important ethical problem in the modern business environment, which has the potential to mislead consumers and injure competitors, is advertising deception. Though illegal in its most blatant forms, it can be found in a variety of manifestations that are difficult to establish as outright deception (e.g., puffery, incomplete comparisons, implied-superiority claims). In view of this, public policy analysts have noted that deception in a marketing context is not a rare occurrence (Andreason 1991). Published research has addressed a number of facets of the deception problem. Several studies have documented the deceptive influence of subtle forms of misinformation such as puffery, incomplete comparisons, and implied-superiority claims (Marks and Kamins 1988; Shimp 1978; Snyder 1989). Others have explored the cognitive and behavioral consequences of the deception (Stearleman and Carter 1988) and evaluated public policy mechanisms designed to prevent
or punish such deception (Ford and Calfee 1986; Wilkie 1982). Recent work by Lord, Kim and Putrevu (1997) suggests that consumers might be inoculated against advertising deception through the use of “informational priming” (providing consumers with relevant objective facts prior to message exposure), “cognitive framing” (providing consumers with a cognitive frame of reference), and attribute oriented ad copy.

The above literature is relevant to the emerging debate on whether consumers should be warned about the appearance of product placements. While advertisers seem to think that placements constitute an effective and subtle promotional tool (Sandler and Secunda 1993), consumer advocates argue that such placements are a uniquely insidious and deceitful form of advertising (Jacobson 1988). Such a concern in a movie or television program setting seems justified as several of the viewers may not be aware that the placement is a paid advertisement. When exposed to these products the viewers might believe that the character uses the product in the indicated manner, thereby suggesting that the placement setting is a reflection of reality. Such an interpretation allows product placements to undermine the consumer’s traditional defences that operate when viewers are exposed to traditional advertising. Hence, it has been suggested that a warning precede the film or television program listing all the paid placements, and the subtitle “advertisement” appear on the screen each time a placed product appears (Jacobson 1991; Lallande 1989).

Such warnings could serve as an “information prime” to inoculate viewers from subtle forms of advertising like product placements. Specifically, when viewers are warned that the movie contains product placements, they may be more attentive to such placements and find this type of advertising unethical. However, it is unlikely that viewers will have the opportunity or ability to process information deeply in a stimulus-rich environment such as a movie or popular television program (Putrevu and Lord 1998). Hence, it is unclear if warnings (found to be effective against ad deception) would work in a product-placement setting. In addition, recent research indicates that the college-age movie audience finds the practice of product placement to be an acceptable form of advertising (Gupta and Gould 1997; Nebenzahl and Secunda 1993).

Learning Research

Marketers have strongly opposed the mandatory introduction of warnings. They argue that such warnings would remove the illusion of naturalness surrounding the placement and hence dilute the effectiveness of this promotional approach. An alternative view suggests that product placements are most effective when they are part of an overt promotional campaign announcing the product’s appearance in the film or television program (Rothenberg 1991). There is also some sound psychological basis for expecting the warnings to be beneficial rather than harmful to the marketer’s cause.

Melton’s (1970) encoding variability theory suggests that the context in which a stimulus is processed by the consumer provides a cue for subsequent information retrieval. When consumers come across the same information in multiple contexts, they form multiple paths in memory. Each of these paths would have unique retrieval cues based on the context in which the information was processed. The existence of multiple retrieval cues makes the information more readily accessible in memory as evidenced by higher levels of recall and recognition. Several researchers have reported results consistent with this expectation. Superior recall scores have been reported for varied ad executions relative to the same exposure levels for a single execution (Unnava and Burnkrant 1991). In a similar vein, an encoding variability advantage was found in inducing resistance to competitive advertising (Unnava and Sirdeshmukh 1994). Also, the use of multiple sources or endorsers has led to deeper processing of the message than the use of a single source (Harkins and Petty 1981; Moore and Reardon 1987). The disclosure in the form of a warning is likely to provide an additional memory advantage for the placed products. Viewers who were previously oblivious to the placements are now more likely to focus their attention on the placed products.

There are counter-veiling predictions with respect to affect. Zajonc’s (1980) Mere Exposure Hypothesis suggests that placements would increase liking for the placed products. However, the stimulus-rich nature of the program setting might weaken/nullify this effect. In contrast to the health/hazard warnings discussed earlier, product placement warnings relate to upcoming ads and hence might have less negative attitudinal impact. Therefore, in this situation the memory advantages of warnings are less likely to lead to decreased affect or purchase intent.

HYPOTHESES

An important objective of this research was to identify and control for potential moderator variables in the context of warning labels. A motivational construct known to moderate stimulus processing is program involvement. Involvement affects both the amount and type of information processing. Celsi and Olson (1988) found involvement to be positively associated with amount and focus of attention, comprehension effort, and elaboration. Similarly, Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann (1983) found that involvement determines which elements of a promotional message become the focus of attention. This study introduces program involvement as a co-variate to test its influence in the context of warnings.

From the literature cited in the previous section, it is clear that consumers read warning labels and remember their content but there is mixed evidence for the effectiveness of such warnings in inducing affect or changing behaviour (even for potentially hazardous products). Encoding variability theory suggests that warnings could potentially serve as an additional cue and thus lead to memory advantages. In the context of product placements, this exposure to a warning is unlikely to lead to a change in affect towards the product due to the counter-veiling forces discussed earlier. Therefore, there is some basis to expect warnings to provide memory advantages for the placed products but it is unlikely that such an advantage would have any impact on affect. These arguments are formalized in the following hypotheses:

H1: The warning group would outperform the control and movie group on the recall of placed brands across each of the following exposure conditions:

a: mode of presentation (visual, verbal, or combined)
b: prominence of presentation (very prominent to non-prominent)
c: frequency of presentation (very frequent to single exposure)
d: type of exposure (long, medium, or brief exposure)

H2: There would be no difference among the three groups (control, warning, and movie) with respect to liking of placed brands across any of the following exposure conditions:

a: mode of presentation (visual, verbal, or combined)
b: prominence of presentation (very prominent to non-prominent)
c: frequency of presentation (very frequent to single exposure)
d: type of exposure (long, medium, or brief exposure)
EXPERIMENT

Design

Sample Characteristics. The sample consisted of 63 students (mean age of 20) from major public universities in Western Australia. Budget and subject-availability constraints led to the use of a student sample as opposed to a random sample from the general population. However, the use of student subjects seems reasonable for the following reasons: students constitute perhaps the largest segment of the movie-going populace, they frequently consume most of the placed products, and the film chosen for the experiment is targeted at this age group.

Stimulus. The stimulus consisted of the movie Reality Bites (1994), which was targeted specifically at the young adult segment of the population. This film provided the opportunity to explore the impact of warnings on product placements as it had thirty-three product placements embedded at various stages of the movie. The placed products included candy bars, junk food, soft drinks, fruit juices, cereal, fast food restaurants, beer, cigarettes, coffee sweeteners, air fresheners, magazines, jeans, television programs, convenience and specialty retail stores, and automobiles (see Figure 1).

Procedure. Subjects were solicited from undergraduate lectures by offering them a free screening of the movie. A large dark lecture theatre was selected and the movie was shown on large screen using a video projector to make the setting realistic. Subjects were randomly allocated to one of three treatment conditions—the control group, the movie alone group, and the warning group. Subjects in the control group (no exposure condition) completed the questionnaire before viewing the film. Upon arrival at the experimental session, they were seated, given the questionnaire, and asked to complete it without discussion. After all the subjects had completed the questionnaire, the movie was screened. The other
two groups (movie-alone and warning) completed the questionnaire after watching the film. Subjects in the movie-alone group viewed the movie and those in the warning group were exposed to a warning (preceding the opening credits) listing all the placed products appearing in the film, followed by the film. Each of these two groups followed an identical procedure: upon arrival at the experimental setting the subjects were seated and when all were seated the movie was screened. At the conclusion of the film, the subjects completed the questionnaire, were debriefed, and dismissed. Subjects in all the three conditions were requested not to discuss the details of the experiment with others. There were no significant differences across groups in viewing habits, citizenship, motive for attending the screening, or the number of times subjects had seen the film before.

Measures

Recall. Recall was measured by asking subjects to list all products and companies they could recall in general. This method of measuring free/unaided recall has been used extensively in prior research (Childers and Houston 1984; Unnava and Burnkrant 1991).

Liking. Liking was measured using seven-point bipolar scale anchored by “like” and “dislike” to reflect how the subjects felt about each of the placed products. Half of the products presented in the questionnaire were distracters that served as a baseline or control. Distracters were products that did not appear in the film, and it was attempted to balance the number of distracters and placed products across product classes (see Figure 1).

Demographics and Involvement. None of the demographic variables like gender, ethnicity and age had any effect on recall or liking. Involvement with the movie was also measured using Zaichkowsky’s (1985) scale. This measure requires subjects to assess the film on twenty dimensions using 7-point scales. In this instance, the scale exhibited a reliability of .98.

Coding. The film was viewed multiple times by one of the researchers and also by three independent judges. Each recorded the branded products and companies that appeared, both visually and verbally. Each product placement was rated on dimensions of the exposure variables, i.e., visual-only, verbal-only, or both; very prominent, moderately prominent, or non-prominent; and long, medium or brief exposure duration. For each product the frequency of exposure was calculated, with each new scene constituting a new exposure. A single scene may consist of several shots e.g., the product in the hand of a character and the shots cut back and forth between this character and another. In this study such an exhibition was counted as one exposure with the actual on-screen exposure time of the product across shots recorded as the length of exposure. A brief exposure was defined as anything less than five seconds long, and most verbal mentions fitted into this category. Medium exposures lasted between five and twenty seconds, and anything longer than twenty seconds was classified as a long exposure. Prominent placements were those where the product was in the foreground, or when the brand could be easily discerned. Moderately prominent products were more difficult to make out, often appearing smaller on the screen or more incidentally. The non-prominent products were those which required a degree of familiarity to identify, often not showing the full brand name, though the packaging would make them identifiable to those familiar with the featured brands. Finally, the placements were coded to indicate if the character interacted with them or not. There was a high level of agreement between the four people who rated the product placements and any discrepancies were resolved through discussion and review of the placements. Figure 2 contains a complete listing of the various combinations that appeared in the movie.

RESULTS

Analysis of co-variance suggested that involvement did not interact with any of the treatment conditions nor did it alter the results relating to either of the dependent variables (recall and liking). Since involvement does not seem to moderate the effects in this context, it was dropped from further analysis. The data analysis was conducted using analysis of variance for each of the exposure conditions to test the equality of the recall and liking means across the three groups (control, movie, and warning). The results are summarised in Table 1 that provides the mean recall and liking score for each exposure condition as well as the F-values and their significance.

Recall Scores. The warning group outperforms the movie and control group on recall scores for products that are presented in the visual-only (F=1.76; p>.05), verbal-only (F=5.42; p<.01), and visual plus verbal condition (F=12.07; p<.01). Similarly, the warning group consistently scores higher on recall than the movie and control group for products that were very prominent (F=15.40; p<.01), moderately prominent (F=7.01; p<.01), and non-prominent (F=2.78; p>.05). The pattern of results is similar for the frequency of exposure variable with the warning group outperforming the other two groups for many exposures (F=17.39; p<.01), few exposures (F=4.63; p<.05), and single exposure (F=8.32; p<.01). Finally, the warning group has the highest recall scores irrespective of the length of exposure, long exposure (F=12.75; p<.01), medium exposure (F=2.78; p>.05), and brief exposure (F=7.71; p<.01). In each of the twelve conditions cited above the means are in the correct direction (warning>control, movie) and nine of them are significant at the .05 level. Therefore, H1 is strongly supported by the data.

Liking Scores. In contrast to the results for recall, the results for liking are all insignificant suggesting that the means of the three groups do not differ from each other. This holds irrespective of exposure format—whether the placement was visual-only, verbal-only or both; whether it was repeated several times, few times, or only shown once; whether the placement was a long exposure, medium exposure, or brief exposure; or whether the character interacted with the product or not (F-values ranging from .02 to 3.08; p>.05—see Table 1). Therefore in the context of product placement, the presence of a warning did not impact the liking for the placed product. These results provide strong support for H2.

DISCUSSION

To recap, the warning group has a higher recall score than either the control group or the movie group. This result holds across almost all the exposure conditions. This pattern of results lends support for the encoding variability hypothesis that posits a memory advantage for the warning group. It appears that the warning preceding the movie serves as an additional memory cue and hence makes the information more accessible in memory. It is interesting to note that this effect is present even when the original placement is very prominent, long, and repeated several times during the movie. These results clearly show the importance of presenting information in multiple contexts, a finding also seen in recent research in the area of integrated marketing communications (Lord and Putrevu 1998). The findings emerging from this study also indicate that as far as memory/knowledge is concerned, the presence of a warning is beneficial rather than harmful in the context of product placements.

The general pattern of results observed for the liking scores indicates that the increased memory/knowledge (recorded earlier with reference to H1) does not translate into a significant change in affect. This is in direct contrast to earlier warning research that has reported both positive and negative effects of warning labels on the
### FIGURE 2
Products Appearing in *Reality Bites*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Visual/Verbal</th>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Prominence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominos Pizza</td>
<td>brief</td>
<td>verbal</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>non</td>
<td>2 (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minute MaidNA</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>visual</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>non</td>
<td>1 (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pringles</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>visual</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>3 (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evian</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>2 (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big GulpNA</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>very</td>
<td>6 (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7eleven</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>visual</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>non</td>
<td>1 (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camel Straits</td>
<td>brief</td>
<td>verbal</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>1 (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NutraSweet</td>
<td>brief</td>
<td>verbal</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>1 (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radioshack</td>
<td>brief</td>
<td>verbal</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>1 (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wholefoods NA</td>
<td>brief</td>
<td>verbal</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>2 (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burger RamaNA</td>
<td>brief</td>
<td>verbal</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>1 (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weiner DudeNA</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>very</td>
<td>3 (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chia Pet</td>
<td>brief</td>
<td>verbal</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>non</td>
<td>1 (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pizza Hut</td>
<td>brief</td>
<td>visual</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>very</td>
<td>1 (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacoste Shirt</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>visual</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>non</td>
<td>2 (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocopuffs</td>
<td>brief</td>
<td>verbal</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>non</td>
<td>1 (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental AirlinesNA</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>visual</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>very</td>
<td>2 (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audi 5000</td>
<td>brief</td>
<td>verbal</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>1 (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levi Jeans</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>visual</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>non</td>
<td>2 (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarter Pounder</td>
<td>brief</td>
<td>verbal</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>1 (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royalton Hotel NA</td>
<td>brief</td>
<td>verbal</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>non</td>
<td>2 (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMW</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>very</td>
<td>10 (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diet Coke</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>very</td>
<td>9 (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolling Rock Beer NA</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>visual</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>non</td>
<td>10 (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infinity</td>
<td>brief</td>
<td>verbal</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>1 (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ford</td>
<td>brief</td>
<td>verbal</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>1 (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snickers</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>4 (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The GAPNA</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>very</td>
<td>6 (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magic Tree Airfreshener</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>visual</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>2 (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coke</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>4 (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorex</td>
<td>brief</td>
<td>verbal</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>non</td>
<td>1 (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Magazine</td>
<td>brief</td>
<td>visual</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>non</td>
<td>1 (S)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NA=Not available in Australia  
brief=< 5 seconds  
medium=5-20 seconds  
long=> 20 seconds  
very prominent=foregrounded, brand easily discernible  
much prominent=brands more difficult to discern, small, or incidental  
m=many exposures=> 5  
few exposures=1, <5  
s=single exposure
TABLE 1
Interaction Effects between Treatment and Exposure Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposure Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>d.f.</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Warning</td>
<td>Movie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a: Recall Scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual only</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal only</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Prominent</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mod. Prominent</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Prominent</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many Exposures</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few Exposures</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Exposure</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Exposure</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Med. Exposure</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief Exposure</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b: Liking Scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual only</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal only</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>4.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many Exposures</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few Exposures</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>4.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Exposure</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Exposure</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Med. Exposure</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief Exposure</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacted</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Interacted</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<.05
** p<.01

attraction of the product. The affect results observed in this study could be due to several factors. In the context of product placements, the warnings relate to an upcoming subtle advertisement and hence might have less negative attitudinal impact in comparison to a health/hazard warning. In addition, the processing environment in a movie or television program is stimulus rich and such an environment may not be conducive to an elaborate processing of the placements (Putrevu and Lord 1998). Such a stimulus rich environment might also weaken/nullify the positive attitudinal impact of mere exposure. Therefore, one may not observe a change in affect in this situation. Finally, although the warning may predispose the viewer against the placed products, the presence of a celebrity endorser might counteract this effect.

In sum, the findings from this research suggest that the presence of a warning preceding the film leads to a memory advantage for the placed products but has no impact on the liking for the same. Also, the effects of warnings were not moderated by program involvement. From a marketing perspective the results are
very encouraging. If the primary objective of the marketer is to enhance brand awareness, the introduction of a warning is actually beneficial. In addition, the attitudinal impact of the warning seems weak or non-existent, a result that would be welcome to advertisers who might face mandatory warnings in the near future. From a public policy perspective, the findings are of some concern. The primary objective here would be to inoculate viewers from this subtext of advertising and call forth their well-developed defences against advertising. The finding that warnings lead to higher recall of the products and have little or no impact on liking indicates that the warnings might be counter-productive. In this instance, warnings could be helping the advertiser’s cause rather than protecting the consumers. However, the results of this research should be treated with some caution as this is an initial and necessarily exploratory study.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The subjects were university students. While students are potential users of most of the products placed in the movie, they are not representative of the larger consumer population. Subjects were not chosen at random, only those interested in watching the free movie participated in the experiment. The small sample size (n=63) further limits generalizability. Respondent fatigue and time constraints led to the use of a single-item scale to measure liking.

Replication across multiple settings (movies, television programs, etc.) and using random samples is required to either confirm or refute the findings of this study. Future research could explore the impact of delayed measurement on the dependent variables. The identification of moderator variables that might influence these effects would also be worthwhile. Possible candidates include the viewer’s state of cognitive arousal, brand familiarity, and product/movie topic fit. One could also explore the effects of different types of warnings to determine if the design of the warning could have an impact on the dependent variables. A related question would be to assess if the inclusion of the warning has any effect on the sales of the placed products.

REFERENCES


The Influence of Warnings on Product Placements


ABSTRACT
This research focuses on some key individual factors explaining the extent of movie goers’ consultation of film critics. Four research hypotheses are put forward on the basis of previous studies in the area of consumer information search and three of them are supported by means of a survey among 120 amateurs of cinema. The results indicate that the consultation of film critics is positively associated with movie goers’ susceptibility to social influence, negatively associated with their self-esteem and negatively associated with their personal involvement with cinema. In addition, the consultation of film critics is higher among those who declare being more knowledgeable about cinema, although consultation decreases at the highest levels of subjective knowledge. Most of the results agree with findings reported in previous research on consumer information search.

INTRODUCTION
Consumers commonly gather information from expert sources in order to form evaluations and make better decisions. When information is perceived as insufficient in a given consumption situation, the consultation of knowledgeable sources is usually an efficient way of reducing uncertainty (Hugstad, Taylor and Bruce 1987). In this article, we are interested in some key individual factors explaining movie goers’ consultation of expert sources. Movies are highly visible and very popular experiential products that are reviewed, analyzed and critiqued by numerous people. Although they are not perceived as the most influential information sources by movie goers (Faber and O’Guinn 1984), film critics do play a significant role in the launching of new movies (Farber 1976). Identifying the individual characteristics that distinguish those amateurs of cinema who consult film critics from those who do not is a relevant research goal.

RESEARCH ON THE INFLUENCE OF FILM CRITICS
Because they are among the first to see new movies and because their role is to share with the public their movie consumption experiences, film critics can be considered both as innovators and opinion leaders (Reddy, Swaminathan and Motley 1996). But, what influence do they have on movie goers’ a priori evaluations and intentions to see, or to not see, a new movie ? There is surprisingly few studies that have addressed this question.

Wyatt and Badger (1984) presented positive, negative and equivocal movie reviews to a sample of university students and found that expressed interest towards a movie was generally consistent with the opinion found in its review. Thus, interest in seeing a movie was higher when the review was positive than when it was negative. It must be noted that in this research, the movie review was the only information available to subjects.

Boor (1992) found positive correlations between the ratings given to 568 movies by six reputable film critics and movie goers’ evaluations as compiled by Consumer Reports. The strength of the correlations was such that the author concluded that in general film reviews are good indicators of the value of movies. Although Boor’s (1992) results are interesting, it must be kept in mind that they are correlational and aggregated.

A recent research by Eliashberg and Shugan (1997) has examined the predictive power of film reviews with regard to box office sales. These researchers found that film reviews were correlated with late and cumulative box office sales, but not with sales observed during the first four weeks. They concluded that although film reviews can predict the success of a new movie, they do not necessarily have an influence on movie goers. In other words, the observed correlation between film reviews and sales would primarily reflect the intrinsic value of movies.

Vézina (1997) used an experimental approach to study the impact of critics’ quotes in movie advertising (e.g., “Terrific! The best movie so far this year!”) on intentions to see a new movie. He found that the number of quotes (0, 2, 4 or 6) did not impact significantly on movie goers’ intentions. In his study, movie genre (action, drama, etc.) was the best predictor of people’s intention to see a new movie.

The empirical evidence concerning the influence of film critics on movie goers’ evaluations and intentions is not compelling. Upon examination of the few published studies, one must conclude that researchers have often used correlational and aggregated methods (Boor 1992; Eliashberg and Shugan 1997). When experimental methods at an individual level were used, researchers have neglected to present any other information than the movie review itself (Wyatt and Badger 1984) or have been simply unable to obtain significant effects of critics’ opinions (Vézina 1997).

Although research on film critics’ influence on movie goers’ evaluations and intentions is certainly relevant, it would seem interesting before looking at the impact of the information diffused by film critics to identify the variables that can predict the extent of consultation of film critics by movie goers. Using a hierarchy of effects perspective (Lavidge and Steiner 1961), the impact of information on consumers necessarily follows from the information acquisition phase. In the next section, we present a set of individual characteristics aimed at predicting movie goers’ consultation of film critics.

DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES
The consultation of film critics can be seen as a special case of consumer information acquisition. It is therefore pertinent to examine the results of studies conducted on this topic in order to establish predictions relative to the characteristics of people who consult or do not consult film critics.

Knowledge
While a negative relationship between knowledge and information search has been observed in many studies (Anderson, Engledow and Becker 1979; Moore and Lehmann 1980; Newman and Staelin 1972), in other studies the observed relationship was positive (Brucks 1985; Johnson and Russo 1984). These contradictory results have been explained by the fact that although knowledge may facilitate information search and processing, at the same time it renders information less necessary (Brucks 1985). In some studies (Bettman and Park 1980; Johnson and Russo 1984), a curvilinear (U-inverted) relationship between knowledge and information search has been reported, which appears to reconcile the preceding contradictions. At low and intermediary levels, knowl-

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1The author thanks Nadia Touil for her help in collecting the data and Pierre Balloffet for many useful comments made on this paper.
edge would have a positive impact on information search because it facilitates processing, but at superior knowledge levels the acquisition of additional information would be less useful. The first research hypothesis is based on this logic.

\[ H_1: \text{There is a curvilinear (U-inverted) relationship between movie goers' knowledge about cinema and the extent of their consultation of film critics.} \]

**Susceptibility to Social Influence**

A consumer’s susceptibility to social influence can be defined as his or her receptivity to others’ opinions with regard to products and services to buy and consume. Consumers highly susceptible to social influence will seek to obtain from important others information about products and services in order to maintain or improve their social image (Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel 1989). It is useful to distinguish normative and informative social influence (Deutsch and Gerard 1955). Susceptibility to normative social influence is concerned with a person’s desire to conform to others’ expectations. Informational social influence on the other hand is founded on a person’s desire to obtain information from others. It is proposed that consumer susceptibility to the two types of social influence is positively linked to the consultation of film critics. The second hypothesis follows from this general proposition.

\[ H_2: \text{There is a positive relationship between movie goers’ susceptibility to social influence—both informational and normative—with regard to cinema and the extent of their consultation of film critics.} \]

**Self-esteem**

A negative relationship has been observed between self-esteem (i.e., a person’s generalized self-confidence) and the propensity to be persuaded easily (Janis 1954). Duncan and Oshalvsky (1982) have found that information search is significantly greater among consumers having a bad opinion of their abilities to judge the quality of products. Therefore, it is proposed that movie goers who consult film critics have a more negative image of themselves than those who do not.

\[ H_3: \text{There is a negative relationship between movie goers’ self-esteem and the extent of their consultation of film critics.} \]

**Involvement**

There have been few studies examining the relationship between personal involvement and information search. Bloch, Sherrell and Ridgway (1986) have obtained positive and significant correlations between personal involvement towards products (personal computers, clothes) and the propensity to search for information about these products. The relationship between involvement and information search may however depend on the nature of the product. Mittal (1989) suggests that in the case of expressive products, i.e., products where functional or physical performance is less important than symbolic value, there is no necessary relationship between involvement and information search. According to Mittal (1989), for expressive products it is the symbolic meanings that are important rather than physical attributes. Whereas physical attributes are well suited for external information search, symbolic meanings are largely idiosyncratic. Cinema being an expressive product in the sense conveyed by Mittal (1989), one can predict that personal involvement with regard to cinema has no impact on information search. The fourth and last research hypothesis is based on this idea.

\[ H_4: \text{There is no relationship between movie goers’ personal involvement with cinema and the extent of their consultation of film critics.} \]

**METHOD**

To test the research hypotheses, a survey was conducted with a sample of 120 amateurs of cinema. The sample was composed of university students. The use of students in this research seems acceptable since this population belongs to the age group (18-24 years) whose probability to go to the movies at least once a month is higher than the average (Dortch 1996).

The questionnaire consisted in scales aimed at measuring the concepts of interest, namely the extent of consultation of film critics, subjective knowledge about cinema, susceptibility to social influence, self-esteem and personal involvement with cinema. In addition, the questionnaire included measures of cinema frequency, money spending for cinema, appreciation of 13 different movie genres (action, adventure, biography, comedy, drama, history, horror, police, science fiction, spectacle, spy, thriller, war) as well as socio-demographic questions (age, income, sex, domain of study and number of completed years in school).

**Measures**

The extent of consultation of film critics was measured using four items for which subjects had to indicate their level of agreement on a seven-point bipolar scale. These are original items since it was not possible to find a scale for this purpose. A typical item is: “Most of the time, I read critiques of movies in newspapers or magazines.”

Knowledge about cinema was measured using five original items. A typical item is: “I have more knowledge about cinema than others”. Again, subjects indicated their level of agreement on seven-point bipolar scales. Although this is a subjective measure of knowledge, it must be noted that objective knowledge and subjective knowledge are generally positively correlated (see e.g., Brucks 1985). Some researchers (Park and Lessig 1981) argue that subjective measures of knowledge may in fact be preferable because they are indicators of one’s objective knowledge as well as one’s self-confidence. Thus, a lack of self-confidence may lead to more information search, independently of the true level of knowledge.

Susceptibility to social influence was measured by means of eleven items for which subjects indicated their agreement on seven-point bipolar scales. These items were taken from a scale developed by Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel (1989) and adapted to the context of cinema. Four of the items aim at measuring susceptibility to informational social influence (e.g., “To make sure I choose the right movies, I often observe what movies others see”) and the other seven items are concerned with normative social influence (e.g., “I rarely go to see new movies unless I am sure my friends approve of them”).

Seven items are used to assess self-esteem. They are taken from the scale developed by Rosenberg (1965). A typical item is: “In general, I tend to think of myself as a failure”. Subjects indicated their level of agreement with all items by means of seven-point bipolar scales.

Finally, personal involvement in cinema was measured by means of ten seven-point bipolar scales borrowed from Zaichkowsky’s (1985) involvement scale. Examples of scales are: To me cinema is: unimportant/important, irrelevant/relevant, superfluous/vital, etc.
RESULTS

Sample Description
Survey participants are 120 graduate students in business administration in a French-Canadian university. The sample comprises about the same number of men (50.8%) and women (49.2%) with a mean age of 25 years. On average, they go to the movies 30 times a year and spend 164 dollars (Canadian) a year for movie tickets. This higher than average level of spending for this category of product (Dortch 1996) may be explained by the fact that students are great consumers of cinema and also by the presence of a movie theatre on campus. The variance in movie attendance is high: 15% of respondents are small users (once a month or less) and 25% are heavy users (once a week or more). Knowledge about cinema also varies greatly: on the subjective knowledge scale (minimum=5, maximum=35), 30% of respondents have a score of 12 or less, 40% a score comprised between 13 and 23 and 30% a score of 24 or more (mean=17.63; standard deviation=6.98).

Quality of the Measures
Scale reliability was assessed with Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (Nunnally 1978). The results are displayed in Table 1. As can be seen, reliability coefficients go from satisfactory (susceptibility to informational social influence, α=0.62) to excellent (knowledge about cinema, α=0.91). Factor analyses of scale items resulted in a dominant factor in each case. Accordingly, all measures correspond to the sum of items composing the scales. Some results allow the assessment of the validity of the knowledge and personal involvement scales. Thus, knowledge about cinema is positively correlated with the total number of movie genres that are appreciated (r=0.22, p<0.05). Knowledge about and personal involvement with cinema are positively correlated with annual movie attendance (r=0.55, p<0.001; r=0.31, p<0.001, respectively) and annual spending for movie tickets (r=0.52, p<0.001; r=0.28, p=0.002, respectively). These correlations are consistent with what one would expect and, as such, provide empirical evidence of construct validity.

Model Specification
In order to test the research hypotheses, a multiple regression model was estimated. This model comprises the consultation of film critics (Critics) as dependent variable and knowledge about cinema (Know), susceptibility to normative (Norm) and informational (Inform) social influence, self-esteem (Esteem) and personal involvement with cinema (Involv) as independent variables. Since a curvilinear relationship is predicted between knowledge and consultation of film critics (H1), the regression model includes both linear and quadratic coefficients associated with the knowledge variable. As recommended by Neter, Wasserman and Kutner (1985), the independent variables were expressed as deviations from their mean in order to attenuate the inherent multicollinearity associated with polynomial regression models. The regression model is as follows (all independent variables are centered around their mean):

\[
\text{Critics}_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Know}_i + \beta_2 (\text{Know}_i)^2 + \beta_3 \text{Norm}_i + \beta_4 \text{Inform}_i + \beta_5 \text{Esteem}_i + \beta_6 \text{Involv}_i + \epsilon_i
\]

Multicollinearity Checks
Correlation coefficients between the independent variables are displayed in Table 2. In general, correlations are low. The highest correlation is that between knowledge and involvement (r=0.58), and it is inferior to the model multiple correlation coefficient (R=0.75) (Maddala 1977).

Model Estimation and Test
The regression model estimation results are presented in Table 3. The model is statistically significant (F=27.58; p<0.001) and altogether the independent variables explain 57% of the total variance (adjusted R²).

Consistent with H1, a statistically significant curvilinear relationship is observed between knowledge about cinema and consultation of film critics. The linear regression coefficient is positive (b1=0.47) and significant (t=7.45; 113 df; p<0.001). The quadratic coefficient is negative (b2=−0.02) and also statistically significant (t=− 3.13; 113 df; p<0.001). This U-inverted relationship supports...
A Study of Individual Factors Explaining Movie Goers’ Consultation of Film Critics

H1. The graph of the relationship is displayed in Figure 1. It can be seen that the consultation of film critics generally increases as knowledge increases. However, at some point the extent of consultation declines sharply.

The regression coefficient associated with the susceptibility to normative social influence variable is positive ($b_3 = 0.28$) and statistically significant ($t=4.42; 113$ df; $p<0.001$). This is also the case for that associated with informational social influence ($b_4 = 0.51; t=7.11; p<0.001$). H2 is therefore supported: as movie goers’ susceptibility to social influence (normative and informational) increases, so does the extent of their consultation of film critics.

The regression coefficient associated with self-esteem is negative ($b_5 = -0.18$) and statistically significant ($t=-4.76; p<0.001$). This supports H3: the more positive movie goers’ self-esteem the lesser the extent of their consultation of film critics.

Relative Importance of Explanatory Variables

Since the independent variables are not strongly correlated, one can examine the standardized regression coefficients to assess the relative impact of the independent variables in the context of the estimated model (Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black 1995). As can be seen in Table 3, the standardized coefficient associated with knowledge (0.61) is larger than those associated with the other variables.
variables, which implies that this variable’s contribution to explained variance is greater. In comparison with self-esteem which is a generalized personality trait, knowledge as measured in this study is directly linked to cinema matters. This greater specificity probably explains why it contributes more importantly to explaining such specific a behavior as the consultation of film critics (Ajzen and Fishbein 1977).

It is interesting to note that movie goers’ susceptibility to informational social influence (0.49) has a greater impact on consultation than their susceptibility to normative social influence (0.30). This implies that the motives of movie amateurs with regard to the consultation of film critics are more centered around information acquisition than a need to conform to others’ expectations.

The rather small importance of involvement in the model appears to be symptomatic of the difficulty to identify a general relationship between personal involvement and various consumer behaviors. Personal involvement is generally associated with a more intensive search for information (Bloch, Sherrell and Ridgway 1986; Zaichkowsky 1985) partly because involvement seems to be naturally linked to consumption situations perceived as more risky, more difficult (Laurent and Kapferer 1985), situations where it is necessary to obtain more information in order to reduce uncertainty. However, it is possible to be highly involved towards a product category without perceiving a buying situation as risky or difficult. Cinema is a relevant example.

**DISCUSSION**

Three out of four research hypotheses put forward in this article have received empirical support. As predicted, a curvilinear relationship between subjective knowledge about cinema and the intensity of consultation of film critics has been observed. This relationship is consistent with what other researchers have found in different consumption domains (Bettman and Park 1980; Johnson and Russo 1984). While the impact of knowledge on the consultation of film critics is positive and significant, there is a significant decrease in the extent of consultation at higher levels of knowledge. It must be noted that we would have concluded to a general positive effect of knowledge on the consultation of film critics if only a linear coefficient had been included in the regression model. This shows the importance of considering more complex explanatory models when interest centers on examining the relationship between knowledge and information search.

The results obtained in this study with regard to the impact of susceptibility to social influence are quite clear: the more amateurs of cinema are preoccupied with the opinions and expectations of others in cinema matters, the greater the extent of their consultation of film critics. The two dimensions that define the concept of susceptibility to social influence, namely the normative and informational dimensions, have both a statistically significant impact on the consultation of film critics. However, an examination of the standardized regression coefficients indicates that the informa-
tional dimension has more weight. This result cannot be attributed to differences in scale reliability since the normative social influence scale is actually more reliable (see Table 1). It seems logical to conclude that the consultation of film critics is more associated with one’s desire to use others as sources of information than with one’s need to conform to some norms defined by important others with regard to cinema.

The relationship between self-esteem and consultation of film critics is negative, as predicted by H1. The more negative moviegoers’ perceptions of themselves, the more they use film critics to gather information about movies. This is an interesting result since it concerns a relationship between a personality variable and a very specific behavior. In a study of the impact of self-confidence and anxiety on information search, Locander and Hermann (1979) have observed a statistically significant relationship between a specific measure of self-confidence (e.g., “I would/would not be confident of my ability to pick the best buy from available brands”) and the tendency to look for information from six different sources. However, in that study a generalized measure of self-esteem from a scale developed by Coopersmith (1967) had not significant effect on information search. Locander and Hermann (1979) explain this result by arguing that a personality trait should not be related to specific behaviors. Why then is it the case that in the present research such a relationship was uncovered? It is not possible to make any judgement on the quality of the self-esteem measure used by Locander and Hermann (1979) since nothing is mentioned in the article about its reliability. A possible explanation may be found in the different nature of products under research. The products used as stimuli in the Locander and Hermann (1979) study were utilitarian products (papertowels, after-shave/cologne, toaster, lawn mower, stereo). These types of product are characterized by functional attributes about which it is possible to obtain relatively objective information. In that case, it is hard to see why one’s self-image should have any impact on information search. However, in the case of a product like cinema it is the symbolic meanings which are of primary importance and, as Mittal (1989) points out, these meanings are idiosyncratic. One’s self-image would tend to be associated with one’s perception of his or her capacity to form a personal judgement about a movie and the consequent need to obtain information from expert sources. These explanations are necessarily speculative and need to be corroborated in future research.

The most surprising result of this research is the observation of a negative relationship between personal involvement with cinema and the consultation of film critics. H2 is founded on Mittal’s (1989) argument that the relationship between involvement and information search is moderated by the nature of the product. More precisely, Mittal (1989) argues that the theoretical positive relationship between involvement and search should apply only to utilitarian (or functional) products for which attribute information can be objectively searched. For expressive products like cinema, the symbolic interpretations matter more than attributes and these interpretations, because they are basically personal, are less susceptible to be formed through information search. To test this idea, Mittal (1989) compared indices of information search associated with expressive products with indices associated with functional products in situations of high product involvement and found that search was indeed less intensive for expressive products than for functional products. However Mittal (1989) did not make comparisons between low and highly involved consumers (a limitation he admits) and could not consequently examine the relationship between involvement and information search. What we observe in the present research where personal involvement is measured is not only that there is no positive impact of involvement on the consultation of film critics, but that this impact is negative and statistically significant. It would be necessary to corroborate this finding in future studies using different expressive products as stimuli. But in the meantime, it is very interesting to observe that the nature of products may change the direction of the relationship between involvement and information search.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has methodological limitations that should be eliminated in future research. Firstly, it is a correlational study. Thus the effects of the individual variables (knowledge, self-esteem, etc.) that were observed apply to the consultation of film critics reported by the survey participants and this may be different from true consultation. It is for instance possible that some participants overestimated the intensity of their consultation to protect their self-image. That might explain some results, such as the negative relationship between self-esteem and consultation of film critics. It would be important in future studies to consider using observational measures of consultation of film critics. One could for example use the method of information display boards (see Jacoby et al. 1976) to obtain a behavioral measure of information acquisition from film critics in situations of movie evaluation or choice.

A second methodological limitation concerns the knowledge measure used in this study which was defined around subjective rather than objective knowledge. It would be relevant in future studies to try to verify if the U-inverted relationship between knowledge and consultation of film critics still holds when knowledge is measured objectively. The work of Brucks (1985) might be useful for this purpose.

A third limitation concerns the sample of amateurs of cinema having participated in the survey. While students represent a relevant segment for a product like cinema, moviegoers can be found in other groups of society too. One negative consequence associated with the use of students is that other individual variables which are important to predict the extent of information search such as age, education and income (see Newman 1977) do not have enough variance to allow an estimation of their impact. It would be important that future studies aimed at explaining the extent of consultation of film critics use more representative samples of the population of amateurs of cinema or samples that show sufficient heterogeneity to allow the estimation of the impact of other relevant variables.

An important conceptual limitation of this research concerns the fact that it is restricted to an examination of a few individual factors to explain the extent of consultation of film critics by moviegoers. Other variables such advertising, the reputation of the actors and the film director, consumer preferences, the difficulty in obtaining information about movies, etc. can have a significant impact on the intensity of consultation. The present research has focused on explaining a general tendency to consult film critics. Future research should conceive of the problem from more specific points of view, for example by studying the factors that explain the consultation of films critics for certain types of movie in certain situations.

REFERENCES


INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the story behind an infamous Russian financial scandal that happened in the middle of the 1990s. MMM, a newly formed investment fund, sold large number of shares with the promise of fantastic returns. It did so by employing an extensive advertising campaign which was so popular that its characters became almost national heroes. But MMM did not fulfill its promise; it was, in fact, a pyramid scheme. In an attempt to save the money of its citizens, the government took the matter into its own hands and arrested the head of the company, Sergei Mavrodi. From jail, he started an intense political campaign to gain support for his actions. It created an unexpected consumer response and a surprising turn of events which showed that at the time advertising had an enormous power over Russians. The whole incident also demonstrated that Russians were not prepared to handle financial investments without relying on government to help.

This paper examines the example of advertising effects on consumer behavior as a case study of the ways ads were used to contribute to political and economic instability in Post-Soviet Russia.

PREHISTORY TO THE CORE EVENT

A poor economic situation was the most burdensome inheritance that post-Communist Russia received from the Soviet Union. For a long time, the economy of the Soviet Union was characterized by the “stability of stagnation” (Aslund 1995). The most particular features of the Soviet economy were permanent shortages and hidden inflation. Money played a passive role; prices were heavily subsidized by the government and did not reflect what the price in the West is usually ponder: wages, costs, etc. The common practice of hoarding both goods and money was caused by the uncertain availability of commodities (Lane 1994). Thus, the Soviet population had on its hands large sums of money, with approximately 20 per cent of their income going into savings. Nevertheless, with the large number of money in savings there were grave shortages and long queues in shops. Consumer demands went unfulfilled.

Because of the faults of the distribution system, goods supply was irregular and unpredictable. At the beginning of 1992 nine out of ten Russian households also had one member spending at least an hour a day queuing for goods (Rose 1994). Russia’s industrial output halved between 1989 and 1994—a sharper decline than America suffered during the Great Depression (“Survey” 1995). Already in the second half of 1991 the USSR faced complete financial ruin (Aslund 1995).

In the Soviet Union—a country with virtually no brand names—advertising was a rather peculiar phenomenon. It was done either for products or services that did not have any competitors (e.g. “Fly with Aeroflot!”)—as if Russians had any other choice) or for products that were already in short supply (i.e. washing machines, vacuum cleaners). In Russian, the word “advertising” has a negative connotation: to advertise means “to praise without shame.” Thus, puffery and hyperbole are naturally expected to be a part of an ad (Tolstikova 1994). In the beginning of the 1990s, Russians were still suspicious of advertising. Socialist ideology warned them of capitalist tricks. For some, advertising was seen as a game between producers and consumers—the more consumers were regarded as recalcitrant, the more intense advertising would have to be (Frolov 1994).

With his perestroika and new thinking Mikhail Gorbachev started a process that was unimaginable before—transformation of the old mentality about openness, freedom, and choice. Gorbachev was a bold politician, yet his economic reforms were more a means to an end rather than an end in themselves. Two major barriers to the new economic thinking were the limited economic knowledge of the population and vested interests of the swollen Soviet bureaucracy which did not want to lose its privileges (Aslund 1995). In April 1991 consumer prices were increased and partially liberalized. For example, Moscow meto’s charge skyrocketed suddenly from 5 kopeks to 100 rubles—a 2000 percent increase! But wages and social expenditures were also increased which caused a new spiral of inflation.

Under the new economic reality the notion of money became very different. Instead of forced savings, monetary overhang, and the persistent shortage of goods, consumers now faced restricted money availability, voluntary savings and an abundance of goods. Price liberalization mostly wiped out the population’s lifetime savings. So people who existed only on pensions, on stipends, or on single wages could not count on a decent income. Most people were in need of either a second job or good financial investments. “Since the start of the transformation process in 1992, the percentage of Russians able to get by with one job has fallen by 15 per cent, but the proportionable to get by with a portfolio of activities has increased by 26.” (Rose 1994 49). As one investor put it: “Money is losing value every day because of inflation, you have to invest it in something and turn it around fast” (Erlander 1994).

After the overnight price liberalization in 1992 came mass privatization. Every Russian had been given for free a voucher with a face value of 10,000 rubles (about $25). A citizen had three options to use this voucher—to sell it for cash, to put it into investment fund (so the fund could later invest all the vouchers in bulk), or invest it directly into an enterprise. Many people did not believe in the potency of the program so they sold their vouchers for cash—sometimes for as little as two bottles of vodka! This allowed the development of a large and liquid secondary market in vouchers, which is where most of Russia’s new stockbrokers have developed professionally. Mass privatization boosted Russia’s financial markets. This law allowed practically all forms of property. An enterprise could engage in any activity not explicitly prohibited (Aslund 1995).

The speedy implementation of the market economy was a crucial factor in changing Russian consumer mentality. Russian investors were more eager to invest in pyramid schemes than in former weapon plants that now manufacturing toasters. Because of previous misconceptions, they thought that now under a market economy they could earn a lot of money without putting any effort into it (Bernstein 1994). People realized the dangers of pyramid schemes: the risks were huge, but so were potential gains. Viktor Geraschenko, then a Russian Central Bank Chairman, suggested a cultural reason for the mania: “Russians are by nature believers in miracles” (Rosett 1994).

Pyramid scheme became famous (and popular) because of Carlo Ponzi. In the 1920s he opened the Securities Exchange Company in Boston. Ponzi did not have any initial capital, however he promised a return of 50 percent of the investment in 45 days and 100 percent in 90 days (Streissguth 1994). The money were not invested in anything, but “profits” of the first investors were paid off by the contributions of the new investors. There is a slim chance that the early investors would win. “To profit from a Ponzi fraud, it’s not enough to be the first one in; you have to be the first one out as well”
(Dunn 1975, xi). The classic Ponzi scheme became very popular in Russia.

The basic components of a market economy grew quickly: by the mid-1995 Russia had about 2,500 commercial banks, 600 investment funds and 40 million shareholders (“Survey” 1995). Now that money was real and inflation was high, one had to put money to work as quickly and profitably as possible. “With Russia trying to fast-forward through the kind of capitalist evolution that took decades in the West, flaky finance is in full cry. Hazy laws and feeble property rights, coupled with half-formed securities markets, have created a new class of carpetbag swindlers hawking dozens of dubious investment schemes” (Rosett 1994).

The problem with Russian business in general is that it is very often difficult to distinguish between a regular business and a criminal activity. Not surprisingly, the legal system produces more muck than clarity: every new law generates more crimes, producing an enormous quantity of bribe takers and bureaucrats. Russian laws are such that “everyone has a loophole with a bureaucrat with big pockets guarding it” (Gessen 1994). The population was used to such a system, and thus seemed more inclined to be engaged a shady business. Although some genuine securities were indeed traded in Russia, investors were interested mostly in those on which they could make money from rapid rises in the share price (Scheit 1994).

The lack of information on financial institutions characterized the Russian investment environment of the early 1990s. In particular, MMM, one of the largest of the suspicious investment institutions, never reported any earnings or investments, and never identified the nature of its business. Share prices for the fund were set by the company itself (“Stock Fund Collapses in Panic” 1994). Nevertheless, the craze of investing became persistent. The new Russian market, rather than growing out of individual ideas and partnerships that incorporate themselves and then seek capital, began issuing paper shares in pre-existing companies. Many new investment companies sold shares together with the heavily advertised idea that a large return was guaranteed to all purchasers (Erlander 1994). In the beginning of 1994 a poll showed that a quarter of Russians owned shares of different enterprises (Amelkina et al 1994). In 1994 the wages of the general population decreased by 17 per cent compared to the previous year. At the same time, profit from entrepreneurial activity doubled and in 1994, composed a third of income (Buida 1994).

As it turned out, the whole MMM AO [the group’s holding company] was a big-scale fraud. New investments were simply used to pay off obligations to other shareholders (Ignatius 1994). Officially, it was not even an investment institution and didn’t have an appropriate license from the ministry (“Press Conference” 1994). This was illustrated in a cartoon in one of the Moscow newspapers: a mighty figure with the letters “MMM” on its chest in reality is just an inflatable dummy that can lose its air anytime (Figure).

There were several layers that made up the Russian financial market. The most visible was the MMM-like speculative sector which has been politely called “venture-capital” (10-15 similar companies across Russia that operated like pyramid schemes). The rest were either newly privatized companies backed by real assets or private commercial banks, which had issued stock for several years and paid good dividends (Erlander 1994).

**MMM**

Sergei Mavrodi, the mastermind of MMM (which reportedly stands for Master Mind Mavrodi) at the time was either the fourth (according to *Financial Times*) or the fifth (according *The Independent*) richest man in Russia (Abelson 1994). MMM became famous in 1991, when it paid for a day’s free travel for all Muscovites on the metro in order to publicize the company (several million passengers use the metro on a daily basis). Given the two-hundred-fold overnight increase in the price of a metro ticket, such a scale of action on the part of Sergei Mavrodi, the head of MMM, turned him into a powerful man in the minds of Russians. The action was just a beginning of his fame.

The group of companies under Mavrodi’s leadership had started with the Communist party’s money at the end of the 1980s. At the time, MMM was selling video equipment in the Lenin Museum—an activity cheered by the party and the government (Liasko and Razin 1994). Very quickly, however, Mavrodi’s empire became a highly complex matter—at one point, it consisted of 21 companies (“Back from the Grave” 1994). *The Economist* reported in 1994 that MMM AO was the biggest investment company in Russia: it had 60 offices in Moscow and another 76 in 49 cities spread across Russia (“Russia’s Crumbling Financial Pyramid” 1994). MMM was not the first company in Russia who would promise high returns—the difference was that MMM offered to its investors absurdly high returns: 3,000 per cent a year. Another factor that made them especially visible was their advertising campaign.

Consumers certainly kept noticing these three letters. It was hard not to. MMM started its aggressive advertising campaign in the press, on billboards, and later on TV. “Thanks to advertising, MMM is one of the best-known companies in Russia. A recognizable and resonant phrase which rhymes too. ‘MMM. Nyet problem’ [MMM. No problem]—easily stuck in the mind of everyone who heard it, simultaneously hinting at the ease of making money and at the unblemished reputation of the company. Very few, however, had any idea what MMM did” (Goldman 1993). The slogan was also the only “information” that one could glean from MMM’s ads. The aggressive TV advertising campaign promoting dreams of easy money in the difficult post-Soviet economy ran an average of 30 times a day. A content analysis of 189 minutes of prime time television in 1994 showed that the unconditional leader was MMM AO: its share was almost 18 per cent of all the time measured (“Survey” 1994). The commercials were so familiar that even Boris Yeltsin once mentioned Golubkov, a main character of the MMM’s TV commercials, to illustrate his point.

The TV campaign was made in a form of a soap-opera targeted at different demographic layers of the population. “Marina Sergeevna,” a woman, supposedly caught attention of lonely females, “Julia” and “Vitya” related to students, while an elderly couple corresponded to senior consumers. “MMM’s advertising featured the character Lyonya Golubkov, a bumbling Russian Everyman who effortlessly stumbles onto the good life after buying MMM shares. One vignette has Lyonya sitting at the table spread with vodka and potato salad with his pal Ivan, who chides him, Soviet-style, for being an unproductive parasite. Lyonya replies brightly: ‘I’m not a parasite, I’m an investor’” (Stanley 1994).

The name of the main character had deep cultural connotations. The last name, Golubkov, has a root “golub” which means “a dove”—a symbol of a peace envoy. Also a dove is associated with a Holy Spirit which connects Golubkov with the Russian Orthodox religion. In turn, it calls for contemplation and abandonment of the real world. The economic behavior and the ethics of Lyonya Golubkov reflected these concepts (“Lyonya Golubkov...” 1994). On a simplistic level, he had a holy belief in the power of investment. At the same time he made peace between the old mentality and the new reality. The very name—Lyonya—brought certain cultural associations in Russians. Brezhnev had the same first name and Brezhnev himself was connected with a period of stagnation. This connection hinted at “Lyonya’s” economic roots.
It also sounded similar to the Russian word that stands for “laziness” (lien’). Lyonya’s image is connected to a Russian cultural archetype that is embedded in the collective unconsciousness. On the one hand, it bears typically “Soviet” features: trusting, counting on somebody’s will and power, hatred of the boss, waiting for the wealth that will fall from the sky. On the other hand, Golubkov can be read as a folk character transferred into a contemporary reality. In many Russian fairy tales there is a well known plot about a young and stupid brother who is pitied by everybody, but who at the end becomes a winner. Incidentally, making his characters the underdogs, Mavrodi scored several important points. Lyonya distinguished MMM from the advertising of the competitors which usually showed successful and happy people. In the hard-to-survive Russia such characters were perceived as unrealistic and false. Besides, the underdog created an emotional resonance among the viewers: people could forgive somebody’s luck only if this person was pitiable. Still one more side of this image was a play on of the domestic cinematographic mythology of the early revolutionary times. Lyonya Golubkov resemble Chapaev and Pavka Korchagin—real revolutionary heroes depicted in the Soviet cinema and literature (Vishnevskaya 1995). New times dictate new images. Lyonya could be viewed as a contemporary revolutionary: he propagated new values, a new mentality, and a revolutionary way of life in the language understandable and familiar to most Russians.

MMM broke advertising stereotypes by making the small talk of its characters a central feature of its commercials—especially compared to the “significant” and obnoxious announcements of their competitors. The characters discussed everyday life problems—incomes, consumer needs, personal affairs—but in a comic way. The innovation of MMM was in targeting not the rich but the poor. MMM counted on retired people, workers, students—the backbone of the former Soviet Union. MMM opened a secret gate
for those who used to get paid very little: they could become rich. At the same time, their residual proletarian ideology of hatred for the nouveau riche and speculators gave the investors a desire to compete with the latter. MMM taught them that they could achieve their wealth via an honest path by becoming shareholders (Dubnov 1994). In 1992 and 1993, against a background of catastrophic decline in the Russian economy, Russia was flooded with the books How to Succeed in Business and the like. The authors of self-instruction manuals had set out to convince their readers: “You can do this!” MEM, by contrast, told their clients: “You needn’t lift a finger!” (Kagarlitsky 1994, 26). MEM’s advertising campaign was not just a company promotion. It propagated certain values and principles. MEM promised its investors khaliava [unearned well-being], a bourgeois way of life without Western efficiency or Protestant work ethic, consummation not connected in any way with labor (ibid).

Despite the deep cultural associations, Russians did not admit liking the image of Lyonya Golubkov—not very bright, not very attractive, not very well spoken. One of the Deputies of the Russian parliament expressed an opinion of many TV viewers: “The first time I saw an MMM commercial, I laughed. The second time I saw it as silly nonsense for fools. The third time I saw it as a mockery of Russian people: we were shown as idiots, yet we were told to be moved by it and to give our money to businessmen like Mavrodi” (Fedorov 1994). In a poll, only 12 per cent of Muscovites were favorable toward Lyonya; 17 per cent were indifferent; 58 per cent had a negative attitude. Even among the shareholders Lyonya’s image caused negative emotions (54 per cent) or indifference (20 per cent) (“Izvestiia’s poll” 1994). Nevertheless, those who were annoyed with Golubkov had already bought shares from MMM (Blazhenova 1994).

The repetition of MMM advertising—frequent, aggressive, and inescapable—produced important effects by itself. Those who knew how expensive TV commercials were understood that this technique created an image of MMM as a very rich and omnipotent enterprise. Others who had no idea about the price of each commercial thought of them as the expression of a state will. As a former Soviet first vice-prime minister Vladimir Shcherbakov put it: “We have begun tremendous economic, political and social transformations and must understand that many people have no experience in such things. They believe advertisements in respectable mass media as they would believe an official document” (“Developments in MMM Company Scandal” 1994). The magic of big numbers played its role—there is a Russian proverb: “If someone is called a pig one hundred times, on the one hundred and first he will grunt” (“Round Table” 1995). In focus groups MMM commercials never came out as a favorite, but their recall was very high: “You needn’t lift a finger!” (Kagarlitsky 1994, 26). MEM’s advertising campaign was not just a company promotion. It propagated certain values and principles. MEM promised its investors khaliava [unearned well-being], a bourgeois way of life without Western efficiency or Protestant work ethic, consummation not connected in any way with labor (ibid).

THE CONFLICT

Collecting taxes became a real problem in Russia. Having privatized all the former state enterprises that were actually turning a profit, and finding no way to collect taxes from the impoverished population, the government was trying to force entrepreneurs to pay at least a part of what they owed (Kagarlitsky 1994). A half million enterprises were among the violators of tax legislation, and tax evasion had assumed a mass character everywhere (“Procuracy Says Tax Evasion Rampant” 1994). The receipt of the full amount would have ensured the normal activity of the state.

The Russian government made no attempt to close MMM AO since there was no formal base for it: pyramid schemes under then current Russian laws were legal (Rosset 1994). Instead, in the summer of 1994 the state decided to prosecute Sergei Mavrodi on tax evasion charges. The reasoning behind it was purely mathematical: if there are 10 million shareholders and the buyback price of a single share is 100,000 rubles so the monetary obligation of MMM was 1 billion rubles (for comparison, the budget of the whole Russia for 1994 was a little over 40 billion rubles). However, after a forced audit of Mavrodi’s empire, the head of Russian Taxation police, Sergei Almazov, said the transaction data suggested MMM management has already converted a considerable amount of the shareholders’ money into foreign currency and exported it (“Russia Unveils...” 1994). According to estimates, the losses incurred by MMM shareholders were about $1 billion, which is the equivalent of one-fifth of Russia’s central bank reserves (Scheitz 1994). With a default legislative system in present, the Russian government had to commit what to an observer may seem a strange action.

After Mr. Mavrodi refused to allow police into his apartment,..., a specially equipped police unit, dressed into camouflage and black ski masks, lowered themselves by rope from the roof onto his eighth-floor balcony... Mr. Mavrodi was escorted outside, waved defiantly to a crowd oflookers, and was driven away... (Banerjee 1994).

This dramatic action immediately made Mavrodi a national hero. Most of the shareholders considered him a victim rather than a villain despite the impropriety of his dealings. The arrest also divided the whole population into two camps: for Mavrodi and against him. Immediately after Mavrodi’s arrest, shareholders began to send him shopping bags with food products (Interfax). Several shareholders announced a hunger strike in support of the head of MMM AO. On August 8, several hundred protesters gathered near the key governmental buildings in Moscow. They carried placards saying “Hands off Mavrodi!” and propagated their intention not to give up a struggle for their economic interests (Brykin 1994). From the very beginning of the scandal, the shareholder crowd was appalled not with MMM, but with the actions of the government.

In jail, Mavrodi announced a hunger strike. At the same time, he launched a public-relations campaign, that called on shareholders to defend MMM against the government’s “legal lawlessness” and “totalitarian style.” On August 19, 1994 only a few hundred citizens showed up in front of the Russian White House to celebrate the third anniversary of their resistance to the coup. They were outnumbered by the MMM shareholders who rallied at the same place in defense of the imprisoned Sergei Mavrodi. Police had to use truncheons to clear the place for those who had defended the White House (Moscow) in August 1991. The next day, more then 10,000 people gathered around the MMM AO headquarters, waiting to buy MMM shares at the set price. MMM AO was the most
heavily traded stock for the next several months. Only two weeks after the Moscow court “unexpectedly” ruled to release Sergei Mavrodi, he was elected to the State Duma (Parliament) and thus acquired legal immunity.

In jail, Mavrodi discovered a literary talent in himself. The genre of jail confession has been discovered before (for instance, by Oscar Wilde, Vladimir Lenin, and Adolf Hitler). Mavrodi’s writings however, had a circulation of at least a million copies. Mavrodi organized his writings to evoke associations with revolutionary mythologies. He gave orders (“Order No. 1”) from the jail, turning himself from a businessman to an underground revolutionary. The jail image thus made Mavrodi’s figure much more significant than before and enhanced it with heroic aspects. Sincerely or not, Mavrodi believed that he “invented a perpetuum mobile, that is a self-acting economic mechanism making it possible not just to increase one’s share severalfold in a single month, but also to keep doing that ad infinitum.” (Sokolov 1994-I, 44). Mavrodi admitted that his company was a pyramid scheme, but it was a “good” pyramid for the country. He claimed to create mechanisms to pump currency from the West, so that Russia would bathe in money. And it was the government which broke “the toy” (Mavrodi and Piyasheva 1994). Mavrodi publicized this information in what was later to be known as his political campaign.

After the announcement of the Mavrodi’s tax non-payment was made by the Tax Enforcement Service of Russia, Mavrodi promised in print that if the government confiscated the money, the MMM investment fund would cease to exist and would not be able to pay the shareholders back. Mavrodi warned the government that he could not predict the form of the robbed people’s indignation: revolution, civil war or something else. To make his announcements and threats, Mavrodi used advertising space that had been bought many months in advance for his MMM campaign. The impoverished Russian media was not able to return the money, although it did not agree with the new ads’ content. Reportedly, only one newspaper was rich enough to return the money.

The new MMM advertising did not look like advertising at all, but used both the visual and textual form of an editorial. Sometimes it was reminiscent of the Soviet Communist party’s official statements. Their headlines reinforced Soviet imagery of the “enemy of the people’s” times: “Leave Sergei Mavrodi Alone!” , “In the Light of Conscience,” “MMM as a Symbol of Russian Democratization.” With straight and bold language, it was trying to prove MMM’s right and the government wrong. The whole story became a big political snowball. Responding to Mavrodi’s request, several million shareholders wrote letters to MMM. People wrote about their economic situation, about their unhappiness with the authorities, and about their support of MMM’s position. Thousands of letters were published in the newspapers. The unchanged TV commercials reinforced an advertising race. Mavrodi was trying to blackmail the government into bailing out MMM shareholders: “So, the authorities do not like Lyonya. But do 10 million Lyonyas like these authorities?” . It was the right time for Mavrodi to become more that just a businessman. Mavrodi announced his candidacy for the Parliament.

Mavrodi was clearly not a politician and had to become one due to circumstances. As many other newly Russian politicians, he even did not have a program. Mavrodi argued: “I feel that political views are not so important in this situation. We have such a critical economic situation that the main thing right now is to feed the people” (Mavrodi and Piyasheva 1994, 6). This populist position and personal economic involvement won Mavrodi a seat in the Russian parliament. The voters’ general opinion was that if he managed to make such money, he must be a talented financier.

Russian politicians could not help but react to this new political force. Zhirinovsky, the leader of the Liberal-Democratic party (usually considered neither liberal nor democratic) quickly rushed to defend MMM. Zhirinovsky admired leading Russian businessmen and their ability to win the market in a competitive game. In a calculated move, Zhirinovsky proposed to Mavrodi to not only stand for parliament in a forthcoming by-election, but to run for president in 1996. It was no surprise for political observers: “After all, Zhirinovsky and Mavrodi are engaged in the same important business—exploiting human stupidity (one in politics and the other in economics) with particular cynicism and on especially great scale... Zhirinovsky’s constant desperate need for money, and Mavrodi’s equally desperate need for political support simply dictate the necessity of mutual understanding” (Sokolov 1994-II, 56).

The scandal revealed loopholes in the Russian legislative system and in particular a deep crisis in the state regulation of the securities market. Some authorities worried that the situation already was rotten and difficult to reverse. However, overcoming the habitual resistance of a bureaucratic machine, Yeltsin did sign a couple of decrees. In November 1994, largely as a political response to a fallout from financial scandals dealing with the MMM pyramid scheme failure, a Presidential Decree on Measures for State Regulations of the Securities Market on Russian Federation was published. In April 1995, Yeltsin issued an additional decree to protect investors.

Surprisingly, the MMM AO scandal produced some positive effects. The whole scheme drew off enormous funds thus checking hyperinflation (although all the money earned went to a single person—Sergei Mavrodi). Some Russian journalists compared Mavrodi to John Rockefeller who in the beginning of the century created the Standard Oil Company and monopolized the market (Grishankov and Shmarov 1994). It is true that Rockefeller monopolized the market, but he was never indicted for any crime. Even if this was a path to becoming a “true” capitalist, Sergei Mavrodi had yet to become one.

ANALYSIS

There were economic, political and cultural reasons for Mavrodi’s popularity (although, it may be difficult to separate them from each another). Some Western scholars argue that there are certain groups of population who are the most vulnerable for the swindlers: unemployed, those on low-income, and senior citizens (Dunn 1975, Lee and Soberon-Ferrer 1997). There were apparent similarities in the Russian case. Those shareholders who wrote letters to Mavrodi—single mothers, pensioners, invalids—mostly were trying to make ends meet. In a transitional period, these strata of society suffer the most. They were thankful to MMM for letting them not just exist but live. After all the hardships, the population did not believe the authorities anymore, who were absorbed with political fights. Through his actions and his advertising, Mavrodi presented himself as someone who wanted to help them not only in words but also in deeds. Despite the fact that Mavrodi’s business was not an investment but a speculation, shareholders trusted MMM more than they trusted bureaucrats (Stanley 1994). MMM let thousands of shareholders step above the poverty level.

Like hostages and their kidnappers, shareholders began to bond with the executives who had built the pyramid scheme that was wiping out their investments. Both sides persuaded themselves that they had a mutual enemy—the Russian government. There was an illusion that governmental action could prevent the MMM’s scandal. “The MMM Investors Union” was formed to support Sergei Mavrodi against the government. Its argument was that the
whole conflict simply was an internal affair between MMM and its shareholders and there was no need for the government to interfere. Never before had the jailing of an entrepreneur caused such a reaction. The crowd near MMM’s main headquarters did not want to know that their money had disappeared into air. People argued that the price of a share was growing every day and that MMM had never deceived them (Aridzhakov 1994). One of the several actions of this Union was an open letter to Boris Yeltsin, in which they asked him to help investors and to release Mavrodi so he could pay them back. Shareholders assured the president of their non-aggressiveness but at the same time warned him that they would vote against the government if the country continued to calmly observe the robbing of the population (Rubnikovich 1994). So, on the one hand shareholders wanted the government to leave alone the formation of the market system, while the same time, they wanted the government to protect them from the own errors. Russians were not yet familiar with the idea that under capitalism responsibility rests on the individual, not the government.

In the transitional situation, MMM took on a paternalistic role, a role the government had rejected. This role was ideologically cohesive. Public opinion polls showed that in this difficult time, Russians wanted stability more than anything else. About half of the population hoped for a new leader who would pull the country out of the economic pit (Buida 1994). There was a nostalgia for the pre-Revolutionary past but also some cloaked romanticizing of the Soviet times with its predictability and familiar rules of survival. In 1993, 65 per cent of Russians believed that they could not live without state tutelage (Tselves 1993). There was a radical incompatibility between the population’s archaic need of paternalism and a movement to an independent existence of market economy. Thousands of shareholders saw Mavrodi as their new caretaker—a sort of capitalist reincarnation of the propaganda image of Stalin. Personality cults remain persistent in Russian mentality (Zviglyanich 1993). Mavrodi reinforced his image by his in-jail behavior. With his hunger strike and his writings he became a “true” national hero who suffered at the hands of an unjust enemy.

The real drama of a transitional Russia was that the old meanings and symbols did not embrace new realities. In the ideologized economy of Soviet Russia, personal reward was declared as a “bourgeois” principle that does not pertain to the true proletarian work with its moral satisfaction being far more important than a monetary one (Zviglyanich 1993). In a true carnivalesque move, Mavrodi managed to shake this postulate: with old methods (paternalism) he promoted new ideas (market system). Some analysts are saying that Mavrodi was reinforcing the market behavior of millions by getting them accustomed to the words like “share” and “dividends.”

The government by its nature appeals to rationality. One could explain for a thousand times that MMM was a pyramid, a scam, a fraud. But one could not reject the fact that if you put a hundred rubles into MMM AO, you would get back two hundred. There is a big difference between an unfulfilled promise and a carried out promise. The success of Sergei Mavrodi was in creating a myth, a dream—and making it available to everybody. An MMM share was seen as a magic potion that would help anybody who use it (see Belk 1991). This device meant to recreate a paternalistic mechanism that would take care of all people’s needs. Ideological illusion is a very persistent feature of Soviet history. “When one illusion failed, it was superseded by another” (Zviglyanich 1993: 93).

The advertising revolution in Russia began with advertised products being available to everybody. The reaction to it is as negative as in any capitalist country. Numerous polls published by the Russian press show that Russians were annoyed with TV commercials because they interrupted a program; they were obnoxious and intrusive, and they ran too often. At the time of the MMM advertising heyday, there were just a few products advertised on TV. Naturally, the intense repetition became even more apparent, annoying, and penetrating.

For those few Russian-made commercials, there were certain elements in common: they were mostly made after Western standards, but had not been targeted to any particular group. The latter could be explained by the virtual absence of a societal structure. Society in transition is rather liquid: yesterday engineer tomorrow can easily become a new rich and a doctor of sciences can fall down the societal bottom (Dubnov 1994).

MMM advertising was an organic unity of Western ideas and a pure Soviet manner of execution. MMM advertising was able to reconstruct a Soviet TV-type aesthetic: bad lighting, sloppy montage, even sometimes a visible microphone in a corner of a frame (Vishnevskaya 1995). In this execution, real life and illusory imagery merged creating the example of the eclectic transitional—post-modern—Russian reality. In one of the first commercials, Lyonya draws a graph of “the satisfaction of material needs of population.” The very scene has the attributes of Soviet times: the curve that always rises, the pointer of a lecturer, a blind belief in a plan.

Zviglyanich (1993) develops Bakhtin’s theory of carnivalization and writes about carnivalesque features of perestroyka. Perestroyka was able to free people from fear of the epic, monologic Soviet life-style into dialogic liberalized reality where people re-obtain their voices. According to Bakhtin (1990), carnival culture is a response to an official oppressive rule. The carnival is able to combine the non-combinable. MMM advertising was a manifestation of carnivalesque culture that combined new concepts—share, dividend, market—and the old but changing mentality: “progressive” and “regressive” features. The peculiar ambiguity of carnival-ecstatic spirit (Zviglyanich 1993) allowed the splashes of nationalism in the MMM commercials. In one of the commercials, Lyonya Golubkov and his brother Ivan were shown in San-Francisco, watching a soccer match and drinking beer. Their general attitude was “It’s good to be in America, but Russia is better”—a very Soviet ideological belief.

Many of those who played with MMM were predominantly people without prior experience with investments, and who were used to living on fixed income. MMM not only helped them lose their lifetime savings but also their faith in a market economy. This was a painful capitalist lesson: rewards and risks are inseparable. The good news was that the number of MMM shareholders was much less than it had been claimed: according to independent sources, it did not exceed 2 million (Sokolov 1994-II). Some of them came back to their senses relatively quickly. A poll conducted in September 1994 already showed the change in attitudes: 26 per cent of Muscovites blamed MMM’s directors for the scandal, 21 per cent blamed naive shareholders and only 13 per cent blamed the government (“Back from the Grave” 1994).

**THE Fallout**

Russian newspapers reported that representatives from a liberal-patriotic party (not Zhirinovsky’s LDPR) were going to burn a stuffed doll of Lyonya Golubkov to protest against the speculative fever of MMM AO. Consumers used the MMM advertising campaign as a source of irony and protest. In Ekaterinburg (Russia), a memorial to the victims of MMM AO was going to be built. The sculpture would depict the queue in front of the MMM office. Shareholders also wanted to write a folk musical “The Betrayal of Lyonya Golubkov,” where Lyonya secretly sells his shares and leaves his wife for another commercial’s character, “Marina Sergeevna.”
The famous economist Peter Garber gives a “reasonable” explanation of the speculative affairs: the perception of increased probability of large returns triggered by a convincing new economic theory or by uninformed market participants brought about the climate necessary for the affair (1994). There is also an opinion that an epoch of financial scams and short-term popular madness is a necessary step toward capitalism, and neither Protestant nor labor ethics can help here (Sokolov 1994-III). Thus, the scam was unavoidable. Hopefully, lesson was learnt by both the government and the population.

AFTERMATH

In the Fall of 1995, the Russian Parliament ousted deputy Sergei Mavrodi. In a 303-0 vote, Mavrodi became the first Russian deputy ever removed from office.

The actor who played the part of Golubkov, wrote a bestseller “How I was Lyonya Golubkov” and from the royalties bought himself an apartment.

On December 17, 1995, the Communists won a majority in the Russian State Duma.

Sergei Mavrodi never paid back any of the shareholders.

A police still has a warrant for his arrest.

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Modeling Tourism Spending Decisions as a Two-Step Process  
Gong-Soog Hong, Purdue University, U.S.A.  
Mohamed Abdel-Ghany, University of Alabama, U.S.A.  
Soo Yeon Kim, Purdue University, U.S.A.  

ABSTRACT  
The aim of this study was to investigate the determinants of tourism expenditure patterns of the U.S. households. Using the 1995 Consumer Expenditure Survey, a double-hurdle model was used to separate the decision to spend on tourism from the decision of how much to spend on tourism. The profile of a household most likely to spend on tourism as well as the profile of a household that relatively spends more on tourism are presented.

BACKGROUND  
During the last decade, growth in tourism in the U.S. reached new highs. Tourism expenditures are projected to reach $473 billion in 1998, making it the nation’s largest services export industry. Total travel spending is up 95% from 1986, with domestic travelers contributing 80% (Galper 1998). Due to the increase in leisure time for workers and the rise in their disposable income (Dardis, Derrick, Lehfeld, and Wolfe 1981), it is expected that the trend of growth in tourism will continue.

Most previous studies used cross-section data and applied the ordinary least squares (OLS) method in examining the effects of economic and demographic variables on tourism expenditures. One of the problems associated with the use of such data, however, is that the sample data often contains a significant number of households that report zero expenditure on tourism. Consequently, econometric techniques not accounting for zero expenditure such as OLS lead to bias and inconsistent estimate (Maddala 1983).

So-called double-hurdle models are now established in the literature as being superior to Tobit modeling (Tobin 1958) in dealing with the zero expenditures. In consumption studies double-hurdle models can be used to separate the decision to spend on tourism (participate) from the level of spending (expenditures) and, therefore, provide more meaningful insights into consumers’ behavior than does the Tobit model (Cragg 1971). Moreover, whereas many of the same variables (such as income and demographics) may influence both participation and expenditure, they may have different effects on participation and expenditures. We attempt to address these issues using the double-hurdle model to analyze tourism expenditure in the United States.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE  
Travel expenditure research  
Using a sample drawn from summer travelers in Michigan’s Upper Peninsular region, Spotts and Mahoney (1991) classified travelers into three groups on the basis of travel expenditures: light, medium, and heavy spenders. The average expenditures per trip were $134.40. The greatest amount was spent for lodging ($39.18), followed by restaurant and bar expenditures ($27.35), vehicle-related spending ($26.71), and expenditures for groceries ($21.52). Heavy spenders were found to have higher incomes than medium or light spenders.

Based on the 1990 Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) data, Fish and Waggle (1996) examined expenditures on travel and pleasure trips relative to current and permanent income. On average, households traveled almost four times in 1990 and spent $1,234 for trips, which represented 4.4% of total expenditures and 3.8% of after-tax income. Expenditures on travel and pleasure trips tended to increase monotonically as total expenditures increase. The amount of total expenditures was used as an indicator of permanent income. The highest quintile of total expenditures spent 5.3% of their permanent incomes on average for travel and pleasure trips, and the lowest quintile group spent 3.2% for trips. Travel spending as a proportion of before-tax income showed a somewhat different pattern. As before-tax income increased, the share of permanent income spent for travel decreased.

Cai, Hong, and Morrison (1995) also used the 1990 Consumer Expenditure Survey to examine household expenditure patterns for tourism products and services: food, lodging, transportation, and sightseeing and entertainment. Family life cycle, social class, and cultural and geographic factors were studied. Older households headed by those ages 65 and older spent more on food than young households headed by those ages 35 or younger. Married households and households with more children were likely to spend more on travel than non-married households and households with fewer children, respectively. As the education level of the head of the household increased, the travel expenditure also increased.

Recreation and leisure expenditure research  
Dardis, Derrick, Lehfeld, and Wolfe (1981) examined recreation expenditures using the 1972-1973 Consumer Expenditures Survey (CE) data. Households with heads age 65 and older were found to spend less money on recreation than households with heads under age 35. Education, employment status, region, and race were significant factors affecting the total recreation expenditures. As education of the household head increased, recreation spending also increased. Married, non-Black, retired, or unemployed household heads spent more money on recreation than those who were single, black, or employed did. Region variables also were significant. Households residing in the West spent less on recreation than households in other regions. Those living in rural areas spent less on recreation than those in urban areas did. Income was associated positively and significantly with household recreational expenditures.

Fan (1994) computed the mean budget shares of entertainment and transportation using 1980-1990 Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) data. White households spent 14.2% and 6.3% of household budgets on entertainment and transportation, respectively. These numbers were 3.8% and 12.6% for Black households. About 4.1% of the budget for Hispanic households were spent on entertainment, and 13.9% was spent for transportation. It was shown that White households allocated more financial resources to these spending categories than did Black and Hispanic households.

Using the 1987-1988 Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) data, Dardis, Soberon-Ferrer, and Patro (1993) investigated leisure expenditures. Their study showed that elderly people (age 55 and older) spent less than younger people on leisure activities did. Consistent with their earlier work (1981), income, education, race, and region variables were found to be significant factors affecting leisure expenditures. However, the region variable showed somewhat inconsistent findings. Compared with those living in the urban Midwest, those living in rural areas or the urban West spent less money on leisure activities. Salary income of households was a
significant predictor of leisure expenditures. Income elasticity for salary income ranged from 0.14 to 1.71, suggesting that leisure activities are either a normal or a luxury good.

In a recent study by Dardis, Soberon-Ferrer, and Patro (1994), leisure expenditure was investigated using the 1988-1989 Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) data. The findings indicated that income, family life cycle, number of adults in the household, number of children, education, race, gender, and region were significantly associated with leisure expenditures. Both the total salary income of all household members (including heads) and unearned income were related positively to leisure expenditures. Both the young-old group (age 55 to 64) and the old group (age 65 and older) spent more on leisure than the middle-aged group (age 35 to 44). As the number of adults or children increased, households spent more money on leisure activities. Households headed by individuals with relatively high levels of education spent more on leisure activities than those with relatively low levels of education. Black households and female-headed households spent less than non-Black or male-headed households. Compared with households in the urban Midwest, households in the urban Northeast or urban West spent less on leisure activities.

**METHOD**

**Data and sample**

Data for this study are from the 1995 Consumer Expenditure Interview Survey (U.S. Department of Labor 1995), the most extensive national household expenditure data available in the United States. This survey focuses on consumer units, defined to be all members of a particular housing unit related by blood, marriage, adoption, or other legal arrangement.

A national sample of consumer units is interviewed once each quarter for five consecutive quarters; the first interview is used for bounding purposes. Using a rotating sample design, one-fifth of the sample is replaced by new units each quarter. For this study, only households that completed interviews for the first quarter during 1995 are included in the sample (N=4,961).

**Model**

As indicated in the introduction, the double-hurdle model specifies participation (equation 1) and expenditure (consumption) equations (equation 2):

\[
Z^* = X\alpha + \mu
\]

\[
Z = 1 \text{ if } Z^* > 0
\]

\[
Z = 0 \text{ if } Z^* \leq 0
\] (1)

\[
E^* = Y\beta + \epsilon
\]

\[
E = 0 \text{ if } E^* \leq 0 \text{ and } Z=0
\]

\[
E = E^* \text{ otherwise.}
\] (2)

In equation (1), the probability of traveling (Z*) is modeled as Z*=X\alpha+\mu, where X is a vector of explanatory variables, \(\alpha\) is a vector of unknown parameter, and \(\mu\) indicates error terms. Z represents a dependent variable for the probit model based on Z*=X\alpha+\mu. Travel expenditure model is described in equation (2), where Y is a vector of explanatory variables, and \(\beta\) and \(\epsilon\) represent a vector of parameters and error terms, respectively. The model distinguishes the likelihood of spending on tourism from the level of travel spending, suggesting that individuals or households face two-step process of decision making. While a tobit model assumes the same set of variables would explain the decisions to travel and the level of travel spending, a double-hurdle model allows different sets of variables to be included in the model of participation and level of spending. A double-hurdle model is therefore preferred to a tobit model.

**Variables**

The dependent variable, expenditure on tourism, is the amount of expenditure on food, lodging, transportation, and entertainment. The independent variables include permanent income, net worth, number of earners, race of reference person, education of reference person, region of residence, household size, life cycle stage of the household. The number of trips, and types of trips were used as independent variables in the truncated regression model, whereas the number of vehicles owned was used as an independent variable in the probit equation only. The variables and their measurement are presented in Table 1.

The permanent income hypothesis suggests consumption is determined more by permanent than by present income (Friedman 1957). Permanent income is defined as the constant annual income adjusted for expected income and consumption patterns over the lifetime (Bryant 1990). In this study, we used the instrumental variable approach to estimate the permanent income. Measured after-tax income was regressed on a set of socioeconomic variables that represent human and non-human wealth, including race, age, education, and occupation of reference person, geographic region of residence, urban or rural residence, type of household, number of earners, and financial wealth. Wealth is defined as the market value of owned homes. The predicted values of the equation are interpreted as estimated permanent income.1

Net worth is the sum of after-tax income, dollar value of saving accounts, checking accounts, bonds, and securities. Number of earners is the actual number of earners in the household. Race and education of reference person are used to capture differences of taste and preferences in spending on tourism. Level of education is divided into four categories: less than high school, high school graduate, some college, and college graduate. Household size is the actual number of persons in the household. Climate and cultural

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1Permanent income was predicted using the following formula:

\[
\text{Permanent income} = 777.24+6118.81 \text{ age} + (25-34)+8248.49 \text{ age} + (35-44)+7192.81 \text{ age} + (45-54)+3287.76 \text{ age} + (55-64)+6323.69 \text{ age} + (65 \text{ over})+2700.21 \text{ Northeast urban}+4619.55 \text{ West urban}+3649.19 \text{ South urban}+490.07 \text{ Midwest urban}+3153.41 \text{ high school graduate}+4349.20 \text{ some college}+11581.00 \text{ college}–157.23 \text{ husband and wife only}–7478.87 \text{ female single parent}–6549.85 \text{ one person unit}–6425.83 \text{ other family unit}–1745.57 \text{ white}–3445.14 \text{ female reference person}–469.23 \text{ blue collar occupation}+5552.77 \text{ white collar occupation}–2540.99 \text{ self-employed}–5612.04 \text{ retired}+7583.12 \text{ number of earners}+.083 \text{ market value of house}.
\]

Adjusted R^2=.37 F=119.79

All explanatory variables were dummy variables except the market value of the house and number of earners. Omitted variables were: rural, less than high school education, age under 25, husband/wife/children family type, non-white, male reference person, other occupation, non self-employed, and non-retired.
differences in each region of the country as well as rural and urban differences influence expenditure patterns (Ketkar and Cho 1982; Ketkar and Ketkar 1987). In this study, region is a categorical variable divided into urban Northeast, urban Midwest, urban South, urban West, and rural. The rural category is not specified further due to data limitations. The life cycle stages developed by Bojanic (1992) were adapted and modified to better suit the observations in data used in this study. Ten life cycle stages were proposed as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Measurement of Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent Variable</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel (probit model)</td>
<td>1 if ever traveled during survey period, 0 otherwise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure on tourism product and</td>
<td>Natural log of total amount of expenditure on food, lodging,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>services (truncated model)</td>
<td>transportation, and entertainment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent income ($)</td>
<td>Natural log of estimated permanent income¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net worth ($)</td>
<td>Natural log of after-tax income, dollar value of saving, checking, bond,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of earners</td>
<td>Number of earners within household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of vehicles owned</td>
<td>Number of vehicles owned by the sample household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-demographic Factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>if white, 0 otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>1 if less than high school, 0 otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>1 if high school, 0 otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College education</td>
<td>1 if some college education, 0 otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduation and higher</td>
<td>1 if college and more, 0 otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household size</td>
<td>Number of household members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Northeast</td>
<td>1 if reside in urban Northeast, 0 otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Midwest</td>
<td>1 if reside in urban Midwest, 0 otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban South</td>
<td>1 if reside in urban South, 0 otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban West</td>
<td>1 if reside in urban West, 0 otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Rural</td>
<td>1 if reside in all rural area, 0 otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Cycle Stage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Age&lt;40, never-married and children absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newly married</td>
<td>Age&lt;40, married, and children absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Nest I</td>
<td>Age&lt;40, married, and children present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Nest II</td>
<td>40 ≤ age&lt;55, married, and children present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-aged couples without children</td>
<td>40 ≤ age&lt;55, married, and children absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Nest III</td>
<td>Age ≥ 55, married, and children present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent</td>
<td>All ages, unmarried, and children present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single persons</td>
<td>Age&lt;55, unmarried, and children absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty Nest</td>
<td>Age ≥ 55, married, and children absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solitary Survivor</td>
<td>Age ≥ 55, unmarried, and children absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travel-related Factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of trips</td>
<td>Total number of trips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of trips</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>1 if travel for recreation, 0 otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day trips</td>
<td>1 if travel for day trips, 0 otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative/friend visits</td>
<td>1 if travel to visit relatives or friends, 0 otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1 if travel for other reasons, 0 otherwise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to non-normality of the distribution and to avoid the possibility for heteroskedasticity, expenditure on tourism, permanent income, and net worth were transformed using natural logarithms. The total number of observations in the sample is 4,961, of which 3,305 (66.6%) did not report any expenditure on tourism.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Table 2 gives an overview of household characteristics in the sample. The sample is predominantly white (85%). Thirty one
percent of reference persons obtained their high school diploma, whereas an equal percentage (almost 25%) each, either had some college years of education, or obtained their college degrees. Almost 90% of the households lived in urban areas. Slightly over one-fourth of the sample lived in the urban South.

Table 3 presents the mean values and distribution of tourism expenditures for households classified by stages of life cycle, race, and education. Permanent income was higher at $45,333 and $43,600 a year for households in the Full Nest II and Middle-aged Couples without Children life cycle stages respectively, compared with households in other life cycle stages. Expenditures on tourism were higher for households in the Newly married and middle-aged Couples without Children life cycle stages than households in other life cycle stages. Forty seven percent of households in the Newly Married life cycle stage had some expenditure on tourism compared with only 17.7% of the single parent households. The level of permanent income as well as expenditure on tourism was higher for white households compared with non-white households. As can be expected, households whose household head had a college or a higher degree of education had higher permanent income and spent more on tourism.

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The parameter estimates of the double-hurdle model are shown in Table 4. As can be seen, net worth, and number of vehicles owned have a statistically significant positive effect on the probability of spending on tourism (i.e., taking a trip). Household size, however, has a negative effect. Neither permanent income nor the

### TABLE 2
Descriptive Statistics (n=4,961)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequencies and percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-demographic variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>4217 (85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>959 (19.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>1,557 (31.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>1,232 (24.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or higher</td>
<td>1,213 (24.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Northeast</td>
<td>986 (19.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Midwest</td>
<td>1,151 (23.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban West</td>
<td>995 (20.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban South</td>
<td>1,307 (26.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Rural</td>
<td>522 (10.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Life Cycle Stages</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>622 (12.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newly married</td>
<td>231 (4.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Nest I</td>
<td>713 (14.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Nest II</td>
<td>520 (10.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-aged couples without children</td>
<td>376 (7.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Nest III</td>
<td>73 (1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent</td>
<td>502 (10.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single persons</td>
<td>473 (9.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty Nest</td>
<td>714 (14.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solitary Survivor</td>
<td>737 (14.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Trips</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>476 (9.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives/friends visit</td>
<td>1,033 (20.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day trips</td>
<td>310 (6.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>213 (4.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Means and standard deviations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household size</td>
<td>2.56 (1.55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Income</td>
<td>28,364 (16,593)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net worth</td>
<td>31,229 (33,715)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of earners</td>
<td>1.34 (0.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of vehicles owned</td>
<td>1.88 (1.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of trips</td>
<td>0.58 (1.03)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
number of earners in a household has a significant effect on the probability of spending on tourism among households recording zero expenditure. For households who did not spend on tourism, households with a white reference person would have a higher probability of spending on tourism than their non-white counterparts. The probability of households whose reference person has some college education or a college degree of spending on tourism is higher than households whose reference person has a high school education. On the other hand, other factors equal, households whose reference person has less than high school education, has lesser probability of spending on tourism than households whose reference person has a high school degree.

The probability of households in rural areas, urban Northeast, and urban Midwest, to spend on tourism is lesser than household in urban South. Compared with households in the life cycle stage of Solitary survivor, households in any of the other life stages have a higher probability of spending on tourism, ceteris paribus.

Whereas permanent income has no effect on the probability of tourism spending, it has a highly significant impact on the level of expenditure among those households reporting expenditure on tourism. Since the natural log of permanent income was regressed on tourism expenditure, then the regression coefficient represents income elasticity. This means a 1% increase in income, ceteris paribus, will result in .19% increase in tourism expenditure. Demand for tourism with respect to permanent income is, therefore, inelastic. Albeit the positive relationship between income and expenditure on tourism is in support of previous studies (Dardis et al. 1981; Dardis et al. 1993; Dardis et al. 1994; Fish and Waggle 1996), the magnitude of the elasticity coefficient is in contradiction of the results obtained by Dardis et al (1981).

As the number of earners increases, the expenditure on tourism decreases. Since the actual number of earners was regressed on the natural log of expenditure on tourism, the marginal propensity to spend is the regression coefficient divided by the mean of expenditure, i.e. (-0.11/186.1). Thus, as the number of earners increases by one, the expenditure on tourism decreases by .06 of a cent. This negative relationship between the number of earners and expenditure on tourism could be attributed to the scarcity of time available to multiple-earner households compared with single-earner households.

Since the dependent variable was in logarithms, the anti-logs of the dummy coefficients are taken, and the resulting values indicate the percentage difference in expenditure for each dummy variable in relation to the omitted category, which has a base of 100 (Carliner 1973; Halvorsen and Palmquist 1980). The transformed coefficients for the dummy variables are shown in Table 5.

Whereas households located in urban Northeast spent 20% more on tourism than their counterparts in the South, households in rural America spent 32% less on tourism than households in urban...
TABLE 4
Results of Probit and Truncated Regression for Expenditure on Tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Probit</th>
<th>Truncated Regression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-demographic factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>0.33 (0.06)***</td>
<td>-0.065 (0.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>-0.29 (0.06)***</td>
<td>-0.067 (0.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>0.27 (0.051)***</td>
<td>-0.011 (0.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or higher (High school)</td>
<td>0.55 (0.054)***</td>
<td>0.21 (0.08)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household size</td>
<td>-0.05 (0.024)*</td>
<td>0.06 (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Northeast</td>
<td>-0.25 (0.058)***</td>
<td>0.18 (0.09)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Midwest</td>
<td>-0.16 (0.056)**</td>
<td>0.013 (0.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban West</td>
<td>-0.08 (0.57)</td>
<td>0.13 (0.086)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Rural (Urban South)</td>
<td>-0.14 (0.07)*</td>
<td>-0.28 (0.11)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Life cycle stage</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>0.55 (0.08)***</td>
<td>-0.19 (0.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newly married</td>
<td>0.47 (0.11)***</td>
<td>0.06 (0.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full nest I</td>
<td>0.39 (0.10)***</td>
<td>-0.26 (0.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full nest II</td>
<td>0.27 (0.11)*</td>
<td>-0.11 (0.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-aged couples without children</td>
<td>0.29 (0.10)**</td>
<td>0.13 (0.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full nest III</td>
<td>0.41 (0.18)*</td>
<td>0.16 (0.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent</td>
<td>0.04 (0.01)</td>
<td>-0.45 (0.18)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single person</td>
<td>0.26 (0.086)**</td>
<td>-0.008 (0.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty nest</td>
<td>0.40 (0.08)***</td>
<td>0.06 (0.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Solitary survivor)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log of permanent income</td>
<td>-4.4E-03 (0.027)</td>
<td>0.19 (0.05)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log of net worth</td>
<td>0.046 (6.6E-03)***</td>
<td>-0.0007 (0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of earners</td>
<td>0.03 (0.03)</td>
<td>-0.11 (0.04)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of vehicles owned</td>
<td>0.09 (0.01)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travel-related Factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of trips</td>
<td>0.37 (0.03)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of trip</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>0.8 (0.07)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day trip</td>
<td>-0.67 (0.08)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative/friend visit</td>
<td>0.21 (0.09)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.55 (0.23)***</td>
<td>2.75 (0.47)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>σ</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 (0.02)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log likelihood</td>
<td>-2832.7</td>
<td>-2664.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>4,961</td>
<td>4,961</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001 Numbers in parenthesis are standard errors.

South. The result is in support of past studies indicating that rural households, holding everything else constant, spend less on tourism than urban households (Dardis et al. 1981; Dardis et al. 1993).

The results for life cycle stage indicate that single-parent households spent 57% less on tourism than households headed by a solitary survivor. There are no significant differences, however, between households in the other life cycle stages and households headed by a solitary survivor. The results support the findings by Cai et al. (1995).

Households whose trips were identified as recreation spent 122% more on tourism than households whose trips were intended to visit relatives and/or friends. Similarly, households whose trips
TABLE 5
Transformed Regression Coefficients for Dummy Variables as Regressors on Tourism Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White-107</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>-107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>-101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or higher</td>
<td>123*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(High school)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Northeast</td>
<td>120*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Midwest</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban West</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall rural</td>
<td>-132*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life cycle stage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>-121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newly married</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full nest I</td>
<td>-130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full nest II</td>
<td>-112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-aged couples without children</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full nest III</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent</td>
<td>-157*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single person</td>
<td>-101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty nest</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(solitary survivor)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

were classified as day trips or others spent 95%, and 23% respectively more on tourism than those households whose trips were to visit relatives or friends.

It is interesting to note that whereas the probability of white households to spend more on tourism than non-white households, there is no significant difference in the level of expenditure between the two types of households, ceteris paribus. The result contradicts past studies (Dardis et al. 1994; Fan 1994; Pitts 1990).

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study lend credence to the superiority of the double-hurdle model over the single decision Tobit model. The results clearly illustrate the importance of a two-step approach to tourism spending modeling. Parameter estimates of the double-hurdle model shows that the effects of some variables such as income, net worth, number of earners, life cycle stage, region, household size, education and race of the head of the household were different in each decision step. It provided more information than would have the Tobit model regarding the unique role of each variable in participation and spending decisions. The additional information may be valuable for understanding consumer behavior in the tourism market.

The results of this study can be used to profile the “typical” household as far as tourism spending is concerned. First, the household most likely to travel is a one that is headed by a white household head who is relatively well educated, has a smaller household size, headed by a non-solitary survivor, has higher net worth, owns more vehicles, and locates in the urban South. Second, a profile of a household that spends more on tourism has the following characteristics: its head is better educated and is not a single parent, has fewer earners, has a higher income, takes more trips especially recreational ones, and resides in urban Northeast.

These results also provide essential marketing information to segment the pleasure travel market by various economic and socio-demographic characteristics of households.

REFERENCES

Bryant, W. Keith (1990), The Economic Organization of the Household, New York; Cambridge University Press.


ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine whether demographics or personality (measured by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) provide a better explanation of leisure preference. Regression analysis indicated that some attributes of leisure are better explained by personality (Planning, Follow through, Variety, People and Pace of activities), others (Household tasks, Team sports and Modernity) by demographics, and still others (Risk) equally by the two. Neither personality nor demographics were appropriate for determining the level of involvement in activities. In all cases except the Planning scale, using a combination of demographics and personality led to a statistically significant improvement in explanatory power.

INTRODUCTION

Although numerous authors have proposed various models of consumer choice, by far the most prominent models in the literature today rely on understanding the decision-making process through an information processing or problem-solving approach using logical flow models of bounded rationality to explain consumer behavior (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). Much of the research underlying the development of these models has focused on the purchase of durable products and the tangible benefits they provide. More recently, a number of researchers have suggested that these models view consumption in too narrow a fashion, not taking into account the choice of products for more hedonic reasons. Consumers may purchase products in anticipation of having fun, to fulfill fantasies, or simply for the emotions or feelings the product will generate (Woods 1981; Holbrook et al 1984; Shimp 1993). To take account of these types of choices as well as impulse purchasing and variety seeking behavior, the traditional information processing model has been broadened into what Hirschman & Holbrook (1982) and Mowen (1988) refer to as the “experiential view” of consumer choice. In fact, in a recent paper by Bernd Schmitt (1999) he argues that this “experiential view” of consumer decision making may now be a better representation of consumer choice than the more traditional models for all types of products.

In their paper comparing the information processing and experiential views of consumer behavior, Hirschman & Holbrook (1982, p. 136) suggest that although personality has shown relatively poor performance in predicting consumer behavior, the “investigation of experiential consumption appears to offer considerable scope for the revival of personality” research. They acknowledge that all individual differences are important in determining choice, but suggest that personality may be a better predictor of choice than demographics for experiential products. Literally hundreds of studies have been completed trying to determine the influence of personality on a variety of aspects of consumer decision making across an enormous variety of product categories. However, as Kassarjian & Sheffet (1991), p.291) conclude, the results are equivocal with the amount of variance explained being 5–10% in the majority of studies with higher percentages being reported in specific cases (eg. Brody & Cunningham 1968). The results in the leisure literature are no better with most of the correlation coefficients falling in the range 0.1–0.3 with an occasional coefficient reaching 0.4 or 0.5 in studies using attributes rather than specific activities (McGuiggan 1996, p.50). However the disappointing results of previous research do not lead reviewers of either the consumer behaviour or the leisure literature, such as Kassarjian (1971), Engel et al (1973), Wells & Beard (1973), Eysenck et al (1982), Kircaldy (1985), Foxall & Goldsmith (1988), Furnham (1990) or Kassarjian & Sheffet (1991), to dismiss personality as a possible determinant of purchasing behaviour. In fact the opposite is true. All reviewers support the need for further research, but point out that for future studies to provide useful information on the relationship, researchers must take account of and avoid the pitfalls of previous studies. Barash 1997, p.4) goes so far as to say that marketplace behavior is far more likely to be influenced by “personality, temperament, character, values, ethos, mythos, and specific individual circumstances than by any combination of accumulated demographic data”.

The aim then of this study was to determine whether this is in fact true for the choice of leisure activities in general, a decision involving a “strong experiential component” (Mowen & Minor 1998, p. 9). However the objective was not to prove that only one variable need be considered when investigating leisure choice, but rather to establish the relative importance of personality and demographics in that choice. Therefore the importance of personality with regard to leisure choice was studied in relation to the importance of the most common demographic variables cited in the leisure literature.

LEISURE CHOICE

Most previous research assumes that personality and demographics have a direct influence on leisure activity choice. However, research to date has provided little support for this assertion (Kelly 1978b, 1983; McGuiggan 1996). There seems to be two issues that need to be addressed here. Firstly, is leisure activity (for example tennis, watching television) the correct unit of measure, and secondly can variables such as personality or demographics be expected to influence choice directly or do they exert their effect indirectly?

Leisure activity

Is leisure activity a simple and unambiguous natural unit of analysis? A number of problems can be identified with this unit of analysis. Unlike many other product categories, it is not possible to produce an exhaustive list of activities that can be classified as leisure, since all activities have the potential to be leisure and all activities have the potential to be non-leisure (for example competition golf for the professional golfer). Secondly, Kelly (1983, p. 159) draws attention to the fact that activity labels do not take account of the diverse types of activity and interaction which may occur in a single activity setting. For example, if a person indicates they have been ‘swimming’ what does this tell us about their actual activities—have they swum laps, played with the children, socialized with friends, or read a book by the pool? Moreover as Neulinger (1974, p. 35) points out, if a list is produced, a decision as to what constitutes a unit of activity has to be made. Number of hours may be an appropriate measure for involvement in reading or watching television, but may not be a good measure for hungry

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1This paper is based on work completed for the doctoral dissertation of Robyn L. McGuiggan entitled “The Relationship between Personality, as measured by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and Leisure Preferences”, Graduate School of Management, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia 1996.
jumping or skydiving. Even if the unit of analysis is established, self-reported participation in leisure activities might be biased, respondents tending to overestimate leisure activity participation (Chase & Cheek 1979; Hultsman et al. 1989). Furthermore, using leisure activities as the unit of analysis limits the generalizability of the research. Leisure activities change over time. For example bungy jumping, grass skiing and inline skating were unheard of in the 1970s, as were electronic games.

It would appear that far from leisure activity being a ‘simple and unambiguous natural unit of analysis’; it seems to be fraught with insurmountable problems. A number of researchers have dealt with this problem by using groups of leisure activities as the unit of analysis, for example social activities, outdoor activities, sports and hobbies. However a review of the literature does not indicate any agreement as to the way activities should be grouped. A further argument against using activity groupings is provided by Kelly (1978b) who points out that dealing with classifications of activities will invariably obscure significant differences among particular activities. Duncan’s (1978) work showing that Q and R factor analyses of leisure activities provide very different groupings of activities suggests that it is not the activity itself that is important to the individual but the underlying attributes of the activity as perceived by the individual. This suggests that predicting ‘generic behavior’, or attribute preferences, should be less difficult than predicting specific forms of behavior. Furthermore, Lancaster (1966) would argue that it is the characteristics/attributes of goods that provide utility to the consumer. It is the utility of the individual attributes that determines the preference for particular products/services. People evaluate alternatives on the basis of their attributes rather than compare products as a whole (Gensch & Javalgi 1987).

It would appear then that the solution is not to profile a person’s actual participation in leisure activities, but rather the attributes or meaning of those activities. The same conclusion has been reached by a number of previous authors such as Coleman (1976), Kelly (1978a), Kabanoff (1980), Crandall & Slikken (1980), Iso-Ahola (1980) and Bergier (1981). In support of this approach, Kabanoff (1981, p. 383) argues that task attributes have consistently been used to predict job satisfaction, and therefore he sees no reason why they should not also predict leisure satisfaction. A further argument for focusing on leisure attributes and meanings is provided by Balderjahn’s (1988) causal model of ecologically conscious consumer behavior in which he suggests that greater correlation should be found between personality and leisure attributes than between personality and participation in specific activities. Foxall’s (1984, pp. 115-116) contention that to measure accurately the association between two variables both must be conceptualized and measured at the same level of generality/specificity, adds a further argument for using attributes rather than activities. Personality measures apply to global views of behavior and not to the specific. Attributes are not activity specific; they can be used to describe any leisure activity.

Leisure choice

The second issue that needs to be addressed is that of choice. Choices are made, but within the constraints that order our lives. Many researchers in the consumer behavior and leisure area have identified constraints on our actual choice. These may be external to the individual such as culturally determined roles, laws and regulations, availability/accessibility of appropriate facilities, or internal such as physical ability, health, and competing obligations such as family or work. Whether constraints are internal or external, perceived or real, surveys such as the General Recreation Surveys administered by the Alberta government in 1988 and 1992, in which approximately fifty percent of respondents reported the desire to start a new recreational or leisure activity but were unable to because of various constraints (Jackson & Witt, 1994), indicate that actual choice is likely to be difficult to predict. Although we may prefer to engage in a particular activity, intervening variables may lead to a totally different activity being chosen or a compromise being made. Therefore rather than personality and demographics influencing leisure choice directly, it is proposed that they exert their influence indirectly through establishing leisure preferences. Some support for expecting personality to influence leisure choice indirectly through preference is provided by Webster & Wakshlag’s (1983) model of television program choice. Although they present no empirical data to support their theory, they propose that “specific program preference is a cause of program choice” (p. 432) and that psychological variables, e.g. needs, influence actual choice through establishing preferences.

MEASURING PERSONALITY

One of the major criticisms leveled at past research is the choice of personality instrument. Literally hundreds of personality questionnaires are available commercially. However many of the previous studies on personality and choice in the consumer behavior literature and the leisure literature have been criticized by authors such as Kassarjian (1971), Engel et al (1973), Wells & Beard (1973), Wilde (1977), Iso-Ahola (1980) Eysenck et al (1982), Kirkaldy (1985), Foxall & Goldsmith (1988), Furnham (1990, 1992) and Kassarjian & Sheffet (1991) for the inappropriate selection and use of personality instrument. The criticisms of these authors point to the necessity of choosing a theoretically based instrument that has been adequately tested in terms of reliability and validity. There must also be a theoretically sound justification for expecting a relationship between the personality trait/s to be measured and the leisure activity.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) has a strong theoretical framework being based on Myers’ theory of personality which she developed from her interpretation of Carl Jung’s theory of psychological types and her own observations (Myers & McCaully 1992). The MBTI describes a person’s personality on four dichotomous dimensions indicating a person’s preference for source of psychological energy (extraversion vs. introversion), perception (sensing vs. intuition), making judgements (thinking vs. feeling), and orientation to the outer world (judging vs. perceiving). The MBTI questionnaire is a forced-choice, self-report inventory, virtually self-administering and designed for use with normal subjects. The questions consist of behavioral preferences and a number of preferred self-descriptive adjectives. Each individual question is designed to elicit a preference for one of the four dimensions. Countless papers have been written reviewing the reliability and validity data on the MBTI. Generally these support the view that the four MBTI scales have construct validity and measure important dimensions of personality which approximate those in Jung’s typology (Steene & Kelly 1976; Coan 1978; Levy & Padilla 1982; Geer et al 1984; Tzeng et al 1984; Sipps et al 1985; Thompson & Borrello 1986; Wiggins 1989; Murray 1990). In addition the MBTI questionnaire is readily available, simple to administer and score and is the most widely used personality questionnaire in America for non-psychiatric populations (Murray 1990).

A number of arguments can be advanced for expecting a relationship to exist between MBTI type and leisure choice. Firstly, Jung’s and Myers’ theories imply that a relationship should exist since both are type theories, which advocate that people of similar personality can be expected to react in a similar way to many situations in life. On this basis a number of authors, including Kroeger & Thuesen (1988) and Provost (1990) have hypothesized on the existence of the relationship. In fact many MBTI advocates...
suggested that this relationship may be stronger than that between personality and work. Secondly, extensive data are available on the relationship between MBTI type and occupational preference or choice. If choice of both work and leisure are influenced by a common third variable such as personality, as suggested by Isok-Ahola (1980) and others, the data already collected on the MBTI showing a strong relationship between MBTI type and career choice would suggest that a relationship between type and leisure choice should also exist. Thirdly, the sensing-intuitive and thinking-feeling functions measured by the MBTI refer to the way people gather information and arrive at decisions. This parallels consumer behavior theory in terms of information search and decision making. In fact the MBTI has been used in organizations to estimate decision styles of executives (Moore 1987). So why wouldn’t the same be true for decisions on product or leisure choice? Although the MBTI has been used only to a very limited extent in consumer research, Shank & Langmeyer (1994, p. 162) concluded from their study that “in fact, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator would seem to be the ideal personality inventory for marketers”.

The MBTI has been used in a limited number of studies in the leisure area focusing on determining the personality type of people engaged in very specific activities. Although the results do not show overwhelming support for a relationship existing between MBTI type and leisure activity, they do indicate that a relationship may exist. Gontang et al (1977) found that marathon runners were more likely to have a preference for introversion and judging, while Clitsome & Kostrubala (1977) found them to have a preference for introversion but also to have a preference for sensing. In contrast, Franzoi (1985) found cross-country runners overwhelmingly to have a preference for perception with some indication that a preference for extraversion, intuition or feeling may encourage participation in this sport. In addition, Schurr et al (1988) found that sensing types were more likely to attend male basketball games and Morehouse et al (1990) showed that extroverts exhibit a greater desire for activity in general. Sensing types appear to watch more television than intuitive types and program preference can also be related to MBTI type (Nolan & Patterson 1990). Although these findings are somewhat inconsistent and the relationships found are not terribly strong, they do provide additional reason to suspect that a relationship between MBTI type and leisure preference may exist.

### METHOD

To avoid the criticism levelled at past research that there was no theoretical basis to support the relationship between the personality instrument chosen and the consumer behavior measured, the MBTI literature was used to develop the leisure attributes and meanings to be studied. The MBTI literature was scanned to determine any predictions that had been made regarding the relationship between personality type and leisure preferences. Other MBTI type characteristics that might be applicable to leisure attribute preference were also noted. For example it could be expected that people who like to plan their work would also prefer to plan their leisure activities. One hundred and twenty forced choice questions were developed under 25 broad headings suggested by the literature (see Table 1). These groupings were later used in the analysis to aid in the formation of leisure attribute scales. Since the MBTI questions are presented as forced choice answers, the leisure questions were developed to replicate this format. The intention was to make questionnaire completion easier for the respondent and to minimize completion time. (For a full description of the development of the actual questions see McGuiggan (1996)). A sample of 103 undergraduate business students was used to pre-test the questions. After skewed (non-discriminating) questions were deleted and highly correlating questions either deleted or reworded, 101 leisure questions remained. Thus the final questionnaire contained these 101 questions, the 94 scoring questions from the MBTI Form G and a number of demographic questions (gender, age, marital status, whether children live with them, highest level of education, usual occupation, country of origin, and household income).

A purposive sample was sought with the aim of achieving a large sample made up of a relatively even distribution of the 16 MBTI types. Undergraduate marketing research students at UTS were required to collect data for this study as part of their course requirement. Each student needed to have six questionnaires completed by appropriate respondents. Instructions on respondent suitability were provided in order to attempt to maximize the variation in respondent personality type. 782 usable questionnaires were obtained. However after establishing the MBTI type of the respondents, it was found that 12 of the MBTI types contained fewer than 30 respondents. Therefore further respondents were

### TABLE 1

**Broad Heads suggested by the literature—and utilized in developing the Leisure Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning:</th>
<th>Variety:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Vacation planning</td>
<td>- Variety of vacations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Leisure planning</td>
<td>- Variety of activities on vacation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Acceptability of changes to plans</td>
<td>- Level of comfort on vacation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Carry through with plans</td>
<td>- Variety of sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Complete planned projects</td>
<td>- Variety of leisure activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Follow rules</td>
<td>- Risk involved in sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People:</td>
<td>Sports:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Number of people vacation with</td>
<td>- Watching or engaging in sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Number of people spend leisure with</td>
<td>- Pace of activities engaged in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth of involvement in activities</td>
<td>- Team or contact sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of vacation</td>
<td>- Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading:</td>
<td>Household tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- General questions</td>
<td>Traditional or modern activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Preferred type of reading</td>
<td>Other aspects of leisure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 2
Reliability of the Leisure Scales–Cronbach’s alpha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leisure Scale</th>
<th>Number of items in scale</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow through</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team sport</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household tasks</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pace of activities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernity</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

sought to boost the numbers in these 12 groups. A list of possible participants of ‘known’ MBTI type in each of the 12 groups sought was provided by the Director of The Institute for Type Development, Sydney. Each of these people was mailed a package, which included a copy of the questionnaire, a reply paid envelope and a covering letter on Institute for Type Development letterhead signed by the Director, requesting their help with the project. A further 126 cases were added to the data bank in this way, giving a total sample size of 908 cases.

Men comprised 49% of the sample, and the mean age was 35-39 years (range 18-65+ years). Seventy two percent were born in Australia and 50% had obtained at least a trade qualification. Of the 70% who were working, 58% worked full-time and 12% part-time contributing to an average household income of $65,000 per year. In comparison with the general Australian population the sample has a higher percentage of respondents who work and is skewed towards the upper quartile of household income brackets. This is not unexpected considering the method of sample selection. However the sample showed a good spread of occupations contributing to a broad range of household incomes ($20,00–$150,000+ per year).

RESULTS

SPSS, a statistical package for the social sciences, was used to analyze the data. Data reduction of the 101 leisure questions was achieved by utilizing the original 25 leisure attribute categories from the literature. Three of these groups were dropped from the analysis since correlation analysis indicated that the questions within these groups were not closely related. The individual question scores in each of the remaining leisure categories were added together to create 22 new variables. Factor analysis was utilized to determine whether any of these 22 scales should be combined, and reliability analysis used to improve the internal consistency of the scales. The final outcome was the creation of 11 simple additive scales utilizing 79 of the 101 leisure questions. (For a full description of the data reduction process and the actual questions in each of the scales see McGuiggan (1996). These leisure scales were correlated with the 4 MBTI continuous scales–Extraversion–Introversion, Sensing–Intuitive, Thinking–Feeling, Judging–Perceiving (created as described in the MBTI Manual (Myers & McCaully, 1992 p. 9))–and the demographics. The Length of vacation scale showed no significant relationship with any of the MBTI scales nor demographics, and was therefore excluded from further analysis. The reliability of the remaining ten scales is presented in Table 2. With the exception of the People scale, the internal reliability of these scales are all above Nunnaly’s (1967) cut off value of 0.5.

To determine the relative influence of MBTI personality type and demographics on leisure attribute preference, two sets of nested multiple regression analyses were undertaken with the dependent variables being the leisure attribute scales. The full model for both sets of analyses included the 4 MBTI continuous scales plus the demographic variables–age, household income, education level, gender, children under 18 years living in the household, usual occupation and cultural heritage (dummy variables having been created for this variable). In the first set of regressions the 4 MBTI continuous scale scores were used as the independent variables in the nested equation while in the second the demographic variables were utilized. In each case the change in R2 and F-value was examined to determine the relative contribution to exploratory power provided by the 2 sets of variables. The results are presented in Table 3.

From Table 3 it is evident that the power of the MBTI to explain the variability in the leisure scales differs greatly from a low of 6.5% for the Involvement scale to a high of 46.6% for the Planning scale. For five of the leisure scales, Planning, Variety, Risk, People and Team sports, more than 20% of the variance could be explained by the MBTI scales. Taking demographics alone, the variability explained varies from a low of 4.5% for the planning scale to a high of 23.8% for the Modernity scale. For the three scales Risk, Pace of activities and Modernity more than 20% of the variance could be explained by demographics. However from examination of the full model and the change in R2 and F-value, it can be seen that the explanatory power of all the leisure scales, except that of planning, could better be explained by a combination of both personality and demographic variables.

In the case of the Planning scale, demographics add nothing to the explanatory power of the equation, in fact the Judging–Perceptive personality scale alone accounts for the full 46.6% of the variability (see Table 4). For a further four of the scales–Follow through, Variety, People and Team sport, personality provides a much better explanation than demographics alone (although adding demographics leads to a statistically significant increase in explanatory power of between 2.9 and 7.5 percent). Personality is also a better predictor of Involvement in activities than demographics, but this scale is poorly predicted by all variables measured. At the other end of the continuum, Household tasks, the Pace of activities and the Modernity scales are best described in terms of the demographic profile of the respondent (18.3%, 21.2% and 23.8% respectively), although adding personality leads to a significant increase in explanatory power (5.5%, 3.9% and 4.7% respectively). For the
TABLE 3
Change in $R^2$ and F value for nested Regression Analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leisure Scale</th>
<th>R$^2$</th>
<th>Total model</th>
<th>R$^2$ (F change) over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>Demographics + Personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>.466</td>
<td>.470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow through</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>.145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td>.311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>.134</td>
<td>.236</td>
<td>.281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team sport</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td>.230</td>
<td>.305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>.224</td>
<td>.214</td>
<td>.322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household tasks</td>
<td>.183</td>
<td>.141</td>
<td>.238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pace of activities</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>.251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernity</td>
<td>.238</td>
<td>.134</td>
<td>.285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>.091</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** F change significant at .001; ** F change significant at .01

TABLE 4
Full Regression Model–standardized significant $\beta$ values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning scale</th>
<th>Risk scale</th>
<th>Competition scale</th>
<th>Teams scale</th>
<th>Tasks scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JP scale</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>- .210***</td>
<td>- .212***</td>
<td>- .371***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow through</td>
<td>JP scale</td>
<td>.163***</td>
<td>- .166***</td>
<td>- .214***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SN scale</td>
<td>SN scale</td>
<td>.192***</td>
<td>- .108**</td>
<td>- .160***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI scale</td>
<td>EI scale</td>
<td>- .143***</td>
<td>- .103**</td>
<td>- .106***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>TF scale</td>
<td>- .068*</td>
<td>- .097**</td>
<td>- .111**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>- .084*</td>
<td>- .097**</td>
<td>- .076*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety scale</td>
<td>People</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI scale</td>
<td>EI scale</td>
<td>- .349***</td>
<td>- .371***</td>
<td>- .208***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SN scale</td>
<td>JP scale</td>
<td>.174***</td>
<td>- .188***</td>
<td>- .160***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>- .103**</td>
<td>- .112**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>- .084*</td>
<td>- .121***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- .396***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>JP scale</td>
<td>- .396***</td>
<td>- .208***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JP scale</td>
<td>EI scale</td>
<td>.172***</td>
<td>- .188***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SN scale</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>- .141***</td>
<td>- .160***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>- .121***</td>
<td>- .112**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>- .104**</td>
<td>- .84*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TF scale</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>- .87</td>
<td>- .087</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TF scale</td>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>- .188***</td>
<td>- .076*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>- .145***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SN scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** significant at .001; ** significant at .01; significant at .05
Risk scale, personality and demographics when used separately have approximately equal predictive power (21.4% and 22.4% respectively), but again by using both together the explanation of variability in the scale is significantly enhanced (32.2%). Therefore, in all but the Planning scale, it appears that both demographics and personality are needed to explain leisure attribute preference. The significant standardized β values for the full equations are presented in Table 4.

From Table 4 it would seem that people with a preference for judging are overwhelmingly more likely to plan their leisure time. Younger males are likely to have a favorable attitude towards risk taking in their leisure activities, especially if they have a preference for extraversion, intuition, thinking or perceiving. Furthermore, younger males in more professional occupations, who don’t have children and have a preference for extraversion, intuition, or perception, are more likely to want lots of variety in their leisure activities. Young men with children with a preference for extraversion or perception are more likely to want to watch or participate in team sports in their leisure time. Modern culture seems more likely to be preferred over traditional culture by young males with less formal education but who work in more professional occupations, if they have a preference for extraversion, perceiving or sensing. Young singles in less prestigious occupations with a preference for either extraversion or perception are more likely to want to spend their leisure time with other people. Younger single males in more professional occupations seem to have a preference for faster paced, competitive leisure activities, especially if they also have a preference for extraversion, thinking or perceiving. People who are likely to do tasks around the house in their leisure time are generally younger and single with an above average household income and have a preference for sensing, thinking or judging. Older people (perhaps of Asian or European decent) employed in more professional types of occupations with a preference for extraversion and perceiving or sensing and judging are more likely to follow through with whatever leisure plans they make. Although the association is weak, males with a preference for thinking or intuition score higher on the involvement scale.

**DISCUSSION**

In all cases except the Planning scale, explanation was improved by use of both demographic and personality variables. The combination of personality and demographic variables explained 20% or more of the variance in eight of the ten leisure attribute scales. However, even though using the two types of variables significantly improved explanation in all bar one case, the Planning scale, the improvement varied considerably. By adding demographics to the personality only model explanation was improved from 2.6% to 15.1%, while adding personality to the demographics only model lead to between 3.7% and 16.3% improvement in explanation. Therefore it would appear that some attributes of leisure are better explained by personality (Planning, Follow through, Variety, People and Team sport), others (Household tasks, Pace of activities and Modernity) by demographics, and still others (Risk) equally by the two. Furthermore it is apparent that neither personality nor the demographic variables used in this study are appropriate for determining the level of involvement in activities nor the preferred length of vacation. However it is also apparent that both demographics and personality both contribute to the explanation of leisure attribute preference.

A possible reason for the variability in the proficiency of both the personality and the demographic variables to explain leisure attribute preference, could be the internal reliability of the various leisure scales. As demonstrated in Lastovicka & Joachimsthaler’s (1988) paper, the coefficient of determination is as dependent on the reliability of the dependent variable as it is on the reliability of the independent variables. Therefore further research needs to be undertaken to improve the internal reliability of the leisure attribute scales, which may in turn enhance the explanatory power of the MBTI scales and the demographics. Of course other explanations for the variation in explanatory power are possible. For example, the leisure attribute may not in fact be related to personality or to demographics. On the other hand, other demographic values not measured in this study may provide more exploratory power. Alternatively, the respondent may not see the attribute as leisure, and therefore lower correlations might be expected. Although the leisure attributes for this study were based on MBTI theory, these may not in fact be the most salient descriptors of leisure activities.

**CONCLUSION**

The results of this study provides support for Holbrook & Hirschman’s (1982) contention that personality should be considered an important influence in the choice of experiential products such as leisure. However, the study also indicates that not all attributes of leisure are equally likely to be influenced by personality. In some cases demographics may provide a better explanation. The overwhelming conclusion from this study is that both demographic and personality variables play an important role in the formation of preferences for experiential products such as leisure, and thus must both be measured to gain a thorough understanding of consumer preference.

**REFERENCES**


Coleman, D. V. (1976). Biographical, personality, and situational determinants of leisure time expenditure; with specific attention to competitive activities (athletics) and to more cooperative activities (music). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 37 (1-B July), 520-B.


ABSTRACT

As men and women move away from traditional roles toward more modern ones, household decision making roles become less predetermined than in the past; therefore, examination of the roles men and women assume within household consumer decision-making is vital. The purpose of this paper is to report on a study of the relative roles of husbands and wives in household consumer decision-making for durable products. The research shows (a) that couples with different sex role orientations experience a higher degree of disagreement about who makes decisions at each step of the decision making process, and (b) the manner in which husbands and wives participate in the different steps that are part of the consumer decision making process is dependent on both the type of product being purchased and the sex role orientations to which a husband and wife subscribe (i.e. traditional or modern).

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between marital roles and decision making has been of interest to marketing and consumer researchers for the past 30 years (for example, Davis 1970; Davis and Rigaux 1974; Ferber and Lee 1974; Green and Cunningham 1975; Qualls 1981). Over the course of these 3 decades, the increasing presence of women in the workplace has led to changes in the roles assumed by both men and women in the home and the workplace. Traditionally, men have been the breadwinners and decision makers in the family, whereas women have been the nurturers, care givers and housekeepers. The decision-making process of more traditional couples is seen as quite simple because the roles of each spouse are clearly defined and therefore conflict rarely arises. Today, as women and men share the role of breadwinner, roles have become increasingly flexible and, as a result, decision-making has become more complex (Brinberg and Schwenk, 1985). As men and women move away from traditional roles toward more modern ones, household decision making roles become less predetermined than in the past; therefore, examination of the roles men and women assume within household consumer decision-making is vital. The purpose of this paper is to report on a study of the relative roles of husbands and wives in household consumer decision-making for durable products.

BACKGROUND LITERATURE

Sex-Role Orientation (SRO) and Purchase of Consumer Durables

Evidence suggests that SRO (the attitudes, values, opinions, behavioural standards and cultural norms that define the appropriate behaviour for men and women in their society) plays a major role in the process of family decision making (Qualls 1987) and that it should therefore be included as a variable in the decision environment that affects the family decision-making process (Qualls 1981). The SRO of both the husband and wife has been shown to influence significantly family decision making (Schaninger, Buss and Grover 1982). As couples become more modern, evidence suggests a decrease in the relative influence of the husband and an increase in the wife’s influence (Webster 1995).

Although research suggests that SRO is significant, it should be noted that research results suggest that the effects of SRO may be product specific and cannot be generalized across all product categories (Davis 1970; Green and Cunningham 1975). Typically, certain household decisions are characterized as being husband dominant (e.g. life insurance), wife dominant (e.g. kitchenware, wife’s and children’s clothes, food), synractic (e.g. housing, vacations, children’s toys and education) and autonomic (garden tools, alcoholic beverages) (Davis and Rigaux 1974). Green and Cunningham’s (1975) research showed that husbands of liberal wives were reported to make fewer decisions than husbands of more conservative and moderate SRO wives for major appliances, automobiles and vacations, showing a shift away from a traditional husband dominated decision environment. Qualls (1981) research indicated that traditional and modern wives exhibited patterns of influence perception similar to each other and that traditional husbands perceived their levels of influence to be higher than did their wives and moderate SRO husbands for decisions regarding automobiles, housing, insurance and vacations. It was also found that levels of joint influence perceived by spouses who were SRO modern was higher than that perceived by SRO traditional spouses, demonstrating a trend toward an egalitarian decision process among couples with sex role modern orientations. In general support of these findings, Schaninger, Buss and Grover (1982) reported that sex role modern families showed less husband and more joint and wife influence over three of the four aspects of their last durable purchase (deciding what, when and where to buy).

Household Division of Labour and Its Effects

SRO affects many aspects of daily life, including the division of household labour. Research shows that regardless of husband/ wife SRO, household tasks such as cooking, cleaning, preparing meals and doing laundry, are for the most part assigned to women, thus maintaining the traditional stereotype of the female homemaker (Hochschild 1989; Greenstein 1996). The exception to this occurs when both the husband’s and wife’s SROs are modern, which may result in an increase of male participation in domestic labour. When examining the effects of SROs on the division of labour in the household, Kim and Lee (1989) found that in the division of labour for performing domestic chores (e.g. laundry, cooking, washing dishes and house cleaning), wives with more modern SROs obtained a greater extent of involvement from their husbands. Greenstein’s (1996) research revealed that a husband’s gender ideology is not related to the division of household labour for men married to traditional wives, but it is for men with egalitarian wives. Results show that husbands do little domestic labour unless both the husband and wife are relatively non-traditional in their beliefs about gender and marital roles.

Conclusions To Be Drawn From Existing Literature

It can be concluded that it is difficult to generalize about the roles each spouse assumes in a particular decision without specific reference to the product being purchased. However, when looking at the research as a whole, it is possible to identify a trend–women are gaining increasingly more influence in the decision making process. However, much of the research examining consumer roles is dated (e.g. Davis, 1970; Davis and Rigaux 1974; Green and Cunningham 1975; Schaninger, Buss and Grover 1982) and sample sizes are small (e.g. 100 families, 73 households, 41 couples). In addition, many of the studies used only wives or only husbands in their sample. Researchers suggest that reliance on only one spouse’s
or family member’s responses is incomplete and misleading (Asser and Bobinski 1991; Davis 1970; Kim and Lee 1997). In addition, newer research such as that by Kim and Lee (1997) and Pahl (1994) shows the importance of involving all relevant parties in decision making in the research (whether its a consumer purchase of family financial management) in order to truly understanding the decision making process.

**Hypotheses Tested in the Research**

The research reported in this paper is designed to assess the relative roles of husbands and wives in the purchase of durable products as we approach the millenium. The specific hypotheses can be summarized as:

- **H1(a)** Couples with similar sex role orientations (both are traditional or both are modern) will have a high level of agreement about the roles each assumes in the family consumer decision making process.
- **H1(b)** Couples with mixed sex role orientations (one is modern, the other traditional) will have a low level of agreement about the roles each assumes within the family consumer decision making process.

- **H2(a)** For modern couples (both husband and wife have modern SROs), for decisions about kitchen appliances and furniture (described later in this paper as Group 1 products), initiating the idea to buy the product, collecting information about the product are dominated by the wife, while making the final decision is done jointly.
- **H2(b)** For modern couples, for decisions about entertainment and electronics (described later in this paper as Group 2 products) and outdoor maintenance and equipment (described later in this paper as Group 3 products), initiating the idea to buy the product, collecting information about the product are dominated by the husband. The final decision is done jointly.
- **H2(c)** For traditional couples, for decisions about kitchen appliances and furniture (Group 1), initiating the idea to buy, collecting information about the product and making the final decision are dominated by the wife. For decisions about entertainment and electronics (Group 2) and outdoor maintenance and equipment (Group 3), initiating the idea to by the product, collecting information about the product and making the final decision is dominated by the husband.

- **H3(a)** For couples with a modern wife and traditional husband, the wife will be more likely to report decisions are made in the same manner as those of modern couple; the husband will report decisions are made in the same manner as those of traditional couples.
- **H3(b)** For couples with a traditional wife and modern husband, the wife will report decisions are made in the same manner as those of traditional couples; the husbands will report decisions will report decisions are made in the same manner as those of modern couples.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design**

Data for this study were taken from a larger study designed to examine the financial management practices of husbands and wives in Canadian households (Madill and Woolley, 1996). Data were gathered from 300 households with 300 husband and wife partners each reporting on the purchasing and decision making of a durable product valued between $100-400.00 (CDN).

**Sample Selection.** The sample was selected using the telephone directory in a major Canadian city. Households were telephoned and qualified for the study if they had at least one child 18 years or younger currently residing at home. Couples who agreed to participate in a personal in-home interview were offered a $25.00 cash incentive and interviews were scheduled at the convenience of participants. Letters confirming the purpose and time of the interview followed up the initial telephone qualification.

**Data Collection.** In each household, a trained interviewer conducted:

1. A joint interview with both male and female partners,
2. Individual interviews with the husband and wife separately and privately, and, while the individual interview was being conducted, the other partner completed
3. A self-completion questionnaire. For the purposes of this study, data collected regarding sex roles, relative influence in consumer decision making and demographics was used.

Sex role orientation was measured using the 9 item British Household Panel Study Scale (1994). During the joint interview, the husband and wife agreed upon the last durable item they purchased (excluding clothes and car repairs) costing between $100 and 400. The products selected by respondents were classified into one of three categories: Group 1—Kitchen Appliance/Furniture and Indoor Maintenance (e.g. microwave ovens, chairs, vacuum cleaners); Group 2—Entertainment and electronics (e.g. televisions, VCRs, stereo equipment, computer equipment); Group 3—Outdoor Maintenance and Sporting Equipment (e.g. lawnmowers, BBQs, tents, canoes).

Both husbands and wives (individually and separately) were asked to describe the relative influence of the husband and the wife in the decision making process regarding the purchase of the durable. For the purpose of this study, a 3 step decision process was used for analysis. Respondents were asked about Step (1) problem recognition (who first brought up the idea), Step 2 (a) search–asked friends for information about the product, Step 2 (b) search–collected information from advertisements about the product, and Step (3) who made the final decision to purchase the product. Respondents were asked who was involved in each of these steps and responses were grouped as: husband dominant (HD), wife dominant (WD), joint (J), or nobody did this (N).

**Data Analysis**

Because respondent variables are binary, logistic regression had to be used in place of ordinary linear regression. To address Hypothesis 1 (a) and (b), an agree/disagree variable was created for each of the decision steps by individually comparing husbands’ and wives’ relative influence responses. If husbands and wives agreed, the couple was assigned a value of one, if their responses did not correspond, the couple was assigned a zero value. Separate logistic regression analyses were performed for each of the 4 steps of the decision making process using the dichotomous outcome variable (0=disagree, 1=agree). Covariates such as sex role variables (SexH, SexW–husband and wife sex role scores), age, education and income variables were entered using a stepwise process in order to identify the important predictors of husband/wife agreement.

To address Hypotheses 2 (a), (b), (c), and 3 (a), (b), the hypothesized relationship between a couple’s SRO, the product being purchased and relative influence in the decision making...
process, logistic regression was also used. Multiple logistic regres-
sions were run (1) using wife data, and (2) using husband data. (The
approach to data analysis will be described on the wife’s data (a
similar approach was used on the husband data)). Relative influ-
ence response was the outcome variable. Logistic regression analy-
ses were done for each step of the decision making process using the
outcome variable Oxy, where x=the respondent [wife (w) or
husband (h)] and y=relative influence response [husband dominant
(HD), wife dominant (WD), joint (J), nobody (N)]. For example,
when a wife’s response is wife dominant (OwWD), a value of one
is assigned, while all other responses are given a zero value. Sex
role covariates (SexH, SexW) and product covariates (due to the
categorical nature of this variable i.e. 1,2,3, two dummy variables
D1 and D2, were created to represent the product groups) were
entered directly in the analysis.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS**

**Description of the Sample**

Sixty-four percent of wives (63.9%) earned under $29,999
annually (compared to 34.4% of husbands), while only 3.1% of
wives earned over $60,000 (compared to 28.4% of husbands). Over
half of respondents were between the ages of 35 and 54, and about
44% of both husbands and wives had completed college or univer-
sity. Approximately half of the respondents (57.1% of husbands
and 50.5% of wives) scored in the mid range (between 22 and 31)
on the sex role orientation questionnaire (scores range from 9(mod-
ern) to 45 (traditional)). Comparisons of respondent incomes, age,
and education with Statistics Canada Census Data show that the
sample from which data were collected in this study is fairly
representative of the population of the city from which it is drawn
in terms of average income and age; the sample is slightly more
highly educated.

**Results of the Testing of Hypothesis One**

To provide support for hypotheses 1 (a) and (b), findings will
require that an increase in the difference between a couple’s SRO
scores (i.e. one spouse is more modern or traditional than the other)
results in a decrease in their level of agreement in consumer
decision making. A ‘Diff’ variable was calculated to measure the
difference between a couple’s SR scores (an increasing negative
value indicated the wife is more modern than her husband; and
increasing positive value indicates the wife is more traditional than
her husband; [Diff] eliminated the positive and/or negative signs
and showed only that the sex roles orientations are different. Both
‘diff’ and [diff] were tested). The summary of results for Hypoth-
esis 1 is given in Table 1.

The data show that 62.3% of the couples agreed about who first
brought up the idea to purchase the product. A couple’s sex role
orientation is not significant regarding agreement of who first
brought up the idea to buy. Comparison of husbands’ and wives
responses found that 50% of the couples agreed and 50% disagreed
about who asked friends about the product. Logistic regression
analysis produced one variable to be included in the model for step
2 (a) – sex role differences. The logistic regression results indicate
that as the difference between a couple’s sex role scores increase,
the odds of agreement between a husband and wife about who
asked friends about the product decrease. This finding supports
Hypothesis 1(a) and (b). Data also showed that only 46% of couples
agreed (54% disagreed) about who collected information from ads
about the product. The absolute difference between a couple’s sex
role scores is a significant predictor of that disagreement. The odds
ratio results indicate that as the absolute difference between a
couple’s sex role scores increase, the odds of agreement between
a husband and wife about who collected information from ads about
the product decrease. This finding supports Hypotheses 1(a) and
(b). Sixty-five percent (65.3%) of husbands and wives agreed about
who made the final decision to buy the product. Logistic regression
analysis showed one significant variable – sex role. Findings show
that as the difference between a couple’s sex role scores increases,
the odds of agreement between a husband and wife about who made
the final decision to buy decrease. In summary, these findings
provide considerable support for Hypothesis 1(a) and (b).

**Results of the Testing of Hypotheses 2 and 3.**

Logistic regression was performed to provide the best fitting
and most parsimonious model to describe the relationship between
a couple’s SRO and their relative influence responses for different
product groups. Findings are presented for each of the steps of the
decision making process (Step 1, 2(a), 2(b) and 3). An outcome
variable, step#ab, was used, where: step# = the step in the decision
process, 1,2(a),2(b),3; a=the respondent under consideration, hus-
band (h) or wife (w); and b=the relative influence response, wife
dominant (WD), husband dominant (HD), joint (J), nobody (N). For
example, Step1wWD–all wives responding wife dominant to step
one, were assigned a value of one, all other responses, were
assigned a value of zero. (The corresponding variable for husband
data would be Step1hWD). The covariates included, sex role
variables, and product variables (due to the categorical nature of
this variable, two dummy variables, D1 and D2 were created to
represent the product groups). To support hypotheses 2 and 3, a
significant sex role and product variable is required. Results of this
testing are summarized in Table 2.

**Step 1: First Brought Up The Idea to Buy.**

Overall, forty percent of wives reported that the wife was
dominant in bringing up the idea to buy the product. Thirty-three
percent believed their husbands to be dominant at this stage, while
23.3% believe it was jointly done (the remaining 1.3% believed
nobody had done this). For wives, both sex roles and product
category are significant in predicting whether the wife reports that

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**TABLE 1**

**Summary of Findings For Hypothesis 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step of the Decision Process</th>
<th>Significant Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1 (Brought Up Idea)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (a) (Asked Friends for Info)</td>
<td>Diff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (b) (Searched Ads for Info)</td>
<td>[Diff]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (Made Final Decision)</td>
<td>[Diff]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the wife or husband dominates this stage of decision making. The odds ratio from the logistic model shows that the odds of the wife responding that she dominates first bringing up the idea to purchase the product are 2.1 times greater if the product is in group 1 rather than if the product is in group 2, and 2.8 times greater if the product is in group 1 rather than in group 3. The odds ratio for the sex role variable indicates that as the difference between a couple’s sex role scores increases, the odds of a wife responding that she initiates the idea to buy the product decrease. Similarly the odds of a wife responding that her husband dominates first bringing up the idea to buy the product are 2.4 times greater if the product is in group 2 than group 1 and 5.5 times more likely when the product is in group 2 rather than group 1. Further, the sex role that it is 4.3 times more likely that a wife will respond that her husband dominates this stage; 14.3% said this step was joint, while 55% of wives said nobody did this. Logistic regression analysis revealed that sex roles are significant when wives report that they dominate this stage of the decision process. The findings show that as the difference between a couple’s sex role scores increases, the odds of a wife reporting that she dominates asking friends about the product, increase. The logistic regression odds ratio also indicates that it is 4.3 times more likely that a wife will respond that her husband dominates asking friends about the product when the product is in group 2 rather than in group 1. Further, the sex role odds ratio indicates that as a wife’s sex role score increases (i.e. approaches traditional), the odds of her responding that jointly, she and her husband ask friends about the product increase. The odds a wife will respond that nobody asks friends about the product are 1.7 times more likely when the product is in group 1 than in group 2.

A total of 14.3% of wives responded that the wife dominated asking friends about the product; 12% reported that the husband dominated this stage; 14.3% said this step was joint, while 55% of wives said nobody did this. The logistic model for husbands who reported that the wife was dominant in asking friends about the product revealed that the sex role variable was significant, indicating that as the difference between a couple’s sex role scores increase, the odds a husband will respond that his wife dominates

### TABLE 2
Summary of Results of Relative Husband/Wife Influence in Consumer Decision Making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of the Decision Process</th>
<th>Wife Data</th>
<th>Significant Variables</th>
<th>Husband Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1 WD</td>
<td>*Sex Role Significant</td>
<td>*Product Category Significant</td>
<td>WD *Product Category Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Product Category Significant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HD</td>
<td>*Sex Role Significant</td>
<td>*Product Category Significant</td>
<td>HD *Product Category Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>No Significant Variables</td>
<td></td>
<td>J No Significant Variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2(a) WD</td>
<td>*Sex Role Significant</td>
<td></td>
<td>WD *Sex Role Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HD</td>
<td>*Product Category Significant</td>
<td></td>
<td>HD *Product Category Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>*Sex Role Significant</td>
<td></td>
<td>J *Product Category Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>*Product Category Significant</td>
<td></td>
<td>N *Product Category Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2(b) WD</td>
<td>No Significant Variables</td>
<td></td>
<td>WD No Significant Variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HD</td>
<td>*Sex Role Significant</td>
<td>*Product Category Significant</td>
<td>HD *Product Category Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>*Sex Role Significant</td>
<td></td>
<td>J *Product Category Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>*Product Category Significant</td>
<td></td>
<td>N *Product Category Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4 WD</td>
<td>*Sex Role Significant</td>
<td></td>
<td>WD *Product Category Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HD</td>
<td>*Product Category Significant</td>
<td></td>
<td>WD *Product Category Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>*Sex Role Significant</td>
<td>*Sex Role Significant</td>
<td>*Sex Role Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stage 2 (b)–Search: Collecting Information About the Product From Ads.

In total, 15% of wives responded that they dominated this stage of decision making, while 16.7% of wives responded that the husband dominated, and 10.7% responded that this step was jointly done by both husbands and wives. The largest group of wives, 52% reported that nobody did this. Logistic regression produced no significant results for those wives who reported wife dominant, but both sex role and product variables are significant for wives who report that the husband dominated the decision. The odds ratios show product group has a large impact on a wife’s response about who collects information from ads about the product. The odds of a wife responding that her husband dominates the collection of information about the product from ads, are 2.3 times greater when the product is in group 3 rather than in group 1. The odds of a husband responding ‘nobody’ asks friends about a product are 1.7 times greater when the product is in group 1 rather than in group 2 and 2.3 times greater when the product is in group 1 rather than in group 3. The sex role results show, as the difference between a couple’s sex role scores increase, the odds of a husband responding that nobody asks friends about the product decrease.

Stage 3–Made the Final Decision to Purchase the Product.

In total, 15.7% of husbands responded that wives dominated this stage of decision making, while 20% of husbands responded that the husband dominated, and 13.3% responded that this step was jointly done by both husbands and wives. The largest group of husbands, 40.3%, reported that nobody did this. The logistic regression analysis produced no significant variables for predicting whether husbands would report that wives dominated this stage of decision making. However, the product variables are significant, showing that the odds of a husband responding that he dominates the collection of information from ads about the product are 2.4 times more likely when the product is in group 2 rather than in group 1. Similarly, the odds ratios show that the odds of a husband responding that he dominated this stage are 3.0 times greater when the product is in group 3 rather than in group 1, and the odds of a husband reporting nobody collected product information from ads are 1.8 times greater when the product is in group 1 rather than in group 3.

Stage 3–Made the Final Decision to Purchase the Product.

In total, 20.3% of wives responded that they dominated this stage of decision making, while 25.7% of wives responded that the husband dominated, and 51% responded that this step was jointly done by both husbands and wives (7% responded that nobody made the final decision). For wives who reported that the wife was dominant in making the final decision to purchase the product, the logistic regression results show that as the difference between a couple’s sex role scores increase, the odds of a wife reporting that she makes the final decision increase, and that the odds of a wife responding that her husband dominates the final decision to purchase the product are 2.0 times greater when the product is in group 2 rather than in group 1, and 2.6 times greater when the product is in group 3 rather than in group 1. Results also showed that as the difference between a couple’s sex role scores increases, the odds of a wife responding that both she and her husband jointly make the final decision to buy the product, decrease.

In total, 18.3.3% of husbands responded that their wives dominated this stage of decision making, while 24.3% of husbands responded that the husband dominated, and 55.3% responded that this step was jointly done by both husbands and wives. The logistic regression results show that product group has a large impact on a husband’s relative influence response about who makes the final decision to buy the product. The odds of a husband responding that the wife dominated making the final decision are 3.3 times greater when the product is in group 1 rather than in group 2. The odds of a husband responding that he dominates the final decision to buy the product is 2.9 times greater when the product is in group 2 rather than in group 1 and 3.2 times greater when the product is in group 3 rather than group 1. The sex role results indicate that as the difference between a couple’s sex role scores increases, the odds of a husband responding that he dominates the final decision to buy the product increases. Further, as the difference between a couple’s sex role scores increases, the odds of a husband responding that he and his wife jointly made the final decision to buy the product, decrease.

In total, considerable support for Hypotheses 2 and 3 was found from the logistic regression analyses. As shown in Table 2, product category and sex role orientations of husbands and wives are important in predicting who is dominant at each stage of the consumer decision making process.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In drawing conclusions, it is important to consider the key strengths and weaknesses inherent in the project. Key strengths of the study is that it surveyed both husbands and wives in 300 couples, and that a measure of SRO was introduced into the analysis as an independent variable. These strengths add considerably to the complexity of the analysis–many permutations of results present themselves making interpretation much more complicated. However, a number of conclusions can be drawn.

Conclusions

The research shows that couples with different sex role orientations experience a higher degree of disagreement about who makes decisions at each step of the decision making process from the information search stages and the final decision stage. The only stage where this disagreement was not significant was in the first stage of the decision process ‘first brought up the idea to buy the product’. The manner in which husbands and wives participate in the different steps that are part of the consumer decision making process is dependent on both the type of product being purchased and the sex role orientations to which a husband and wife subscribe (i.e. traditional or modern). Wives with traditional views still look to the husband to make the decisions at each step of the process for every product. Conversely, modern wives expect to be included in every aspect of the decision making process. They may not dominate the process at every step or for every product, however they do
participate in making the decision. Husbands with traditional views of sex roles expect to make all decisions related to the family, with the exception of products in group 1 (kitchen appliances, furniture and indoor maintenance products such as microwave ovens, chairs, vacuum cleaners). Although they see themselves as the bread winner and therefore decision maker of the family, traditional husbands view the products in group 1 as falling in the wife’s domain. Modern husbands believe in a more egalitarian decision environment and therefore look to their wives for participation/input in every aspect of the process and expect (or accept) the wives to dominate the decision making process for products more closely associated with the traditional female role (group 1).

Traditionally, products have been associated with a gender. As in the early studies of Davis and Rigaux (1974), products still seem to be gender associated in terms of who has influence in decisions about their purchase. Products such as those assigned to group 3 in this study—outdoor maintenance and sporting equipment (e.g., lawnmowers, BBQs, tents, canoes) that were once male dominated, have remained male dominated. However, the findings show there is an increase in the amount of input/participation women have (for modern SROs) in each step of the decision making process for these male dominated products (more joint decision making). Products that were traditionally associated with women (group 1), are still considered women’s domain.

The decision making process of traditional couples is quite simple because the roles of each spouse are clearly defined. Conversely, as couples become more modern, their roles become increasingly flexible and as a result, their decision making processes become more complex (as per Brinberg and Schwenk, 1985). As previous research suggests, as couples become more modern, husbands relative influence decreases, while the relative influence of wives increases (Schaninger, Buss and Grover 1982; Webster 1995). Overall, consumer decision making is still progressing towards an egalitarian decision environment. As couples become more modern, husbands dominate fewer of household decisions, consequently, decisions are increasingly joint in nature.

**Implications**

The research findings from this study support the work reported in the literature; but much of this work is quite dated, and as we approach the millenium, it is important to study any changes that may have occurred since the much earlier studies of Davis (1970) and Schaninger, Buss and Grover (1982) and others. This study shows the continuing movement of the household decision making environment towards an egalitarian situation—however, we are not egalitarian yet when it comes to making consumer decisions in the household. Since this study also strengthens the importance of SRO in the analysis of household decision making, future research would benefit from the development of a standardized, acceptable (many of the scales that have been used in consumer research have a number of items that study respondents find laughable if not insulting) scale to measure sex role orientation that would effectively measure the sex roles in today’s society.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


British Household Panel Study (1994), Taken from questionnaire supplied directly by authors.


SESSION OVERVIEW
The idea that things differ in the degree to which they are alike is not a new one. Quantifying the alikeness of objects, places and people has a considerable history in psychology and consumer research. In his “Dimensions of Similarity”, Tversky (1977) set forth what has become the seminal work on this topic. Since then, research on the impact of various alikeness constructs has blossomed in a wide variety of consumer research domains.

Research on brand extensions, for example, has focused on the role of alikeness (fit) between extant brand and extension on consumer evaluation of the extension (Aaker and Keller, 1993; Broniarczyk and Alba, 1994). Within the context of “composite branding alliances,” Park, Jun and Shocker (1996) have explored the importance of fit between two brands in the alliance on evaluation of the composite brand. In the domain of celebrity endorsers, Kamins and Gupta (1994) have looked at the impact of alikeness (match-up) between endorser and brand on advertising effectiveness.

Currently, several new consumer research domains are exploring the impact of such alikeness constructs. This special session explores three of these new applications of alikeness constructs in the study of consumer behavior. By presenting studies from a wide variety of domains, it is hoped that audience members will be able to think about “alikeness” at a sufficiently abstract level so as to spur conversation about macro-issues during the subsequent discussion.

Each study looks at a different facet of alikeness. The first looks at how alikeness (fit) between an event and a sponsoring brand impacts the inferences people make about the sponsor. The second paper explores how alikeness (similarity) between a leader brand and a “copycat” impacts consumer inferences about the copycat, as well as choice between the leader and the copycat. The third paper explores how alikeness (congruity) between a brand name and it’s home country impacts consumer acceptance of the brand when produced in a different country.

References
main effects in this context, little is known about interaction effects between these two pieces of product information. Understanding the nature of such interactions becomes increasingly important as more and more products are manufactured outside their brand’s home country. A recently-proposed hypothesis regarding brand × COP interactions is that consumers’ product quality judgments are affected less by changes in COP from the brand’s home country to another country when the product carries a strong brand name than when it carries a weak one. However, the empirical evidence regarding this brand-strength hypothesis has been mixed.

The authors propose an alternative explanation of brand × COP interaction effects that is based on the concept of brand-COP congruity. The latter is defined as the equality of a product’s COP and the original home country of the brand. That is, if a product is manufactured in the brand’s home country, it is said to possess brand-COP congruity. By contrast, a product lacks brand-COP congruity if it is manufactured in a country other than the brand’s home country. Based on the theory of cognitive consistency, attitude theory, and recent findings in the area of consumer decision making, the presence of brand-COP congruity is hypothesized to have a positive effect on product quality judgments above and beyond brand and COP main effects. Furthermore, the magnitude of the positive congruity effect is expected to be positively related to the strength with which a brand is associated with its home country, i.e., the degree of brand-COP congruity.

An empirical study was conducted to test the proposed explanation of brand × COP interactions in the context of consumers’ evaluations of alpine skis. A 4 (brand name) × 4 (COP) full-factorial design was used. Data were collected in face-to-face interviews of 284 Austrian skiers, each of which rated the quality of 16 pairs of skis. The results provide strong support for the hypothesized effects of brand-COP congruity. Specifically, they indicate that (1) brand-COP congruity has a strong positive effect on consumers product quality judgments, (2) the magnitude of the congruity effects varies across brands that differ in how strongly they are associated with their home country, (3) the relative sizes of the congruity effects for different brands are accounted for by the degree of brand-COP congruity, and (4) brand-COP congruity actually suffices to account for all brand × COP interaction effects. Due to the design of the study, brand strength can be ruled out as an alternative explanation of brand × COP interaction effects for the current data.

The findings suggest that manufacturing a brand outside its original home country will often have a double negative effect on consumers’ judgments about the brand’s quality. First, since production is typically moved to a lower-cost country with an unfavorable COP image relative to the brand’s home country, a negative COP main effect has to be expected in these cases. Second, the resulting loss of brand-COP congruity must be expected to have a negative effect on consumers’ quality judgments in addition to any negative COP main effect.

The Impact of Congruity Between Brand Name and Country of Production on Consumers’ Product Quality Judgments

Gerald Häubl, University of Alberta, Canada
Terry Elrod, University of Alberta, Canada

Consumers’ product quality judgments are often affected by heuristic cues such as brand name and country of production (COP). While there is strong and consistent support for brand and COP
SESSION OVERVIEW

In this session we explore the influence of schematic expectations. A schema has been identified as a generic knowledge structure, stored in memory, that consists of relevant attributes of some stimulus domain as well as interrelations among those attributes (Crocker, Fiske and Taylor, 1984; Fiske and Linville, 1980; Fiske and Taylor, 1984). One may possess schemas for types of people, including the self, social roles (salesperson, customer), or events. Basically, the schema is an organized pattern of expectations (Bettman, 1979). These expectations are extracted from information obtained through knowledge and experience. In turn, knowledge and experience are filtered through one’s individual identity, subcultural experience and identity, and cultural membership. Our session explores how these individual, subcultural and cultural identities create schematic expectations that influence our information processing and subsequent behavior.

We present three studies, each examining a different relationship between schematic expectations and identity: individual, subcultural or cultural. In the first paper, Block and Kiesler take an individual level perspective. They explore how individuals have varying expectations regarding different types of advertisements. Deviations from individual expectations result in variations in processing and behavior. We then move to a group identity level with the Henderson et al. paper. These authors study how visual expectations are related to subcultural membership. Visual familiarity with members of other subcultures changed expectations and recognition of individuals within the subculture. In the final paper, Williams and Aaker expand our understanding of expectations to a larger cultural level. They examine cultural differences in emotional reactions when confronted with deviations from expectations.

In addition to presenting three levels of social aggregation (individual, subcultural, cultural), this session also offers three unique methods and outcome measures for examining the impact of these expectations on consumers. Block and Kiesler show that individuals’ different expectations of ads result in different processing of the ad content and differential persuasion. This paper takes more of a traditional information processing approach and focuses on traditional measures of advertising persuasion. In contrast, the Henderson et al. paper uses a less conventional retail customer role-playing method. With this method, they show that expectations based on subcultural membership influence the ability to recognize individual consumers within subcultures. In the final paper, Williams and Aaker expand our understanding of expectations to a larger cultural level. They examine differences in emotional reactions and persuasion when confronted with deviations from culturally-derived expectations.

Although the study of schemas and expectations has been researched extensively, the three papers included in this session all present an entirely new way of looking at consumer schemas and expectations. The Block and Kiesler paper demonstrates that categories of ads are stereotyped, and that these stereotypes affect consumer response to the product. Extending the literature to show that categories of ads have stereotypes has numerous implications for advertising theory as well as practical applications for advertising strategy and design. Likewise, Henderson et al. present a truly provocative paper with direct implications for retailers and hiring decisions. In this paper, Henderson and her colleagues demonstrate that the well documented tendency for people to have an easier time recognizing faces of individuals of their own race than those of another race depends not on race, but on experience. They conclude with suggestions for hiring service providers based on experience who might be better able to serve an increasing African-American presence in the marketplace. Finally, Williams and Aaker examine expectations regarding the nature of emotional experience across cultures. In their paper, they find that while members of individualist cultures expect positive and negative emotions will not co-occur, members of interdependent cultures are comfortable with such duality of emotional experience. These culturally-derived differences in expectations lead to differences in emotional responses to advertisements featuring both positive and negative emotions, as well as differences in persuasion.

The three papers in this session cohere nicely as a group. Yet, at the same time, we believe the variety of methods and contexts should generate a rich discussion among conference participants. We expect this session to be of particular interest to anyone studying information processing, advertising theory or cross-cultural research.

Expectations of Stereotypic and Non-stereotypic Advertisements

Lauren Block, New York University, U.S.A.
Tina Kiesler, New York University, U.S.A.

Consumer researchers have long been interested in consumers’ categorization of product categories and brands. Theories of categorization specify that consumers construct organized knowledge structures in memory pertaining to a category. That organized knowledge structure, consisting of attributes and relationships among attributes, is called a schema and serves as a basis for one’s expectations regarding future experience with category members.

These generalized beliefs and expectations about categories of items are often called stereotypes. In a previous study of advertising stereotypes, Goodstein (1993) examined consumers’ motivation to process television advertisements based on whether the ad was typical or atypical of ads in particular product categories (dog food, shampoo, and fast food restaurants). He found that stereotypic ads elicited less extensive processing than nonstereotypic ads.

We extend this literature to examine the depth of the stereotype. We had two goals with this research: 1) to explore whether consumers have stronger versus weaker stereotypes for different categories of ads, and 2) to examine whether depth of stereotype moderates the differential persuasiveness of ads that match or do not match these stereotypes. Using health-related advertisements as our umbrella category, we tested the first goal using two different sub-categories of health-related ads: Public Service Ads (PSA) vs. Direct-to-Consumer (DTC; weak stereotypes). We find that PSA ads have a much stronger stereotype, represented by depth of stereotypic schema, than DTC ads.

Our results indicate that expectations of DTC ads influenced ad processing and persuasion. These stereotypic expectations were
used as a heuristic, and judgments were formed based on these expectations. Specifically, respondents who saw the typical ad claimed greater persuasion, stated greater levels of knowledge about the product (its safety, what it is for, when to use it), and reported they were more convinced by the ad and more influenced to buy the product. How do we know that the respondents’ expectations were driving persuasion and not the ad itself? Despite the reported favorableness of the typical ad, our results show that people spent the same amount of time looking at the typical DTC ad and the atypical DTC ad. However, the two groups of consumers spent that time differently. The respondents viewing the atypical ad spent more time looking at the copy in the ad, and tended to recall more information. The respondents who viewed the typical ad recalled more incorrect irrelevant items. Thus, those who saw the typical ad seemed to be making up information. Finally, although respondents indicated different levels of persuasion, both groups were similar in their ratings of the credibility of the ad they saw, the informativeness of the ad, how interesting they found the ad, and they both reported similar levels of liking their ads.

A second experiment using a category of ads with stronger or more in-depth stereotypical schemas—public service ads (PSA) does not support the theorizing that expectations about an ad category drive message persuasion. Contrary to experiment 1, results demonstrate no significant differences between the stereotypical and the atypical ads in this category on message processing and persuasion. In this case, heuristic processing is used for the entire ad category regardless of deviations from the stereotype. We speculate that a sort of “heuristic-halo-effect” occurs in categories with a strong stereotype that attenuates the effect of expectations on message processing and persuasion. We conclude with suggestions for future research on the moderating effect of depth of stereotypes on advertising persuasion.

Experience Matters: Overcoming the Other-Race Effect in Customer Face Perception and Recognition

Geraldine R. Henderson, Howard University, U.S.A.
Amy L. Ostrom, Arizona State University, U.S.A.
Tiffany D. Barnett, Duke University, U.S.A.
Kimberly D. Dillon, Duke University, U.S.A.
John G. Lynch, Duke University, U.S.A.

Little attention has been given to the effect of race on service provider-customer interactions and customers’ evaluations of services. This research examines the effect of race early in the encounter by studying the other-race effect (ORE). ORE is the tendency for people to have an easier time recognizing faces of individuals of their own race than those of another race. This effect has been well documented in the psychology literature, but poorly understood. Our goal was to consider the implications of such an effect for establishing customer relationships in a retail service context, to replicate ORE, and to gain insight into psychological mechanisms underlying the other race effect.

In this research, we find that experience matters, in that the ability of subjects to recognize black faces improves with experience, regardless of the race of the subject. That is, the more experience that subjects report with Blacks, the better they are in a role-playing exercise at distinguishing between regular customers and new shoppers both of whom happened to be Black. We find no impact of experience on the ability of subjects to differentiate between regular customers and new shoppers who both happen to be White. These findings hold for both black and white respondents in the U.S. and South Africa.

We conclude with speculation based on our findings. As the marketplace becomes more diverse, and as more African-American shoppers increase their presence in the marketplace, service providers may be better able to serve them by hiring front-line personnel who have had more experience with them. In past studies, the race of the respondent has covaried strongly with the degree of interaction that the respondent has with black versus white people in day-to-day life, perhaps making it appear that the race of the respondent was crucial to the “other race effect.” In our studies, (black versus white) race of respondent was only mildly correlated with proportion of life interactions with black (versus white) others. Consequently, we find that race of respondent was not a factor in the ability to recognize black versus white faces. Insofar as ability to recognize good customers is a component of good service, our results imply that retailers with a higher percentage of black customers should recruit employees with more everyday experience with black people, regardless of the race of the prospective employee.

Expectations of Emotional Valence: Culture and the Peaceful Coexistence of Conflicting Emotions

Patti Williams, New York University, U.S.A.
Jennifer Aaker, University of California, Los Angeles, U.S.A.

Significant research in the emotion literature has explored the relationship between positive and negative emotions (e.g., Diener and Emmons 1985). Some say that positive and negative emotions can be felt jointly, while others suggest that one cannot feel differently valenced emotions simultaneously (Bagozzi, Wong and Yi, 1997). The goal of this research is to address this question by determining whether emotions are perceived and processed differently by individuals with distinct self-construals. Specifically, we examine whether individuals with interdependent (versus independent) selves are more likely to feel both positive and negative emotions simultaneously (two dimension emotion model), while individuals with independent (versus interdependent) selves are more likely to feel only one emotion at a time (one dimension emotion model).

With their strong emphasis on self-knowledge and inner-psychological experiences, independent individuals are likely to perceive positive and negative emotions as distinct categories, unlikely to be simultaneously experienced, each arising from particular types of situations and each leading to unique action tendencies (Frijda 1987). In contrast, interdependent individuals tend to have a greater concern for understanding social context than self-knowledge, and are more likely to perceive emotions and events as arising from a combination of contextual factors, representing multiple aspects of a single experience. As a result, they are likely to look for and experience both types of emotions across a wide variety of situations, reflecting an underlying acceptance of the duality of emotional experience. For example, even in the domain feelings of romantic love, members of independent cultures appear to focus on both the positive and negative emotions experienced in a relationship to a greater degree than do members of independent cultures (Rothbaum and Tsang 1988).

In two experiments we manipulate the extent to which conflicting emotions (happy and sad) are portrayed in an advertising appeal, and measure resulting attitudes and emotional reactions across cultures. Initial results indicate that less favorable attitudes exist for independent versus interdependent individuals when exposed to appeals that contain conflicted emotions (relative to control conditions). Further, insight into the process underlying these effects is provided: those with more independent versus interdependent self-construals tend to experience increased feelings of confusion, imbalance and tension when exposed to appeals that simultaneously portray both happy and sad emotions (com-
pared to appeals that feature just a single emotion). Theoretical implications involving the role of culture and self in the perception of emotions are discussed.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACT

This article describes an exploratory investigation of masculinity and consumption. Depth interviews were conducted with 30 French men of varying ages in order to determine the extent to which products, brands, and consumption play a role in the development of self-image and conceptualizations of masculinity. The findings revealed four main issues reflecting denial of brands, products, and consumption as central aspects of the lives of male consumers. The authors consider the role of personal and social fears as underlying these various forms of denial.

Self-image and gender are two personality-related variables that have increasingly captured the attention of consumer researchers as capable of shedding light on consumer decision making, brand selection, and product consumption. Nonetheless, the relationship between self-image and gender, though much discussed in the behavioral and social science literature, has received relatively scant research attention from the perspective of consumer behavior. In no place is this lack of research more obvious than in the realm of masculinity and consumption. Within the social and behavioral sciences, the focus on men has occurred largely within the context of a long tradition of examining how they differ from women in attitudes, experiences, relationship behaviors, and the like. This work has relied on such concepts as sex role identity, gender role orientation, and attitudes about gender roles in order to explore individual differences among males and females (Winstead & Derlega, 1993). While the subject of gender also has been widely treated in the consumer behavior literature, it is mainly feminine roles (Joy & Venkatesh, 1994; Thompson, 1996), differences between men and women (Meyers-Levy & Maheswaran, 1991), gender biases (Bristor & Fisher, 1993), or sex role differences (Meyers-Levy, 1988) that have been emphasized.

In recent years, researchers have begun to focus their attention on the role of gender in helping to explain the link between consumers’ self-image and consumption. As a fundamental aspect of one’s self-concept, sexual identity not only influences product and brand choices but is in turn shaped by them. In the same way that male and female consumers can be characterized as having masculine and feminine attributes, many products also may be seen as sex-typed, possessing masculine and feminine attributes. As such, consumers often opt for products and brands that provide a congruence with their self-image or enable them to achieve a more desired self-image. However, given the paucity of research on masculinity and its relationship to consumption, little is known about men’s relationship to products, both sex-typed and non-sex-typed, and the ways in which products and brands serve as vehicles by which men can achieve a desired level of masculinity. In this paper, following a review of the concepts of self-image, gender, and masculinity, we present the findings of an exploratory investigation of masculinity and consumption.

SELF-CONCEPT AND CONSUMPTION

From a social cognition perspective, self-image is considered as a cognitive structure or schema that is used to interpret one’s experience (Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984). As a cognitive generalization about the self, the self-schema serves to process and organize information derived from an individual’s social experiences (Markus, 1977). Because such schemas are derived from experience, their contents vary from person to person and differentially affect how people process information.

It is generally maintained that the self is a multi-dimensional construct and that various kinds of self-concepts can be distinguished. For example, the “actual self-concept” describes how people realistically perceive themselves, the “ideal self-concept” reflects how they would like to be perceived by themselves and others, and the “social self” refers to how people think they are perceived by others. These distinctions are both influenced and shaped by the individual’s consumption environment. Thus, a product or brand may be selected because it is believed to be consistent with one’s current self-image or instrumental in helping the consumer attain a more desired ideal-self. The link between self-concept and consumption is perhaps most evident in the development of the “extended self,” which is the self as extended by one’s personal possessions (Belk, 1988). That is, for many consumers, a self-identity is in part formulated and reflected by the products and objects that they use and surround themselves with (Csikszentmihalyi & Halton, 1981). Individual differences in materialism have been noted among consumers who vary according to the extent to which they view worldly possessions as central to their lives and gauge the worth of themselves and others in terms of the products they own (Richins & Dawson, 1992).

The actual component of the self that most strongly influences the selection of products and brands is no doubt tied to the consumption context. Thus, in order to fully understand the functioning of the self-concept in consumption situations, it is relevant to add a contextual dimension to the analysis. One can speak of the actual self in a private context (“how I see myself now”), the actual self in a public/social context (“how I think others see me”), the ideal self in a private context (“how I would like to see myself”), and the ideal self in a public/social context (“how I would like others to see me”). Recent research on self concept/product image congruity revealed that such situational variables as the size of the social group, the formality of the occasion, and the physical characteristics of the public situation, are important for understanding the public or private context in which particular products and brands are selected (Hogg & Savolainen, 1998).

Consistent with these ideas, it has long been maintained that the self identity of consumers can be defined in part by the products they acquire or use, the meanings products have for them, and the attitudes they hold towards products. For example, self-image congruence models posit that products are selected to the extent that they correspond to some aspect of the consumer’s self (Sirgy, 1980). According to Sirgy (1980), the image induced by product attributes activates a self-schema that induces the same images, resulting in the emergence of either congruent or incongruent states. In this view, the greater the congruence between product (or brand) image and self-image, the more a product (or brand) will be preferred. Congruity has been found between consumers’ self-images and a variety of consumption choices, including cars, beer, soap, toothpaste, cigarettes, and shops (e.g., Dolich, 1969; Bellinger, Steinberg, & Stanton, 1976). However, as Solomon (1999) has pointed out, in many cases it is unclear whether people buy products because the products appear to be similar to their self-image or because they assume that the products coincide with their self-image because they bought them.
GENDER, SEX ROLES AND CONSUMPTION

An additional consideration in the self-concept and product selection process is seen in the impact of gender and sex roles on purchasing behavior. Since the early 1960s, researchers have considered the impact of changing roles on marketing strategies and consumer decision making (Aiiken, 1963; Dickens & Chapell, 1977; Hawkins & Conley, 1976; Stuteville, 1971; Tucker, 1976). As societal expectations determine the norms that define acceptable and unacceptable behaviors for men and women, the resulting differences in sex roles invariably have implications for consumption decisions.

The study of sex roles and consumption is often complicated by the fact that there is considerable overlap and confusion about the labeling and meaning of concepts used in gender research (Winstead & Derlega, 1993). As a result, terms such as sex, gender, sex roles, and gender identity are sometimes used interchangeably. In an attempt to clarify the differences, gender researchers typically make two distinctions in their analyses: a biological distinction between male and female and a social distinction between masculine and feminine. The former distinguishes differences between men and women in terms of physical characteristics (or sex), whereas the latter bases differences in sociocultural influences (or gender). Thus, “sex” refers to biological phenomena associated with being male or female, whereas “gender” pertains to “the meanings that societies and individuals ascribe to male and female categories” (Eagly, 1995, p. 145). Gender identity generally is regarded as a psychological phenomenon in which individuals label themselves as male or female; gender role identity (or gender role orientation) refers to the individual’s endorsement of personal characteristics considered appropriate for women and men. Masculinity and femininity are thus relative, given that a male can act in a feminine way and a female in a masculine way, and different traits can be considered as appropriate for either gender. Given these distinctions, it is clear that gender is more than a personality variable; rather, it can be seen as “a pervasive filter through which individuals experience their social world” (Brisfor & Fischer, 1993).

Beyond the influence of sex (a biologically linked characteristic) and gender role orientation (a personality linked characteristic), male and female behavior is also determined by the ways that individuals have internalized their culture’s attitudes about gender roles. The sex role (or gender ideology) approach to understanding gender differences focuses on society’s assumptions about the proper roles of men and women and the ideal behaviors that are emphasized for each sex (Pleck, Sonenstein, & Ku, 1993). Gender role attitudes might include beliefs that men should give priority to their careers, that women should work outside the home, that men and women should share in the housework, shopping, or childrearing, and so on. In one early perspective, Parsons and Bales (1956) argued for a separation of sex roles that stresses an instrumental role for men and an expressive role for women. By contrast, Blood and Wolf (1960) suggested that the assignment of role depends on systems of regulation adopted by spouses according to the capital they possess in order to optimize their respective roles. Recently, Kaufmann (1995) has suggested that the relationship between men and women can only legitimately be considered by taking into account the distinction between public and private settings. In his view, the male role has changed very little in the private realm, but in the public realm it has undergone some clear changes, where women have made increasingly significant advances.

Traditionally, it has been assumed that people generally acquire either a masculine or feminine gender role. Accordingly, it is presumed that the self-concept of the individual who has acquired a masculine role would include such traits as dominance, independence, self-confidence, assertiveness, strength, and ambition. By contrast, an individual who has acquired a feminine role would have an emotional, affectionate, yielding, submissive, gentle, dependent, and gullible self-concept. Based on this distinction, it was concluded that femininity and masculinity were merely end points on a single continuum of gender or sex roles, and that people could be characterized as falling somewhere on a range from feminine to masculine. Consistent with cultural expectations that accord the masculine role to men and the feminine role to women, these traditional role assumptions tend to be firmly ingrained in many marketing communications (Artz & Venkatesh, 1991; Bellizzi & Milner, 1991).

During the 1970’s, researchers began to question the assumption that masculinity and femininity exist as opposites on a single dimension (Bem, 1974; Spence & Helmreich, 1978). For example, social psychologist Sandra Bem (1974) argued that masculinity and femininity are separate dimensions, such that individuals can be described as varying in the degrees to which they exhibit masculine and feminine characteristics. Bem also argued that the two dimensions are not strictly dependent on biological differences, suggesting that men and women do not necessarily possess sex-typed masculine and feminine traits. Thus, individuals can incorporate various degrees of masculinity and femininity in their self-concept, regardless of their biological category. Moreover, some individuals may be described as both masculine and feminine (“androgynous”), while others may not include either dimension in their self-concept (“undifferentiated”).

In order to better understand and measure the influence of sex roles on consumption, some researchers have focused on the links between the sexual images of consumers and products. In one early study, Vitz and Johnston (1965) obtained an association between the masculine image of a product and the masculine image of a person. Elsewhere, Fry (1971) found that feminine men were more likely than masculine men to smoke less masculine cigarettes. More recently, data from the 1988 National Survey of Adolescent Males revealed that American males who held traditional attitudes toward masculinity were less likely to use condoms than males lower in masculine ideology (Pleck, Sonenstein, & Ku, 1993).

The influence of gender on consumption has also been observed in terms of sex differences and shopping behavior and buying goals. For example, a survey investigation of Christmas gift shopping patterns revealed that while women report being more involved than men in the activity, men tend to be more involved if they hold egalitarian gender-role attitudes (Fisher & Arnold, 1990). Dittmar, Beattie, and Friese (1995) found that men tend to impulsively buy instrumental and leisure goods projecting independence and activity, whereas women are more likely to purchase symbolic and self-expressive goods that are linked to appearance and emotional aspects of the self. This sex difference is apparent in the purchase of clothing, with men stressing the functional (self-oriented) benefits of clothing and women emphasizing benefits more associated with social (other-oriented) concerns.

THE NATURE OF MASCULINITY

The denotative meanings typically offered to define the term “masculinity” emphasize qualities or conditions of being masculine; that is, attributes traditionally considered to be characteristic of a male. Masculinity is not a biological characteristic; rather, it is culturally defined and varies according to societal and temporal contexts.

Over the course of the twentieth century, a variety of approaches to the study of masculinity can be discerned (cf. Connell,
The psychoanalytical approach stems from the work of Freud, Jung, Adler, and other psychoanalysts and clinical psychologists who linked masculinity to developmental conflicts in the child and various unconscious processes. Despite a strong strand of masculine superiority in their writings (cf. Samuels, 1995; Seidler, 1997), a primary focus of the psychoanalysts was on femininity, and this emphasis is apparent in their conceptualizations of masculinity. For example, Jung theorized that the feminine interior of masculine men was shaped by unconscious “archetypal” images.

A second perspective on masculinity has evolved from thinking in the disciplines of history, sociology, and anthropology, and has been labeled the “New Social Science” approach by Connell (1996). Consistent with this approach, some historians have argued that masculinity is deeply enmeshed in the history of institutions and economic structures and further shaped by social interactions. According to the social science perspective, masculinity is perpetually challenged by new societal practices and conventions and thus is not a stable object of knowledge. Recently, Seidler (1997) has suggested that the mass-mediated conceptualization of the “new man” who desires a stronger role in child rearing and a more egalitarian relationship with his partner, was quickly denigrated as effeminate in the 1990s. As another example, Seidler points out how the context of an economic crisis, such as that experienced in the West during the 1980s, can lead to a reestablishment of masculine ideals, as reflected in an intensification of work among both men and women. A recent analysis of the biographical narratives of a group of young male offenders in Great Britain revealed that drug use, drug dealing, and other crimes serve as important cultural and emotive resources for scripting a particular, powerful masculine identity on the street (Collison, 1996). Such findings are consistent with the attempts of contemporary social scientists to recast their ideas about masculinity in terms of social theory and cultural studies. It should be noted, however, that these conceptualizations of masculine identity are place (as well as time) specific and predominantly reflect “Western” notions.

Another perspective on masculinity, briefly described above, is represented by the sex-role approach, which has predominated in the behavioral science literature during recent decades. The role approach to masculinity originated in comparisons of men and women in attempts to explain their respective places in society (Connell, 1996). As applied to gender, roles are seen as specific to definite situations or societal expectations. From this social-psychological perspective, two broad theoretical approaches have been adopted in attempts to provide greater insight into the nature of the male gender role. Trait perspectives emphasize the sources and consequences of the extent to which men actually possess characteristics that are culturally defined as masculine, such as independence, self-sufficiency, and virility. By contrast, normative perspectives, derived from the social constructivist view of gender roles, focus on the nature and consequences of the standards used to define masculinity within a culture.

Pleck, Sonenstein, and Ku (1993) have explained the difference between these two sex-role approaches by suggesting that one can define a “traditional” male in terms of gender-related personality traits, as a male who actually possesses culturally defined masculine characteristics, or in terms of a normative conception, as one who believes that men should have these characteristics. These two interpretations of masculinity imply different approaches to assessment at the individual level, with an emphasis on trait measures or attitudinal measures, respectively. A related concept within the normative perspective is “masculinity ideology,” a subset of sex-role attitudes that “refers to beliefs about the importance of men adhering to culturally defined standards for male behavior” (Pleck et al., 1993, p. 12).

### Masculinity and Consumption

The concept of masculinity has been the focus of renewed interest in recent years in large part because the place of man in society and the image of man have continued to undergo changes. Some attributes and objects traditionally associated with masculinity have been overtaken by women, including knowledge, work, money, vote, the control of procreation and birth control (Sullerot, 1992). Other traditional attributes have lost their importance or utility for society, such as physical strength. Technical developments have decreased the difficulty of numerous tasks; for example, the truck driver has power steering, the farmer a tractor, and so on, and these changes have opened up such traditionally masculine jobs to women. Moreover, the evolution of economy from industry to services favored the rise of women in professional milieus.

These changes have led to corresponding modifications in sex roles, particularly in everyday life and in consumption (Costa, 1994; Fausto-Sterling, 1992; Fischer & Arnold, 1990; Menasco & Curry, 1989; Schmitt, Leclerc, & Dubé-Rioux, 1988). Women now play a greater role in purchase decisions once regarded as falling within the traditional responsibility of males and are progressively considered as serious buyers of traditionally male products. For example, more than 60% of American new car buyers under the age of 50 are women (Candler, 1991) and approximately half of all condoms sold are now bought by women (Cutler, 1989). Other changes in sex roles are evident in the depiction of men and women in advertising, where reversals in the traditional portrayals of the central characters are becoming more common. For example, the recent American positioning of cigars as a symbol of rebellion for successful, trendy consumers includes images of female cigar smokers in marketing communications. Although women continue to be depicted in traditionally stereotypic roles in a majority of advertising messages, men are progressively presented as sex objects, helpless, or incompetent vis-à-vis competent or powerful women. This is seen in a recent campaign by Kookaï, a women’s clothing firm, which has run attention-getting mass media and outdoor advertisements in France depicting miniaturized men at the mercy of dominant women. In short, traditionally masculine values have come to be increasingly disparaged as feminine values have taken on progressively greater importance. The man is no longer the absolute reference, the one with the absolute power.

As threats to the universal dominance of man continue to become manifest in contemporary society, changes in consumption behavior can be anticipated and represent an area of growing research interest. For example, within competitive, consumerist cultures, men constantly compare themselves with others; products and brands become an obvious overt sign of one’s standing relative to the competition. Thus, the power to purchase new commodities is not only linked to the expectation that personal satisfaction will follow, but also becomes the way in which men may assert themselves in relation to other men (Seidler, 1997). In this way, owning a fast car provides a boost to one’s self-image because it is an indication of success; owning a faster car than others strengthens one’s masculine image because it conveys the idea that one is doing better than others. In this way, consumption objects represent a focal point for protecting the male ego and helping to shape the masculine self-concept.

Just as female role expectations and conceptions of beauty change with the times, the nature of masculinity has varied across the ages, and the evolution of the male sex role is typically accompanied by corresponding changes in the marketplace. According to Badinter (1992), during the 17th century, “les Précieux” appeared, a new kind of man who adopted some attributes of femininity and moved closer to women in both clothing and
manner. A similar sort of male ideal seems to have reappeared in recent years. Although many products have a sexual dimension, such as cars, cosmetics, beer, and the like, products related to the body have emerged as increasingly relevant to the masculine self-concept. A growing number of marketers seem to have recognized that the way a man cares for his body is demonstrative of the way he desires to be perceived as a man. Thus, formerly “feminine products” like fragrances, hair dyes, jewelry, and personal care products have begun to be marketed to male consumers, but not with complete success in some countries. These products are often positioned as appealing to men who do not conform entirely to the masculine stereotype, but who embrace an ideal personality that includes such traits as romantic, tender, and playful, albeit accompanied by confidence and independence (Solomon, 1999).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW

The present investigation was intended as a starting point toward developing a more complete understanding of masculinity and consumption, particularly in terms of how the symbolic nature of products and brands serves as a vehicle by which men can achieve a desired level of masculinity. Using an exploratory, depth interview approach, we attempted to shed light on contemporary masculine self-images, product and brand symbolism, and the product usage and brand selection of male consumers. A primary interest in this research was to identify the various representations of men and masculinity as revealed by male consumers, and to suggest implications for marketing strategy. This interest stems from the expectation that the traditional image of masculinity has changed—not by moving closer to the traditional image of femininity, but through a representation that differentiates masculinity from femininity in a new and different way.

Consistent with these goals, our investigation centered on two guiding questions:

- How do men define themselves, and in what ways does product consumption help assist them in their self-definition?
- How do product purchases help male consumers project their masculinity or play out their male roles?

In order to narrow the scope of this preliminary study, we focused the depth interviews on products related to the body—specifically, fragrance and personal care products. In recent years, researchers have begun to focus their attention on the “sociology of the body”, in attempts to discern how consumers naturally draw distinctions between self and body (Synnott, 1993; Thompson & Hirschman, 1995), and the implications of body image on consumer rituals of self-care (Rook, 1985) and the pursuit of beauty ideals (Bloch & Richins, 1992). Body-related products have grabbed the attention of marketers in recent years and there is growing evidence that the way a man cares for his body is indicative of the self-image he wishes to convey.

We chose to utilize the comprehensive interview approach in order to better understand the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it—in this case, male consumers of various ages and backgrounds. This approach was successfully utilized by Kaufmann (1995) in a related subject: the presentation of women’s bodies on beaches. Because of the interpretative nature of the qualitative interview approach, the methodology also enabled us to benefit from the dual culture (American and French)/dual gender (male and female) makeup of the authors of the present article who served as interpreters of the interview texts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Although the interviews touched on a number of marketing-related themes, four main issues appeared to stand out as most relevant to the research questions that served as the focus of the present investigation: (1) the denial of differentiation; (2) the denial of consumption; (3) the denial of the seductive nature of the male body; and (4) the image of man in daily life and advertising. Each of these areas is considered below, with representative interview excerpts.

I. The denial of differentiation.

Several comments from our respondents reflected the belief that in contemporary society, the differentiation between men and women in terms of sex roles and sex-typed behaviors is no longer evident, or at least is less apparent than in the past. For example, one respondent commented that “there is no longer any difference between a man and a woman ... today in behavior; it is no longer really the man who leads the couple.” Another stated that “products are for everybody; only advertising tells you it is for men or women or the presentation, the packaging, but the products are the same.” This egalitarian view is exemplified by magazines, which, according to one respondent, “Are for everybody, not only for men; even magazines for men can interest women and vice versa.” Relative to magazine consumption, one respondent pointed out that

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1Six out of 30 interviews were conducted by the second author.
Perhaps the only gender-specific exception is for sex magazines (and videos), which is viewed as a more hidden or private example of consumer behavior. Such perceptions of egalitarianism in products and product usage extends also within the realm of sports and other recreational activities: one respondent pointed out that bicycle riding "can be shared with men or women." A denial of differentiation was also seen in our respondents’ reactions when asked to identify specific products as masculine or feminine. A large proportion of responses revealed a difficulty in linking traditionally sex-typed products such as umbrellas, bags, scarves, skin cream, tight t-shirts, hair coloring, and fragrances with either male or female usage.

<table>
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<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Residence</th>
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Several interviewees were rather adamant in their denial of sex-typed categories for people and things. According to one respondent, “I refuse categories, so except for the differences of nature, nothing is specific.” When our respondents identified gender differences, they focused on the obvious, biological/physiological ones, such as hormonal or physical capabilities linked to strength: “The biological man can be found at work, with his aggressive instinct... the definition of territories... there are the dominant ones and the dominated.” It is only for biological differences that distinctions in product usage were mentioned; that is, in terms of the difficulty for men to use body products for women.

Various interpretations of the apparent egalitarianism on the part of our interviewees are possible. Particularly when interviewed by a female, our male respondents may have been reluctant to point out differences among men and women and consumption objects because of a fear of appearing sexist in front of a woman. The denial of differentiation may also be attributed to the changing marketplace, where unisex products (e.g., CK1 fragrance) and advertising have become more commonplace. In such a context, admitting differences could also be seen as admitting a traditional or conservative point of view, out of touch with current trends, which might be disparaged in interview and non-interview contexts. In this regard, one respondent referred to the “bad image of men before,” which included such traits as macho, aggressive, and rude. The refusal of differentiation was consistent with an apparent view on the part of the interviewees that it is impossible for men to have their own products and still maintain a desire for equality. Further, to deny equality would pose the risk that men could become a minority, further threatened by the growing social and economic gains won by women. These ideas are consistent with the work of Kaufmann (1992), whose long-term research with couples has revealed equality as a personal and social (as well as political) imperative within a democratic system.

2. The denial of consumption.

In a number of regards, our interviewees appeared reluctant or unable to acknowledge that consumption plays a major role in their lives. Generally speaking, consumption was perceived as more of a feminine concern, associated with the household and tasks typically performed by the woman. According to our respondents, men are more oriented toward the domain of work, which is outside the home, with the exception of household tasks for which they are more apt to take responsibility, such as electrical or other manual repairs.

More specifically, the denial of consumption was reflected in our respondents’ comments regarding personal objects, which are not seen as a fundamental male preoccupation. For example, one interviewee commented that “a man doesn’t need a bag because he doesn’t need products to take care of him, like beauty products... a man only needs his keys and (identity) papers.” When asked to freely recall brand names associated with male products, the majority of our interviewees were unable to list more than three or four. The brands Gillette, Mennen, and Brut were commonly cited, which corresponds to the respondents’ tendency to identify shaving as the only truly masculine consumption area.

Another common tendency among our respondents was their assertion that products for men are much less numerous than those available for women. According to one respondent, “for clothes, it is much more limited than for women; for body care products, all that is not soap or shampoo is less for men. Very few men use face cream; when they use it it is because they have skin problems.” One point that was emphasized has to do with the labels used to name products; that is, when men use certain products typically associated with female consumption, the products are often called something else: hair spray for women vs. hair gel for men; a bag for a woman vs. a wallet, saddlebag, or backpack for a man. Other examples that were cited are reflected in different French words for the same product, depending on whether the product is for a man or for a woman: a woman’s scarf (“foulard”) vs. a man’s scarf (“écharpe”); a woman’s suit (“un tailleur”) vs. a man’s suit (“un costume”); a ring for a woman (“une bague”) vs. a wedding ring (“une alliance”) or signet ring (“une chevalière”) for a man.

In the view of our respondents, products, tasks, and activities considered as masculine are generally exhibited outside the home and are traditionally associated with men. Three categories of products and activities were apparent: (a) economic products linked to the traditional role of the man to earn money and to take part in urban life (e.g., business magazines, politics, “a suit and a tie”); (b) products or leisure activities requiring strength or violence (e.g., judo, karate, boxing, football, weapons, taking out the garbage can, closing the windows and shutters, cleaning large windows, alcohol consumption) or linked with nature (e.g., fishing and hunting) or sex (e.g., erotic magazines, pornography); and (c) technical products or leisure activities (e.g., cars, computers, remote control). Some products were discussed by combining the technological and aggressive elements; for example, the masculine car is perceived differently from the feminine car in terms of power, size, and aggressiveness.

Other products or tasks were discussed by our respondents in the context of the egalitarian discourse described above. That is, certain household tasks, such as cleaning the table or washing dishes are performed not so much because they represent masculine activities, but because they enable the man to obtain equity relative to the work done by the woman in the relationship. As one respondent described it, it is the man’s responsibility “to wash up when the woman has prepared a good meal.”

While few of our respondents were willing or able to identify products that they perceived to be masculine in nature, they were more apt to discuss products as linked with man’s identity, as defined by their jobs and the work they perform (outside of a consuming world). For them, the identity of men is not in the area of consumption or shopping because these are viewed as aspects of the feminine world. Indeed, shopping has long been stereotyped as a woman’s pastime and our respondents appeared to maintain this feminine connotation (cf. Firat, 1991). Masculine products were not associated with the body, appearance, or fashion, with the exception of shaving. Shaving is also the masculine activity for which our interviewees were most able to offer masculine brand names; they also exhibited familiarity with technical brands. Among the masculine brands identified were Nike, Adidas, Rolex, BMW, Lacoste, Bic, Celio, Levi’s, Philips, Armani, Microsoft, and Apple. Some of the younger interviewees appeared more able to name brands than older respondents, especially for fragrance brands.

Overall, the interviews portrayed the world of consumption as a foreign one for French men. Our respondents had difficulty naming and speaking about brands, and their comments tended to reveal that consumption is not a domain that is central to their lives. Familiar brands were largely limited to sports (e.g., Adidas, Reebok), fashion (e.g., Levi’s, Celio), and shaving (e.g., Gillette, Mennen, Bic).

3. The denial of the seductive nature of the body.

Consistent with the overall tendency among French consumers towards discretion and the avoidance of ostentation (Mermet, 1996), our respondents revealed an aversion to showing or displaying their bodies in public settings. In their view, to show one’s body is to reveal an overt attempt to attract or to seduce. This denial of the body is apparent in one respondent’s belief that “men can’t use...
overly exuberant products, not too showy products, because it is more typically women who show themselves.” Although it was the younger interviewees who gave more importance to appearance, rarely were products spontaneously offered as relating to the body or to seduction, with the exception of fragrances and shaving products. The product most frequently mentioned as inappropriate for the man is nail polish, which combines seduction and artificiality. The interviewees indicated that they do buy soap or shampoos, but primarily in order to clean themselves rather than to be handsome or seductive. According to one interviewee, “a man cannot be too interested by body products.”

Our respondents also revealed that they find it difficult to buy products specifically for women, such as hygiene products or women’s underwear, and rarely purchase such items for women; however, there were indications that while it might be possible for them to buy such products, it is the use of such products that is seen as more forbidden. This contrasts with the tendency for many women to make purchases for men of such items as underwear, shaving products, and the like. The denial of the body evidenced by our respondents carried over to their aversion to advertisements that presented men in an unnatural way, as too affected or mannered.

4. The image of man.

A number of comments from our interviewees reflect a belief that the image of man has undergone a variety of changes in recent years, to the extent that it is quite different to be a man today than during previous generations. According to one respondent, to be a man today “is to have a good job, this hasn’t changed, but what has changed is in what the family means; a man is not admired because of the cohesion of his family, but more because of his job.” The importance of work was emphasized by several interviewees, including one who maintained that “men get from their work a position a social position, so for them it is very important; it is through their work that they represent something.” Today’s man is also viewed very traditionally as “courageous, strong with muscles, all that looks natural.” While there is perhaps nothing new about these portraits, unlike their fathers’ generation, men today “now have to share,” in the sense that the concept of head of the family no longer exists and there are now shared responsibilities for educating the child.

In general, our respondents were critical of the depiction of men in advertising. A typical view from one respondent claimed that male characters are portrayed as “too feminine, too sophisticated, artificial, precious, and over-refined; men and women in advertising look similar, with a lot of muscles and a baby!” Another respondent suggested that the man in advertising “is diminished to some extent, like before they were relentless, tough towards women, now they victimize the men.”

Our respondents revealed varying conceptions of masculinity: for one, masculinity represents vanity, a word for women to qualify men; for another, it means “bestiality; masculinity is to be a male, and to be a male is to be an animal.” Another respondent characterized masculinity as “strength, not physical strength, but interior strength.” Also evident in their remarks was a fear to be revealed as a minority, in the sense of being in a weaker position relative to women. Thus, one respondent commented that “some men don’t like to go into clothes shops or underwear shops with their women because here, for the first time they feel discomfort, they are in the minority.” Other indications of this fear were apparent in their suggestions that men feel guilty with respect to not taking care of their family or in their refusal to receive orders from a woman. According to one respondent, “to assume the difference from the other gender, without trying to be too close with the other gender, is to be normal, to be considered as somebody, to ‘feel well in one’s skin’.”

Our younger respondents, who perhaps have more to prove, were more likely to focus on the social side of masculinity than were the older respondents. One spoke of masculinity as being “handsome, big, with muscles and [body] hair,” and another spoke of “a big guy full of muscles with hair everywhere.”

What emerges from these varying portrayals of the male image and masculinity is a set of characteristics or aspects that differentiates men and women. A man can be defined strictly in relation to a woman, in terms of physiology, musculature, and a predilection to face events as well as possible by taking an active attitude in attempts to control the environment. For older men, masculinity is to be responsible—to face responsibilities and to keep one’s word.

Our respondents also revealed how a fear of homosexuality makes it difficult for men to accept equality with women: equality implies that one recognizes the feminine side of man and the possibility of homosexuality. One respondent admitted that “it is difficult for me to imagine buying products which would give a feminine connotation to the use of these products, for instance, toiletry products that would give a too feminine side, clothes which would give the illusion of homosexuality, or something like that.” Consistent with this view, another respondent suggested that some products that have a feminine association are linked to “the dark side of men, sometimes homosexuality, sometimes marginality, violence. Earrings on men are associated with hooligans, bad boys, evil company.”

CONCLUSION

Do men define themselves and their masculinity in terms of the products and brands they use? Our interviews with male consumers suggest that the answer to this question is not an obvious one. Respondents exhibited a degree of difficulty in discussing products and brands in general, as well as in terms of gender associations, and their comments reflected an unwillingness to admit that products and consumption represent central aspects of their lives. Nonetheless, there were indications that these tendencies may be based in part on fear: fear of conditioning traditional attitudes about male and female roles; fear of becoming a minority relative to the position of women in society; fear of admitting a feminine side to their self-image (and the corresponding fear of homosexuality); and fear of admitting that products and brands represent important aspects of their public and private self-images.

We expected that the symbolic nature of consumption objects would serve as a vehicle by which men develop their sense of self and their masculinity. To whatever extent this is true, men tend not to be willing to admit it. However, care should be taken when considering the generality of our findings in light of some methodological limitations of the study. As an exploratory, qualitative investigation, our goal was to obtain preliminary insight into the link between self-image, masculinity, and consumption. Given that our sample was limited to males residing in the Paris region of France, it is unclear whether similar findings would be obtained from other samples. Additionally, the fact that the interviews were conducted by women may have inhibited the responses of male interviewees, particularly when discussing issues related to self-image and sexuality.

Further research on male consumers is necessary in order to clarify the marketing implications of our results. Some of the issues worthy of future consideration include the apparent difficulty in targeting men when marketing products with gender-specific symbolic associations; the importance for advertisers to project an image of man that is more consistent with the way their targets perceive themselves and their place in society; the implications for retailers of the reluctance of men to enter women’s shops; and the importance of labeling similar products differentially for men and
women. A logical next step in the research process is to pursue the notion of consumption denial in a quantitative assessment of the role of products and brands in the definition and construction of the masculine self-image.

The use of culturally diverse samples and a focus on age and materialism as moderating variables in future studies of masculinity and consumption is also recommended. Future research on masculinity also might benefit from a focus on women, in terms of their conceptions of masculinity and the consumption circumstances that stimulate the masculine side of their personalities.

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Toward an Integrated Model of Self-Congruity and Functional Congruity

M. Joseph Sirgy, Virginia Tech, U.S.A.
J. S. Johar, California State University, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT

Self-congruity is defined as the match between the brand image and the consumer’s self-concept, while functional congruity refers to the match between the perceived functional or performance characteristics and the consumer’s desired or important functional characteristics. It was hypothesized that the attitude predictiveness of self-congruity and functional congruity is moderated by brand conspicuousness, uniqueness, differentiation, and involvement. A study was conducted involving eight different product categories and 429 subjects. The overall pattern of results provided some support for the moderating effects of conspicuousness, uniqueness, involvement, and differentiation on attitude predictiveness of self-congruity and functional congruity.

FUNCTIONAL CONGRUITY

On the other hand, functional congruity, on the other hand, is defined as the match between the consumer’s beliefs about brand utilitarian attributes (performance) and the consumer’s referent attributes. The referent (e.g., ideal) attributes are the criteria used to evaluate the actual performance characteristics of the brand. For example, a specific brand of toothpaste may be evaluated along a set of utilitarian attributes such as preventing cavities, freshening breath, whitening teeth, and tasting good. The consumer may have referent points or standards (e.g., an ideal) used to judge the relative goodness of the perceived attributes. The greater the congruence between the consumer’s utilitarian beliefs about the actual brand and the more positive the attitude (Sirgy, Johar, Samli, and Claiborne 1991). Expectancy-value researchers explain that a positive attitude is likely if the object of evaluation is perceived to have characteristics that are positively valued.

The relationship between self-congruity and functional congruity has been addressed by several studies (Samli and Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy and Samli, 1985; Sirgy et al. 1991). Samli and Sirgy (1981) conducted a study to test the differential impact of self-congruity and functional congruity on store loyalty. Specifically, store loyalty was regressed on self-congruity (social and ideal social congruities) and functional congruity (functional evaluation of store-image) in addition to socioeconomic status, area loyalty, and shopping-complex loyalty. The results indicated that although self-congruity failed to significantly predict store loyalty, the self-congruity variables (social congruity and ideal social congruity) were significantly correlated with functional congruity (functional store-image evaluation or multiattribute attitude). In a follow-up study, Sirgy and Samli (1985) demonstrated through causal path analysis that store loyalty may be primarily influenced by functional congruity (functional store-image evaluation), and that functional congruity is influenced by self-congruity (social and ideal social congruity). That is, the study demonstrated a “biasing effect” of self-congruity on functional congruity. This effect suggests that, although functional congruity is more closely related to consumer behavior than self-congruity, functional congruity is significantly influenced by self-congruity.

Sirgy et al. (1991) addressed these issues in more detail. Four studies were conducted to test the hypotheses that (1) consumer behavior is more strongly predicted by functional congruity than by self-congruity, and (2) functional congruity is influenced by self-congruity. The model posits that the consumer experiences a match or congruity between a particular product/store’s symbolic image and his/her self-image resulting in self-congruity. Such congruity will bias the consumer’s perception and evaluation of the product/store’s functional image (functional congruity). In contrast, a consumer who experiences self-incongruity is likely to form an initial unfavorable attitude, which in turn biases her evaluation of the store’s functional characteristics in a negative way. Perception and evaluation of functional attributes operate at a more-conscious level to influence consumer behavior. In contrast, self-congruity is argued to operate at a less-conscious level to influence the consumer’s perception and evaluation of the product/store’s functional attributes. Also, self-congruity was hypothesized to influence consumer behavior directly but less strongly than functional congruity. That is, the motivational tendency generated as a result of self-
congruity not only biases functional congruity, but also impacts consumer behavior directly.

Johar and Sirgy (1991) developed a conceptual model addressing the psychological dynamics involved in value-expressive and utilitarian appeals. The model helped clarify the distinctions between these two types of advertising appeals. The model showed how value-expressive appeals involve a psychological process in which the brand user image is compared with the audience self-image (i.e., self-congruity), while utilitarian appeals involve a psychological process in which the brand performance, concrete, or functional features are compared with the features of a referent (i.e., functional congruity). The model further articulated a set of hypotheses concerning moderator effects, such as the conditions which would enhance the effectiveness of value-expressive appeals, and similarly the conditions which moderate the effectiveness of utilitarian appeals. It was hypothesized that a value-expressive advertising appeal may be effective when the product (brand) is uncommonly used (or unique), and when the product (brand) is conspicuously consumed. Conversely, utilitarian advertising appeal may be effective when the product (brand) is highly differentiated from its competition, and when the consumer is highly involved with the product (brand).

The Self-Congruity Effect

Self-congruity models are based on the cognitive matching between value-expressive attributes of a given brand and consumer self-concept. The models are designed to predict consumer behavior variables, such as product (brand or store) attitude, intention, behavior, and loyalty (see Sirgy 1982, 1985a, 1985b, 1986, Sirgy et al. 1991; and Claiborne and Sirgy 1990; Johar and Sirgy 1991, for comprehensive reviews of the consumer research literature in self-concept). Among the commonly used self-congruity models are the actual self-congruity model, the ideal self-congruity model, the social self-congruity model, the ideal social self-congruity model, and the affective self-(social) congruity models.

If consumers experience actual self-congruity (ideal self-congruity, social self-congruity, and/or ideal social self-congruity), they will be motivated to purchase that product, because the use of the product will satisfy self-consistency (self-esteem, social consistency, and/or social approval) needs. By using that product, consumers would be able to fulfill their needs of self-esteem, self-consistency, social consistency, and social approval. This situation is expected to maximize brand preference and use. Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis was deduced:

**Hypothesis 1:** Self-congruity (actual ideal, social, and ideal social-self-congruity) is predictive of brand attitude.

The Moderating Effects of Brand Conspicuousness

Brands that are socially visible (conspicuously consumed) reveal the personal characteristics of their users more than brands that are consumed inconspicuously. The social visibility of the brand helps establish consensual beliefs regarding the stereotyped image of the brand user. Sirgy, Johar, and Wood (1986) have demonstrated that brand social conspicuousness is positively related to brand value-expressiveness (which in turn may evoke a self-congruity process). They explained that socially visible brands can be associated with the personal characteristics of their users more than brands that are consumed privately. Based on this discussion, we hypothesize the following:

**Hypothesis 2:** Self-congruity is likely to be more predictive of brand attitude when brand conspicuousness is high rather than low.

The Moderating Effects of Brand Uniqueness

From attribution theory in social psychology we know that unique or uncommon events are used by people to make causal attributions: i.e., the informational weight of unique characteristics is augmented, whereas common characteristics are discounted in perceptual inferences. That is, the use of uncommon or unique brands may lead to inferences about the brand user (person attributions). Based on this discussion, we hypothesize the following:

**Hypothesis 3:** Self-congruity is likely to be more predictive of brand attitude when brand uniqueness is high rather than low.

The Functional Congruity Effect

The functional congruity effect, as previously discussed, involves the match between the beliefs about the brand utilitarian attributes (performance-related) and the consumer’s referent attributes. The greater the congruence between the consumer’s utilitarian beliefs about the actual brand and the referent beliefs, the more positive the attitude toward the brand. Therefore, the following hypothesis is deduced.

**Hypothesis 4:** Functional congruity is predictive of brand attitude.

The Moderating Effects of Brand Involvement

Consumer involvement may be defined in terms of such observable actions as time and/or intensity of effort expended in consumer behavior. Consumer behavior may include overt information search, in-store shopping, price and brand comparison, and product use. Under high involvement conditions, consumers tend to engage in more information processing and alternative evaluation than under low involvement conditions. Brand involvement is similarly defined in terms of cognitive effort in decision-making. Johar and Sirgy (1991) argued that brands that induce high emotional involvement are likely to involve a functional congruity route to persuasion. The consumer is likely to allocate greater cognitive processing capacity to focus on the concrete, performance-like, or functional aspects of the brand. Based on the above argument, we hypothesize the following:

**Hypothesis 5:** Functional congruity is likely to be more brand predictive of attitude when brand involvement is high rather than low.

The Moderating Effects of Brand Differentiation

Brand differentiation may cause consumers to invest considerable cognitive effort searching for differences among brands. Under conditions of high brand differentiation, consumers may acquire more knowledge about the benefits of the brand. Low involvement processing often may occur when the differences between brands are not perceived (low brand differentiation). If we accept the notion that brand differentiation may be related to product involvement, we can logically conclude that brand differentiation may play a similar role in moderating the relationship between functional-congruity and attitude toward the product. Based on the above argument, we hypothesize the following:
Hypothesis 6: Functional congruity is likely to be more predictive of brand attitude when brand differentiation is high rather than low.

Self-Congruity versus Functional Congruity

Sirgy et al. (1991) theorized that although both self-congruity and functional congruity impact brand attitude directly self-congruity may play a more subtle role. That is, self-congruity operates at a lesser conscious level biasing functional evaluations. Thus, the direct impact of self-congruity on brand attitude is not as strong as functional congruity. By the same token, functional congruity is influenced by self-congruity. Therefore, the following hypotheses can be tested:

Hypothesis 7: Functional congruity is likely to be more predictive of brand attitude than self-congruity.

Hypothesis 8: Functional congruity is a direct function of self-congruity, i.e., the self-congruity effect is partially mediated through functional congruity.

METHOD

Product and Brand Selection

Eight brands pertaining to eight different products were selected for the study. The selection criterion dictated that the products and brands would vary in involvement, differentiation, conspicuousness and uniqueness. It should be noted that the extent to which a specific brand is judged as differentiated, conspicuous, or commonly used is dependent on the consumer’s frame of reference. For example, a brand of automobile such as a Porsche can be judged as high in conspicuousness relative to a Ford Escort, but low in conspicuousness relative to a Ferrari. We decided to control possible confounds from different frames of references by specifying a referent brand for each of the selected (focal) brands. Note that we did not measure involvement in relation to a referent-brand but at the product level because we felt that a consumer’s level of involvement is determined mostly by the product category and not his or her perception of the brand relative to a referent brand. The selection of the eight brands was based on a pretest using 39 college students and involving 20 brands. Our objective electing two was to work with brands that would produce the greatest variability in the moderator variables.

Sampling

Eight different samples were obtained, each corresponding to a different product (the eight brands used in the study). The goal was to obtain 70 respondents for each of the eight samples (eight brands), a total of 560 respondents. Marketing students were used as consumer subjects for this study. A total of 429 students completed the questionnaire, producing a response rate of 76%. More specifically, the responses were broken down as follows: auto (n=54), camera (n=39), tires (n=36), watch (n=47), soft drink (n=70), TV (n=51), beer (n=64), and headache remedy (n=68).

Attitude Measures

Four self-report items using 5-point Likert-type scales were used to measure attitude for each of the eight products. These were: I like Focal Brand better than Referent Brand. I would use Focal Brand more than I would Referent Brand. Focal Brand is my preferred brand over Referent Brand. I would be inclined to buy Focal Brand over Referent Brand. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient across the eight brands was .915. The mean (and standard deviation) of the average composite was 3.111 (1.075).

The Self-Congruity Measure

The self-congruity measure involved the summation of scores from four self-congruity constructs (for a comprehensive review of self-congruity measures, see Sirgy et al. 1997). These are: actual self-congruity, ideal self-congruity, social self-congruity, and ideal social self-congruity.

Actual Self-Congruity. This construct was measured using 10 self-report items along 5-point Likert-type scales. Reliability analysis produced a Cronbach Alpha of .82 (pooled across all eight products) after deleting five items. The retained items were: (+) I like the image of the (user of focal brand) than the image of (referent brand). (-) I am not the kind of person who (uses) (focal brand) rather than (referent brand). (+) I prefer the image of (focal brand) over (referent brand). (+) I am very much like the typical person who (uses) (focal brand) rather than (referent brand).

Ideal Self-Congruity. This construct was measured using 10 self-report items along 5-point Likert-type scales. Reliability analysis produced a Cronbach Alpha of .84 (pooled all eight products) after deleting four items. The retained items are: (+) I may like myself better if I were to (use) (focal brand) rather than (referent brand). (-) I hate the image of (focal brand) (user) compared to the image of (referent brand). (+) I prefer the image of (focal brand) (user) than the image of (referent brand). (-) I can’t identify with those people who prefer (focal brand) over (referent brand). (+) The image of the (user of focal brand) is highly consistent with how I see myself, more so than the image of the (referent brand user).

Social Self-Congruity. This construct was measured using 10 self-report items along 5-point Likert-type scales. Reliability analysis produced a Cronbach Alpha of .90 (pooled all eight products) after deleting four items. The retained items were: (+) The image of the (focal brand) (user) than the image of (referent brand). (+) I prefer the image of (focal brand) over (referent brand). (+) I like the kind of person who (uses) (focal brand) better than the kind of person who (uses) (referent brand).

Ideal Social Self-Congruity. This construct was measured using 10 self-report items along 5-point Likert-type scales. Reliability analysis produced a Cronbach Alpha of .87 (pooled across all eight products) after deleting five items. The retained items are: (+) I may like myself better if I were to (use) (focal brand) rather than (referent brand). (-) I can’t relate to those people who (use focal brand) rather than (referent brand). (-) I can’t identify with those people who prefer (focal brand) over (referent brand). (-) People who are close to me have a hard time seeing me as (using) a (focal brand) user. (+) The image of (focal brand) user is high in conspicuousness relative to a Ford Escort, but low in conspicuousness relative to a Ferrari. We decided to control possible confounds from different frames of references by specifying a referent brand for each of the selected (focal) brands. Note that we did not measure involvement in relation to a referent-brand but at the product level because we felt that a consumer’s level of involvement is determined mostly by the product category and not his or her perception of the brand relative to a referent brand. The selection of the eight brands was based on a pretest using 39 college students and involving 20 brands. Our objective electing two was to work with brands that would produce the greatest variability in the moderator variables.

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associates prefer the image of (focal brand) (user) than the image of (referent brand) (user).

The Functional Congruity Measure
From the open-ended responses in the preliminary study, a set of functional (utilitarian) evaluative criteria were content-analyzed. From the content analysis results, a set of functional attributes were formulated specific to each of the eight brands. These attributes were used to measure the component variables involved in a belief-importance multiattribute attitude. The model involves the sum of the product of belief strength and importance weights across a set of utilitarian attributes. The belief strength variable was measured using the following response cue: “Listed below are possible attributes of Product X. For each of these attributes, please indicate by circling the appropriate number how likely or unlikely it is that the Focal Brand [Brand X] would possess each attribute compared to the Referent Brand” [Brand Y]. Responses to this question were formulated in terms of a set of utilitarian attributes measured using a 5-point likelihood scale (from “very unlikely” to “very likely”). A “don’t know” category was also concluded, and responses in this category were treated as missing values. The importance variable was measured using the following response cue: “If you were considering Brand X in general, how important or unimportant are the following characteristics to you? For most people, some things are more important than others. Please circle the number which is closest to the degree of importance you would attach to that characteristic when shopping for Brand X.” The same utilitarian attributes used to tap the belief strength variable also were used to tap the importance variable. The response scale was a 5-point scale ranging from “very unimportant” to “very important.” The mean (standard deviation) of the functional congruity measures was 10.923 (5.589).

The Involvement Measure
Zaichkowsky’s (1985) involvement scale was used for this study. The measure involved 7-point semantic differential scales consisting of 20 bipolar adjectives. Reliability and factor analyses showed the following items to interrelate highly: important/unimportant, of no concern/of concern to me, irrelevant/relevant, means a lot to me/means nothing to me, useless/useful, valuable/worthless, trivial/fundamental, beneficial/not beneficial, matters to me/doesn’t matter, uninterested/interested, significant/insignificant, and vital/superfluous. The mean and standard deviation of the overall measure were 3.317 and 1.306, respectively.

The Differentiation Measure
Ten Likert 5-point scales were designed to measure the brand differentiation construct. This measure was then modified from a measure used by Sirgy, Johar, and Wood (1986). Based on factor and reliability analyses, the following items were retained: (-) I can hardly notice the difference between “X” and most other brands I know; however, there is definitely a difference between “Y” and the other. (+) “X” is much more differentiated from other brands than “Y.” (-) It is harder to distinguish “X” from its competition than “Y.” (+) “X” is very similar to the competitor brands. The mean and standard deviation of the overall measure were 3.710 and .978, respectively.

The Conspicuousness Measure
Ten Likert 5-point scales were designed to measure the brand conspicuousness construct. This measure was modified from a measure used by Sirgy, Johar, and Wood (1986) in which product conspicuousness was hypothesized and found to be positively related to product value-expressiveness. The findings provided construct validation support for the measure. Based on factor and reliability analyses, the following items were retained: (+) The user of “X” is more of an attention-seeker than the user of “Y.” (+) The user of “X” is more noticeable when it is than when using “Y.” (+) People who use “X” show off; people who use “Y” don’t. (+) The use of “X” draws attention from other people more than the use of “Y.” (-) The use of “X” is much more private than “Y.” (-) The use of “X” is more inconspicuous than the use of “Y.” (+) The use of “X” is more attention-getting than the use of “Y.” (+) You can’t avoid people not seeing you when one uses “X.” This is not the case when one uses “Y.” The mean and standard deviation of the overall measure were 2.651 and .744, respectively.

The Uniqueness Measure
Ten Likert 5-point scales were designed to measure the brand uniqueness construct. This measure was modified from a measure used by Sirgy, Johar, and Wood (1986) in which product common usage was hypothesized and found to be negatively related to product value-expressiveness. Based on factor and reliability analyses, the following items were retained: (+) “X” is directed to a highly select market, whereas “Y” isn’t. (-) The majority of consumers buy “X.” This is not the case for “Y.” (+) Only a very select few use “X.” Everyone else seems to use “Y.” (+) Not a lot of people use “X.” This is not the case with regard to “Y.” (+) There is a much smaller minority of people who use “X” than use “Y.” The mean and standard deviation of the overall measure were 3.556 and .828, respectively.

RESULTS
The results are reported by hypothesis. Hypothesis 1 states that self-congruity (actual-, ideal-, social-, and ideal social self-congruity) is predictive of brand attitude. Two regressions functional congruity treated as a covariate were run. Self-congruity was found to be significantly (p<.01) related to brand attitude both with (.271) and without functional congruity (.522). These results provide support for the notion that self-congruity does play a significant role in predicting brand attitude (Hypothesis 1).

Hypothesis 2 states that self-congruity is likely to be more predictive of brand attitude under conditions of high than low brand conspicuousness. A median split was used to create two groups, one set with functional congruity as a covariate and another set without the covariate. The results show that self-congruity was slightly more predictive of brand attitude in the high conspicuousness condition (.481) than the low condition (.442); however, the difference was not statistically significant at the .05 alpha level. However, the same pattern was more evident when the effects of functional congruity was partialled out (high brand conspicuousness=.348; low brand conspicuousness=.219).

Hypothesis 3 states that self-congruity is likely to be more predictive of brand attitude under conditions of high than low uniqueness. A median split was used to create two groups of uniqueness (high and low). Regression analyses were run on these two groups, one set with functional congruity as a covariate and the other without. The results show that self-congruity was not more predictive of brand attitude in the high uniqueness condition (.588) than the low uniqueness condition (.577). This was also evident when the effects of the covariate was partialled out (.311 vs. .334).

Hypothesis 4 states that functional congruity is predictive of brand attitude. Two regressions (one with self-congruity as a covariate and one without the covariate) were run. Functional congruity was found to be significantly related to brand attitude both with the covariate (.462) and without the covariate (.612). These results provide support that functional congruity does play a significant role in predicting brand attitude.
Hypothesis 5 states that functional congruity is likely to be more predictive of brand attitude under conditions of high than low brand involvement. A median split was used to create two groups of brand involvement: high and low. Regression analyses were run on these two groups, one set with self-congruity as a covariate (.495 vs. .380) and another set without the covariate (.575 vs. .537). The results show that functional congruity was indeed slightly more predictive under high than low involvement conditions, with and without the covariate.

Hypothesis 6 states that functional congruity is likely to be more predictive of brand attitude under conditions of high rather than low brand differentiation. A median split was used to create two groups of brand differentiation: high and low. Regression analyses were run on these two groups, one set with a self-congruity as covariate (.441 vs. .377) and another without the covariate (.603 vs. .585). The pattern shows that functional congruity was somewhat more predictive under high rather than low differentiation conditions, with and without the covariate.

Hypothesis 7 states that functional congruity is likely to be more predictive of brand attitude than self-congruity. The results indicate that indeed functional congruity is more predictive (.462) than self-congruity (.271), accounting for 42 percent of the variance in brand attitude. These results provide support for Hypothesis 7.

Hypothesis 8 states that functional congruity is a direct function of self-congruity, i.e., the self-congruity effect is partially mediated through functional congruity. The regression results show that functional congruity is significantly predicted by self-congruity (.180) with the covariates (brand attitude, brand differentiation, brand conspicuousness, brand uniqueness, and brand involvement) and without the covariates (.554).

REFERENCES
The Apparent Paradox of Self
A Semio logical Analysis of the Role of Consumption in the Life of “Trainspotting” Mark Renton
Conor Ryan, Guinness Ireland
Damien McLoughlin, University College Dublin, Ireland

ABSTRACT
The postmodern self is so engaged in the new symbolic rationality of consumption that many authors in a variety of disciplines have argued that consumption defines the self. Symbolic interaction theory, recognising the social negotiation of meaning, throws its considerable weight behind the argument that consumption is role supporting. A third body of researchers has attempted to reconcile these views, arguing that consumption can simultaneously support both. It is the thesis of this paper that all consumption is tribal and role supporting. Consumption cannot define the self. A review of the literature on postmodernism, the self and tribal linkage is followed by a new addition to the debate, the Rubix Cube of Postmodern Consumption. This model places the power of self definition squarely in the psychic powers of the individual and not in the realms of consumption. It is argued that consumption supports the roles the giddy postmodern consumer plays in today’s postmodern tribes. Evidence to support this thesis is provided in the form of a semiological analysis of the role of consumption in the motion picture Trainspotting. Three semiotic codes are used to conduct a scene by scene analysis of the consumption patterns of Mark Renton. Renton uses consumption as a means of transition from membership of one tribe to another. As the roles change so too do the consumption practices. That consumption does not define the self is evidenced in the form and content of the continuous stream of consciousness and thought displayed by Rentons monologues throughout the motion picture. The implications of this paper for marketing practice and research are many. It requires a recognition of the infinite capacity of the human mind and the realisation that all consumption is tribal and no act of consumption is purely individualistic. Dismissive comments arguing that the postmodern consumer is irrational must be replaced with an understanding of the symbolic rationality of consumption. Decisions to maximise role congruency using a constellation of symbolic consumption elements are no less rational than a decision to maximise utility based on economic value.

1. THE APPARENT PARADOX OF SELF: TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING

Dualism, dialectic, dyad, duality, dichotomy, this interesting alliteration comprises many of the terms used in academic literature to describe the postmodern phenomenon of simultaneously seeking absolute individualism and tribal linkage. Many researchers agree that consumption has a pivotal role to play in the life of the giddy consumer seeking to reconcile this apparent paradox of self. This paper seeks to gain an understanding of the role of consumption in the life of the postmodern consumer. The academic world is largely divided regarding the role of consumption in this area. Belk (1988) argues that consumption of objects defines the self in that those objects become an extension of the person that consumes. Solomon (1983) takes his lead from symbolic interaction theory espousing that products are in fact social stimuli supporting the social roles of individuals. A growing body of research suggests that self definition and tribal linkage are in fact two sides of the same coin (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg Halton, 1981). To date the most plausible treatment of the subject is the model of “Cosmic Consumption” in Cooper and McLoughlin (1998) wherein individualism and tribalism form a continuum. Cooper and McLoughlin (1998) perform a semiotic analysis of consumption in “The Simpsons", a postmodern, hyperreal family. This work dichotomised the roles of consumption based on what the authors describe as the “Southern Schools Ideology”. The authors believe that “no longer do consumers look to broad society as a source from which to take their meanings, rather they look to tribes: symbolic and unstable groupings of individuals” (1998, p.9). Cooper and McLoughlin identify four roles of consumption in hyperreality; products representing valued traits, tribal linking products, mediating products and hyperreal role products. The one area in which their work is found to be lacking is in the quality of the application of semiotic methodology. This paper builds largely on the work of Cooper and McLoughlin and their analysis of consumption in a hyperreal environment. It is the hope of this author that through a more detailed treatment of semiotic methodology, the subsequent analysis may provide further insight into the role of consumption in the life of the postmodern individual. It is the thesis of this paper that consumption defines tribal linkage. It will be argued that self definition is a purely intellectual, psychological process of thought wherein awareness of ones existence is reached. The thinking here is influenced by Descartes and the Cogito Ergo Sum principle. Consumption develops or reinforces roles. Roles exist only in the context of a social system or network wherein meaning is socially negotiated. A collection of roles create a tribe the membership of which may occur consciously or unconsciously. The self is defined before consumption. Hence consumption defines tribal membership. This paper draws on a variety of academic fields including consumer behaviour theory, psychology, sociology and philosophy. We shall begin with a quick treatment of postmodernism. This will be followed by a review of the current literature examining self definition and tribalism. We will then develop a framework of the role of consumption which will be applied in the semiological analysis of the consumption of Mark Renton in the motion picture “Trainspotting”.

2. METHODOLOGY
Our analysis borrows much from the methodology employed by Hirschman and Holbrook (1993) in their analysis of consumption symbolism in Beverly Hills cop and Holbrook and Graysons (1986) analysis of Out of Africa. The analysis of Trainspotting began with numerous viewings of the film on video cassette. A body of notes was compiled detailing certain key scenes. The video-cassette reviews were complemented with a detailed examination of the Trainspotting script and character stage direction. The script review executed with forensic precision, facilitated the development of an extremely detailed body of notes on consumption in Trainspotting. The resultant notes were then studied using three semiotic codes which were applied on a scene by scene basis for Mark Renton. The semiotic codes used were: actor / outcome, consumption and role codes.

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The Northern Anglo Saxon school of thought sees consumption as self-defining whereas the Southern, Mediterranean School espouses the view that products are services are consumed as much for their linking value as their use value. Cooper and McLoughlin (1998) forward a model for the analysis of consumption as an expression of the self and as a system of meaning enabling linkage to social tribes. Cooper and McLoughlin see individualism and tribalism as points on a continuum. They argue:

"some consumption acts are done with the focus being the individual, a conflict within the mind or a need to express an individually felt feeling such as love, whereas other acts are performed predominantly to provide a link to tribes, such as displaying symbols that are recognised by the tribe" (1998, p.9).

Consumption they argue will simultaneously affect both elements to varying degrees. This argument is similar to Csiszentmihalyi and Rochberg Halton (1981) view that individualism and integration through consumption are two sides of the same coin. In an effort to shed further light on this subject we have produced a model of consumption in the life of the postmodern consumer. The model discussed in the following sections will form a key element of the semiological analysis of Mark Renton's consumption.

4. THE RUBIX CUBE OF POSTMODERN CONSUMPTION

"If I am what I have and if what I have is lost, who then am I?" (Fromm, 1976, p.294). This simple question challenges the foundations of the belief that consumption can define the self. If we may be so bold as to offer a potential answer to this question, you are not what you have, you simply are. The self exists regardless of consumption. Definition of self is an intellectual, psychological process of thought in which one becomes aware of ones existence in the universe. One becomes aware of who and what one is. The self is the stream of consciousness of the individual. Just as I am aware of my self now, I am also aware that it is the same self that supported my existence when I was 10 years old and that it will continue doing so.

Rene Descartes (1641), in order to prove his own existence to himself approached the problem by deciding that he would not believe anything that could be doubted (i.e. only lending credence to absolute facts). Descartes wanted to figure out how he could be sure that he was not a character in a dream, or that he was being convinced that he existed by some powerful entity.

"But there is I know not what being, who is possessed at once of the highest power and the deepest cunning, who is constantly employing all his ingenuity in deceiving me. Doubtless then I exist, since I am deceived; let him deceive me as he may, he can never bring it about that I am nothing, so long as I shall be conscious that I am something. So that it must, in fine, be maintained, all things being maturely and carefully considered, that this proposition I am, I exist, is necessarily true each time it is expressed by me, or conceived in my mind" (Descartes, 1641: Trans John Veitch 1901)".

And thus we make the argument that the self exists and is defined without consumption. All consumption defines tribal linkage as consumption supports a role. For example driving a BMW is seen as a status symbol, a symbol of achievement, superior quality etc.
These symbols are socially negotiated and agreed upon. Roles exist only in the context of a social network. The variety of roles which various products and consumption practices support and reinforce allow the postmodern consumer to be as giddy as he likes regarding tribal membership, with the average person performing several roles in several tribes. The self continues to exist unchanged by this consumption, what changes is membership. Regarding possessions James (1890) wrote; “the empirical self of each of us is all that he is tempted to call by the name of me. But it is clear that between what a man calls me and what he simply calls mine the line is difficult to draw” (1890, p.291). The line may be difficult to draw but it exists. McClelland (1951) believed that objects/possessions become a part of self when we can exercise control over them. If possessions are viewed as part of self, it follows that loss of possessions should be regarded as a loss or lessening of self (Belk, 1988). Taking this argument to the extreme if someone loses everything in a fire or through war does that person no longer have a self?

So which is it? Does consumption define who we are? Do we define who we are? Do we differentiate to integrate or to separate? Am I me?, or is my self some function of objects with varying degrees of importance in my life? What follows is our contribution to the debate. We have developed a framework depicting the role of consumption in the life of the postmodern individual. This model attempts to build on the work of Cooper and McLoughlin (1998) and Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg Halton (1981). The model comprises four elements “The Self”, “Consumption”, “Roles” and “Tribes”. It is represented graphically in Figure 1.

4.1 The Self
Definition of self is a purely intellectual process of thought in which one becomes aware of ones existence in the Universe.

4.2 Consumption
Numerous authors have argued that consumption defines the self. As the previous paragraph highlights, we disagree. Consumption occurs in a culturally constituted world within which meaning is socially negotiated. As no man is an Island, all consumption is role defining and role supporting. The self exists. The roles change.

4.3 Role
If as we have argued all consumption is role defining then it is the roles which link the individual to the one or more tribes that person is a member of. Roles and consumption reinforce each other in that roles only exist in the context of a social network. Thus all consumption has an “effect” consciously or unconsciously within this wider social network.

4.4 Tribe
Thanks to the diversity of consumption practices which the individual may engage in, the individual can play numerous roles in numerous tribes. These postmodern tribes are ephemeral. As for the metaphor of the tribe,

“it allows us to account for the process of disindividuation, the saturation of the inherent function of the individual and the
emphasis on the role that each person is called upon to play within the tribe” (Maffesoli, 1996, p.6).

5. SEMIOLOGICAL TRAINS OF THOUGHT

Trainspotting follows the exploits of five friends in Edinburgh, three of whom are drug addicts, another becomes a drug addict and another is a violent psychopath. The film centres around the life of Mark Renton (played by Ewan McGregor). Rentons partners in crime and addiction are Spud, Sick Boy, Begbie and Tommy. The group lives a miserable existence, addicted either to heroin or violence. Renton decides to kick the habit realising the futility of his situation. The following sections apply the rubix cube of postmodern consumption to Mark Renton.

5.1 The Self

Renton has a constant self that remains unchanged by his consumption patterns. Evidence of this appears in the continuous stream of consciousness that he displays throughout the film primarily in the form of his various monologues. It is interesting to note that many of Rentons monologues deal with consumption. We believe this is why many argue that the self is defined by consumption. In our opinion the crucial point is this; the individual must in todays society apply a great deal of his psychic powers to consumption, however it is the psychic powers, the consciousness of self, that defines the self, the application of these powers to consumption is a secondary process. A quote from one of Rentons monologues may help to illustrate the point.

"Choose leisurewear and matching luggage. Choose a three piece suit on hire purchase in a range of fucking fabrics... Choose your future. Choose life. But why would I want to do a thing like that? I chose not to choose life. I chose something else. And the reasons? There are no reasons. Who needs reasons when you've got heroin?"

Thus we see Mark Renton philosophically deciding on “life”. His mind examines numerous elements of consumption. The key here is the idea of choice. He can choose leisurewear or heroin. The phrase “I chose”, is Mark Rentons self making a decision, it exists prior to the choice. The consumption that the self chooses is tribal, not self defining.

5.2 Consumption

Trainspotting opens with blistering energy as Mark Renton speeds down the street with Spud trailing and two security officers in hot pursuit. Stolen merchandise fall from the collective pockets and jackets of Spud and Renton. All the while we hear the pulsating and energising rhythm of Iggy Pops “Lust for Life” interrupted only by what must be one of the most famous voice overs of all time. In three short paragraphs Mark Renton philosophically highlights the paradoxical complexity and simplicity that characterises modern western society. He also highlights his loathing for such a so called existence. The importance of consumption is paramount in this motion picture.

"Choose leisurewear and matching luggage. Choose a three piece suit on hire purchase in a range of fucking fabrics... Choose your future. Choose life. But why would I want to do a thing like that? I chose not to choose life. I chose something else. And the reasons? There are no reasons. Who needs reasons when you've got heroin?"

Choose life. Choose a job. Choose a career. Choose a family. Choose a fucking big television, choose washing machines, cars, compact disc players, and electrical tin openers. Choose good health, low cholesterol, and dental insurance. Choose fixed-interest mortgage repayments. Choose a starter home. Choose your friends. Choose leisure wear and matching luggage. Choose a three piece suit on hire purchase in a range of fucking fabrics. Choose DIY and wondering who the fuck you are on a Sunday morning. Choose sitting on that couch watching mind numbing spirit crushing game shows, stuffing fucking junk food into your mouth. Choose rotting away at the end of it all pissing your last into a miserable home, nothing more than an embarrassment to the selfish f*cked-up brats you spawned to replace yourself. Choose your future. Choose life. I chose not to choose life. I chose something else. And the reasons? There are no reasons. Who needs reasons when you’ve got heroin?

Mark Renton defines “life”, by the presence or absence of the above. He differentiates himself from this tribe of traditional society through the consumption of heroin. One of the most enigmatic questions regarding Rentons character was the role of heroin in his life. If the thesis of this paper holds true then injecting oneself with heroin is not a purely individualistic self defining act, but an act of tribalism. But where is the tribalism in being drugged on the floor oblivious to all around you? The answer lies not in what the effect of heroin is but in understanding why it is consumed. Renton explains it as follows:

"People think its all about misery and desperation and death and all that shite, which is not to be ignored, but what they forget is the pleasure of it. Otherwise we wouldn’t do it. After all, we’re not fucking stupid. At least we’re not that fucking stupid."

It is interesting that throughout Rentons explanation he refers to “we”, denoting the tribes collective consciousness. He continues:

"Take the best orgasm you’ve ever had, multiply it by a thousand, and you’re still no where near it. When you’re on junk you have only one worry: scoring. When you’re off it, you’re suddenly obliged to worry about all sorts of other shite. Got no money, can’t get pissed. Got money, drinking too much. Can’t get a bird no chance of a ride. Got a bird too much hassle. You have to worry about bills about food, about some football team that never fucking wins, about human relationships and all the things that don’t really matter when you’ve got a sincere and truthful junk habit."

Thus it is our understanding that taking heroin is tribal in that it is an escape from the reality of other tribes. It is also interesting to note that all of Rentons philosophies revolve around different acts of consumption whether it be consumption of objects, people, places or indeed ideas. This highlights the crucial role that consumption plays in the life of the postmodern individual.

5.3 Role

Rentons consumption reinforces a number of different roles during the film. The greatest variation in his consumption patterns occurs when he oscillates between drug addiction and recovery. He is on a consumption rollercoaster as his tribal membership changes. Some of the primary roles Renton plays, often simultaneously are as follows: Drug Addict; Thief/Criminal; Son; Estate Agent.

5.3.1 Drug Addict

Renton is first and foremost a drug addict. All of his consumption revolves around his relationship with drugs, taking them or relinquishing them. While satisfying his addiction he steals from family and friends, and the society that surrounds him. Taking heroin frees Renton from the concerns of traditional society. As a drug addict Renton rejects the advice and ideologies of life of his friends and family. He spends a great deal of time in Swaneys flat. In fact Swaneys is a sanctuary for the drug addict tribe.
5.3.2 Thief/Criminal
The opening scene of the motion picture shows Renton running down a street in Edinburgh with pens, tapes, CD’s and sunglasses falling from his pockets. He stole valium and money from his mother, a personal video from Tommy, a TV from a hospital, a car stereo, a prescription pad from a doctor, money from an American tourist and the money from his so-called friends drug deal. The vast majority of Rentons criminal activity is directly attributable to his heroin addiction. However at the end of the film he begins his new life by stealing the drug money from his friends.

5.3.3 Socialiser/Friend
Renton attends dance clubs and bars with his friends. They regularly drink together whether celebrating or commiserating. Rentons most immediate friends both drug addicts and non drug addicts share a common appreciation of football. The early scenes of the motion picture show the group playing football. Socialising whether on the sports pitch or in the bar is trans-tribal, again highlighting the numerous roles the postmodern person plays and the potential for multi-tribal membership.

5.3.3 Son
Renton ate dinner at his parents house. They explained their concerns regarding his drug usage. Following the suspension of a custodial sentence by the Judge Renton drinks in the bar with his parents and friends. His parents are relieved and reminisce about Rentons childhood. After his near fatal drug injection his parents take him home and lock him in his old room in order to help him recover.

5.3.4 Estate Agent
Rentons consumption changes markedly as he assumes the role of an estate agent in London. He wears a suit and tie. He does not take heroin or other drugs. He eats pot noodles, and fast food and watches TV. He engages in correspondence with Diane and begins to worry about all the stuff that doesn’t really matter when you have a sincere and truthful drug habit. He asks Diane if she is pregnant. He explains it as follows:

“People think its all about misery and desperation and death and all that shite, which is not to be ignored, but what they forget is the pleasure of it. Otherwise we wouldn’t do it. After all we’re not fucking stupid. At least we’re not that fucking stupid.

Being a heroin addict dramatically affects all other consumption patterns. Every act is geared to the satisfaction of the addiction. Renton points out that “When you’re on junk you have only one worry, scoring”. Leaving the drug addict tribe according to Renton places the focus of consumption on all the things that “don’t really matter”. The drug is seen to have almost human qualities by Sick Boy who says “heroins got great personality”. Those not taking heroin (such as members of the human tribe) have to apply their psychic powers to numerous other “problems”. Renton eloquently explains it as follows:

When you’re off it you’re suddenly obliged to worry about all sorts of other shite. Got no money, can’t get pissed. Got money drinking too much. Can’t get a bird, no chance of a ride. Got a bird, too much hassle. You have to worry about bills, about food, about some football team that never fucking wins, about human relationships and all the things that don’t really matter when you’ve got a sincere and truthful junk habit

The tribe is oblivious to the danger that surrounds them. Sharing filthy needles in Swanseys flat is commonplace. It is interesting to note that Swanseys flat is almost devoid of possessions, reinforcing the tribes indifference to everything except heroin. Members of the tribe steal to support their habit. They steal anything, a TV, car stereo, prescription pads, drugs, money etc., in Rentons case even from money from his parents. The only thing that is important is heroin and the addicts will go to any length as an unsuspecting American tourist discovered to his peril. In a particularly disturbing scene we see baby Dawns bloated face. The child died from neglect because her mother and father (Allison and Sick Boy) were continuously drugged up. On discovering the baby the tribe are incapable of dealing with the situation. Renton said: “I wished I could think of something to say, something sympathetic, something human”. His only response was “I’m cookin’ up”. Renton uses the term “human” on a number of occasions when discussing the tribe. He sees those outside his tribe as human. The mothers response to the childs death was to take a “hit” of heroin as quickly as possible. Members of the drug addict tribe have little or no loyalty to each other. Sick boy came off heroin at the same time as Renton in order to lessen Rentons struggle. Despite the fact that Allisons baby had died, Renton made sure that he got a “hit” before she did. Renton gave Spud speed in order to make sure he would fail a job interview. Sick boy and Renton were perfectly prepared to run

5.5 Tribespotting
Trainspotting is full of tribal interaction. The tribes themselves are inherently unstable and ephemeral as evidenced by the facility with which membership of tribes alters so often. The boundaries that differentiate one from another are often blurred or unclear. As we have seen Renton plays a wide variety of roles throughout the motion picture. In an effort to paint a more complete picture of the role of consumption in the motion picture Trainspotting we have identified a number of distinct tribes in the film. The previous analysis highlighted the consumption patterns which signify membership of numerous tribes. We will now discuss the nature of these tribes. This adds the final missing element of the rubix cube of postmodern consumption. The two most important tribes in the context of the motion picture are the drug addicts and the tribe of traditional society or the human tribe (a distinction made by Renton). As previously highlighted membership of these tribes occurs through role performance which in turn is a function of the consumption patterns of the individual. Regarding postmodern tribes Cova (1997) wrote:

*These postmodern communities are inherently unstable, small scale, aectual, and are not fixed by any of the established parameters of modern society; instead they can be held together through shared emotions, styles of life, new moral beliefs, senses of injustice and consumption practices (1997, p.301).*

The following analysis will highlight the manifestation of these tribal characteristics in the tribes of Trainspotting. In the discussion of both the drug addict tribe and the human tribe particular emphasis will be placed on how consumption is the basis of tribal membership and a key indicator of tribal transition.

5.5.1 Drug Addicts:
The primary consumption practice of the members of this tribe is intravenous injection of heroin, usually in Swanseys flat. The tribe is characterised by a nihilistic outlook on everything in life except the pleasure of the “high”, following the injection of heroin. Renton explains the creed of the tribe:

People think its all about misery and desperation and death and all that shite, which is not to be ignored, but what they forget is the pleasure of it. Otherwise we wouldn’t do it. After all we’re not fucking stupid. At least we’re not that fucking stupid.

Renton ate dinner at his parents house. They explained their concerns regarding his drug usage. Following the suspension of a custodial sentence by the Judge Renton drinks in the bar with his parents and friends. His parents are relieved and reminisce about Rentons childhood. After his near fatal drug injection his parents take him home and lock him in his old room in order to help him recover.

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Rentons consumption changes markedly as he assumes the role of an estate agent in London. He wears a suit and tie. He does not take heroin or other drugs. He eats pot noodles, and fast food and watches TV. He engages in correspondence with Diane and begins to worry about all the stuff that doesn’t really matter when you have a sincere and truthful drug habit. He asks Diane if she is pregnant. He explains it as follows:

“People think its all about misery and desperation and death and all that shite, which is not to be ignored, but what they forget is the pleasure of it. Otherwise we wouldn’t do it. After all we’re not fucking stupid. At least we’re not that fucking stupid.

Being a heroin addict dramatically affects all other consumption patterns. Every act is geared to the satisfaction of the addiction. Renton points out that “When you’re on junk you have only one worry, scoring”. Leaving the drug addict tribe according to Renton places the focus of consumption on all the things that “don’t really matter”. The drug is seen to have almost human qualities by Sick Boy who says “heroins got great personality”. Those not taking heroin (such as members of the human tribe) have to apply their psychic powers to numerous other “problems”. Renton eloquently explains it as follows:

When you’re off it you’re suddenly obliged to worry about all sorts of other shite. Got no money, can’t get pissed. Got money drinking too much. Can’t get a bird, no chance of a ride. Got a bird, too much hassle. You have to worry about bills, about food, about some football team that never fucking wins, about human relationships and all the things that don’t really matter when you’ve got a sincere and truthful junk habit

The tribe is oblivious to the danger that surrounds them. Sharing filthy needles in Swanseys flat is commonplace. It is interesting to note that Swanseys flat is almost devoid of possessions, reinforcing the tribes indifference to everything except heroin. Members of the tribe steal to support their habit. They steal anything, a TV, car stereo, prescription pads, drugs, money etc., in Rentons case even from money from his parents. The only thing that is important is heroin and the addicts will go to any length as an unsuspecting American tourist discovered to his peril. In a particularly disturbing scene we see baby Dawns bloated face. The child died from neglect because her mother and father (Allison and Sick Boy) were continuously drugged up. On discovering the baby the tribe are incapable of dealing with the situation. Renton said: “I wished I could think of something to say, something sympathetic, something human”. His only response was “I’m cookin’ up”. Renton uses the term “human” on a number of occasions when discussing the tribe. He sees those outside his tribe as human. The mothers response to the childs death was to take a “hit” of heroin as quickly as possible. Members of the drug addict tribe have little or no loyalty to each other. Sick boy came off heroin at the same time as Renton in order to lessen Rentons struggle. Despite the fact that Allisons baby had died, Renton made sure that he got a “hit” before she did. Renton gave Spud speed in order to make sure he would fail a job interview. Sick boy and Renton were perfectly prepared to run
with the money from the drug deal and Renton eventually did. The only element that unifies this tribe is the pleasure of the “high”.

Morality, emotion and even friendship are superseded by heroin. This is an example of the ephemerality of postmodern tribes.

5.5.2 Human Tribe:

We have decided to call traditional society, the human tribe, due to the distinction Renton makes on numerous occasions when he discusses drugs. The human tribe is characterised primarily by the opening and closing monologues. The monologues discuss many of the elements that comprise the everyday life of most people; a career, a family, washing machines and fixed interest mortgage repayments. Members of this tribe include Rentons parents, Tommy (before his drug addiction) Lizzy and Gail, and numerous others in group scenes throughout the film (the bingo scene for example). Rentons parents live in a miserable home, watch gameshows, play bingo in social club. Lizzy and Gail (girlfriends of Tommy and Spud respectively) are only concerned with human relationships and sex. In many respects the juxtaposition of the human and drug addict tribes leaves the viewer seriously questioning which tribe leads a worse life. The energy and vitality of the drug addicts makes the passive existence of the human tribe seem unbearable. The human tribe rejects those who engage in non-conforming consumption practices. The consumption practices of the drug addicts are illegal. Members of the drug addict tribe are prosecuted with prison sentences. Rentons prison sentence is suspended on condition that he continue participating in a recovery program run the human tribe. Tommys transition to the consumption practices of the drug addicts is met with absolute rejection by the human tribe. Tommys new consumption practices, moral beliefs, style of life and emotions are no longer compatible with the those of the human tribe. In an interesting parallel Tommy changes membership from the human tribe to the drug addicts while Renton performs exactly the opposite transition. Leaving the human tribe and adopting the consumption practices of a drug addict eventually lead to Tommys destruction. Leaving the drug addicts to join the human tribe frees Renton and allows him to live as a “good citizen” (albeit with sixteen thousand pounds stolen from his friends). At the end of the film Renton decides to chose life. He walks confidently towards the camera which is complete contrast with the opening scene in which he runs frantically toward the camera. He says:

“I’m going to change. This is the last of that sort of thing. I’m cleaning up and I’m moving on, going straight and choosing life. I’m looking forward to it already. I’m going to be just like you. The job, the family, the fucking big television........

He chooses to join another tribe, that of traditional society. He will join this tribe by consuming as they do. A subset of the tribe of traditional society is the business community. This tribe wears suits and ties, operates out of offices and is purely focused on cash. Renton explains what the business tribe meant to him:

“I quite enjoyed the sound of it all. Profit, loss, margins, take-overs, lending, letting, subletting, subdividing, cheating, scamming, fragmenting, breaking away. There was no such thing as society, and even if there was, I most certainly had nothing to do with it.

Once a member of the business community Renton began to worry about the things that originally separated the drug addicts from others. He was appalled to discover that his TV had been stolen and sold by Sick Boy. This is in direct to contrast with Rentons theft of a TV from a hospital while a drug addict. He saves over two thousand pounds as an Estate Agent in London. This is in contrast with his stealing money from his parents to purchase drugs.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has attempted to highlight the value of pushing off from the shore of more traditional, modernist research methodologies, and chose to follow a course plotted by Hirschman and Holbrook (1993), Holbrook and Grayson (1986), Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg Halton (1981), and most recently Cooper and McLoughlin (1998). The rubix cube of postmodern consumption is another tool which can be used in understanding the role of consumption in the lives of the postmodern consumer. It is a simple tool which at once recognises the many parts the actor plays, while simultaneously allowing for the existence of a powerful self behind the masks and make-up.

The implications for marketers and researchers alike are many. It has long been recognised that the study of consumption as the economic maximisation of utility is of little value in the context of the omnipresent symbolism in modern society. This thesis has attempted to show that consumption reinforces roles which link consumers to tribes. The next step however is to arrive at an understanding of why people choose to perform particular roles in particular tribes and how tribal membership evolves over time.

What is the motivation for role performance? Is it sociological, psychological, philosophical, emotional, cultural or a combination of a multitude of contributory elements. This research question by its very nature will require and would benefit greatly from a multi-disciplinary and multi-national approach. This semiological analysis of Mark Renton offered some clues such as extreme emotional and social problems leading to experimentation with drugs, the desire to improve oneself leading to membership of the business community or drug addiction being a rejection of traditional society and an escape from the mentality of that tribe.

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SESSION OVERVIEW

In recent years, advertising and marketing researchers have become more and more interested in aspects of consumer behavior that could be described as “sacred,” “ritualistic,” “transformative,” and even “magical.” For example, both Rook’s (1985) article on ritualistic consumption and Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry’s (1989) seminal piece on sacred consumption argue that the use of some products and services can “transport” consumers “outside of themselves,” and result in transcendent experiences. Likewise, Arnould and Price (1993) delineated what they described as “river magic,” or extraordinary experiences that occurred during white water rafting trips. More recently, Arnould, Otnes and Price (1997a, 1997b) and Arnould, Price and Otnes (forthcoming, 1999) have extended this research by examining exactly how consumption experiences in the postmodern era resemble social magic such as that described by Malinowski and other anthropologists exploring traditional societies.

Moreover, scholars in a related area–advertising–have also become interested in the transformational or magical claims that often appear in this genre. For example, Leiss, Kline, and Jhally (1996) observed that up to 20% of all appeals in ads could be described as “magical,” in that they promised some sort of transformation to the consumer. Diane Barthels (1988) describes the use of such claims in beauty ads, and Judith Williamson (1978) states that advertising rhetoric sometimes actually takes the form of spells, a finding supported by recent research on advertising and ritual (Otnes and Scott 1996).

This session integrated these two areas of interest, by exploring the presence of magical elements in goods and services from the perspectives of both consumers and advertisers. In particular, “Magical Special Possessions” by Eric Arnould, Linda Price and Carolyn Curasi explored the ways in which cherished objects acquire characteristics that make them magical to consumers. Moreover, JelenaRunser-Spanjol, Pamela Lowrey and Cele Otnes, in “Magic and Transformation in Advertising: A Longitudinal Study,” examined how various types of transformational claims—or promises that a product or service will change a consumer in any noticeable fashion—are employed in ads directed to women over three decades.

Moreover, this session extended previous research by drawing on a new area of literature that clearly is steeped in magic—that of the fairy tale. In particular, Benoit Heilbrunn, in “When Snow White Dates Mr. Clean!!… A Narrative Approach to Advertising Discourse” argued that most advertising rhetoric is based on a common universal structure that is found in fairy tales. He observed that while fairy tales offer magical powers as a way to demonstrate competency, the corresponding magic in modern advertising is often articulated as scientific legitimacy (a finding also supported by the transformational claims found in the paper to be presented by Runser-Spanjol, et al). In short, this session advanced the discussion on magic in the marketplace by: 1) offering a consumer perspective on the magical nature of products; 2) exploring the nature of transformational (and magical) claims in advertising across three decades and 3) discussing the difference between the narrative structure of fairy tales and that of advertising. In addition, we offered an international perspective on this issue by including researchers from France (Heilbrunn), Switzerland (Runser-Spanjol), and the United States.
and the advertising universe. It also suggests potential roles to be played by brands—such as hero, an anti-hero, villain (in comparative ads), and so on. Finally, it offers an implicit model by which the consumer may be viewed as a heroine saved by a hero (the brand). The implication from this model is that the imaginary universe of fairy tales has gradually been captured by advertising ideology with the express purpose of involving the consumer in an attempt to develop and consolidate a consumer/brand relationship.

**Magic and Transformation in Advertising: A Longitudinal Study**

*Jelena Runser-Spanjol, The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.*

*Pamela Lowrey, The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.*

*Cele Otnes, The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.*

Many scholars have argued that some ads promise that products will bring about significant transformations or changes in consumers’ lives (e.g., Barthels 1988; Leiss, et al 1986; Otnes and Scott 1996). However, the nature and pervasiveness of these transformative claims—and the source of the transformative power behind them—have not been explored by researchers in any systematic manner. This paper examines the nature of the transformational claims in ads found in two women’s magazines over three decades. In so doing, these claims will be considered within the historical context in which they occurred, and examined as to their differences before or after such events as the introduction of the birth control pill and the rise of the women’s movement.

Two magazines—*Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar*—were sampled. These publications were selected because of their longevity and wide circulation. Three issues of each magazine were selected from 1951, 1959, 1974, 1979, 1992, and 1997 (two years from each decade, selected randomly). Every nth ad in each of these issues—that created a sample of 20 ads from each magazine—was scanned and converted into an electronic file, labeled as to magazine and year and converted into an electronic database. The final sample consisted of 720 ads or spreads (20 ads x 3 issues x 6 years x 2 magazines).

Ads were coded for the presence of transformation claims. If such claims were found, they specific nature and duration of the transformation promised to consumers was coded. All elements of copy and art were coded for the possible presence of transformational claims. Initial coding categories were derived from a literature review. The established codes were reviewed by all three authors, and the coding sheet was pretested. After adjustments, a second pretest was undertaken to assess intercoder reliability, which was 73.3%. Disagreements between coders were discussed and resolved.

Of the 720 ads in the sample, 247 (or 34.3%) contained at least one transformational claim. The number of such claims in ads ranged from one to seven, with an average of 2.34 claims in these ads. The vast majority of transformational claims were strictly verbal (89.5%). The two most common transformational claims made across all ads were positive physical transformation (28.2%) and sexuality transformation (24.6%).

Chi-square analysis revealed a significant relationship between product category and the total number of transformational claims, the strength of the transformation and the nature of the transformational claims. The nature of these claims, and their variance across decades, is the next step in the exploration of these data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1</th>
<th>The narrative scheme common to fairy tales and to advertising</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contract</strong></td>
<td><strong>Competency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Framework</td>
<td>Within the framework of a value system, proposal and acceptance of a program to carry out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snow White</td>
<td>A spell was cast on Snow White; she must be brought back to life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Clean</td>
<td>Mission is to Get rid of the (big) stain without any effort</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Snow White | A spell was cast on Snow White; she must be brought back to life. | The Prince has magical powers. | The Prince uses his magical powers to bring Snow White back to life. | The Hero conquers Snow White’s heart and marries her. |
| Mr. Clean | Mission is to Get rid of the (big) stain without any effort | Scientific legitimacy | The brand gets rid of the spot | The brand is recognized as the most effective brand |

and the advertising universe. It also suggests potential roles to be played by brands—such as hero, an anti-hero, villain (in comparative ads), and so on. Finally, it offers an implicit model by which the consumer may be viewed as a heroine saved by a hero (the brand). The implication from this model is that the imaginary universe of fairy tales has gradually been captured by advertising ideology with the express purpose of involving the consumer in an attempt to develop and consolidate a consumer/brand relationship.
SELECTED REFERENCES


SESSION OVERVIEW

Work in psychology and behavioral decision making has long focused on the two fundamental processes underlying human decision making: the judgment of frequencies and probabilities and the evaluation of outcomes. This session brought these two areas of inquiry together by addressing one of the shared characteristics of these aspects of consumer behavior, the constructive nature of both judgments and preferences. Research in both areas is based on the notion of bounded rationality due to limited processing capacity, under which consumers make difficult tradeoffs between conflicting pieces of information or attributes. To provide the necessary breadth, the session addressed three specific areas that have recently captured the attention of consumer researchers.

First, consumers who make judgments of the frequencies of events such as sales promotions or shopping trips can rely on retrieving episodic information about these events from memory as well as on retrieving rate-based information (e.g., Menon 1993; Menon, Raghubir, and Schwarz 1995). The accuracy of constructing frequency judgments in memory depends on the cognitive capacity constraints that are operative both at the time of encoding and at the time of retrieval of such frequency-related information. The judgmental process requires consumers to weigh episodic and rate-based information against each other. Second, in evaluating choice options consumers have to trade off conflicting attributes against each other, subject to their information processing constraints. When constructing these tradeoffs is difficult, e.g., when the choice set offers several attractive options none of which easily can be verified as the best, consumers may prefer to postpone choice altogether (e.g., Dhar 1997; Meyer 1997; Tversky and Shafir 1992). Third, consumer choice often involves intertemporal tradeoffs between present and future consequences of consumption. These tradeoffs are particularly difficult to make in the face of impulsive preferences (e.g., Loewenstein 1996; Wertenbroch 1998). For example, consumers might want to purchase an expensive clothing piece that they cannot immediately afford. Instead of doing so, they may wait and save money for, say, their child college education. In order to keep themselves from giving in to such temptation, they may self-impose constraints on their liquidity, e.g., by leaving their credit cards at home. Such self-imposition of constraints under which one makes intertemporal choices is another aspect of the constructive nature of consumer judgments.

The three papers in this session all focused on new aspects of these areas of inquiry into the construction of consumer judgments. The first paper (Fitzsimons and Menon) compared the relative accuracy of rate versus episodic recall for both regularly and irregularly occurring behaviors at varying levels of cognitive capacity at both encoding and retrieval. The second paper (Dhar and Simonson) explored the impact of adding a no-choice alternative to a choice set on consumer preferences. The authors proposed that such no-choice option provides a way to resolve difficult choices and decreases the relative share of alternatives that are often chosen when no single alternative has a decisive advantage, e.g., in the context of the attraction and compromise effects. The third and final paper (Wertenbroch, Soman, and Nunes) focused on consumer debt as a dynamic vehicle for balancing rational and hedonic dimensions of consumer choice. It showed that consumers self-impose constraints on their own liquidity in order to avoid overconsumption of hedonic goods.

SESSION SUMMARY

New Insights in the Construction of Consumer Judgments
Klaus Wertenbroch, INSEAD, France

When It Takes the Mind: The Moderating Effects of Cognitive Capacity on Judgments of Behavioral Frequencies
Gavan J. Fitzsimons, University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A.
Geeta Menon, New York University, U.S.A.

The regularity (i.e., periodicity) of an event is a construct that determines which piece of information is accessible in memory for use at a later point in time in computing a judgment. Previous work (e.g., Menon 1993) has shown that: (a) when an event is perceived to be a regular one, people use rates-of-occurrence to form a judgment; and, (b) in the case of irregular behaviors, people are more likely to use an episodic recall strategy to arrive at a frequency. One of the unanswered questions is whether increased accessibility of these different inputs is a function of the encoding process or the retrieval process.

The authors examined the effects of an individual characteristic, cognitive capacity, its effects on information accessibility and the subsequent use of different strategies (episodic recall vs. estimate), and how it moderates the effects on accuracy. They tested the accessibility argument in a wider domain, by hypothesizing that for low frequency events people will tend to use an episodic recall strategy that will lead to accurate results, just as rate-based estimation leads to more accurate results for high frequency events. Further, they also examined whether the inaccuracies result because of processes used at encoding vs. retrieval.

The authors demonstrated that the cognitive capacity that the person has at encoding will determine the accessibility of various inputs, and the cognitive capacity at retrieval will determine the accuracy of the judgment strategy used. They used two different methodologies: (a) they studied everyday behaviors and used diaries as an objective criterion; (b) they also used a computer simulation to manipulate the accessibility of different pieces of information in memory, and therefore had a completely objective criterion for accuracy. By using diverse methodologies, they provided a strong test of their hypotheses.

In study 1, the authors asked 79 undergraduate students at NYU to maintain diaries of their readership of various magazines. They manipulated cognitive capacity at retrieval by giving (vs. not) them an unrelated task to perform while eliciting behavioral frequencies. Regularity was observed at two levels by a median split on the regularity of magazine readership. They expected that when the behavior is perceived to be a regular one, the manipulation of cognitive capacity should not make a difference to the use of a rate-of-occurrence, or to the accuracy of the response. On the other hand, in the case of an irregular behavior, the manipulation of cognitive capacity should hamper the accuracy of the response.

In study 2, the authors manipulated cognitive capacity at encoding and retrieval. Undergraduate students at Wharton took part in a computerized bidding simulation in which they believed they were competing with other participants for a series of building contracts. The experimenters manipulated the competitive response to their bids to control the regularity of a number of behaviors (e.g., how often they bid on a large job - one that requires more than 20 hours of work; how often they win the bid, etc.). While frequency of the behaviors was identical, the authors manipulated the regularity across conditions. For example, participants either bid on a large job twice a week (Mondays and Thursdays) for five weeks, or ten random times across the five week period. After completion of the bidding tasks participants were asked to recall the
The Effect of Forced Choice on Choice

Ravi Dhar, Yale University, U.S.A.
Itamar Simonson, Stanford University, U.S.A.

Consumers often face choice among several different alternatives in the marketplace. Several studies have shown that when forced to choose, consumer preferences are influenced by the choice set under consideration. However, choice studies typically “force” respondents to select one of the presented products, whereas in real life consumers usually have the option of not making a purchase. In fact, choosing not to choose is by far the most frequently selected alternative. Furthermore, recent research suggests the decision not to choose is sensitive to the relationship among the alternatives provided. For example, the tendency to not choose increases when the choice set offers several attractive alternatives but none that can easily be verified as the best.

An implicit assumption in the practice of not including a “no-choice option” is that such an alternative would have taken approximately similar relative shares from the various available alternatives (i.e., consistent with the assumption of IIA), such that the qualitative conclusions are unaffected. However, if this assumption does not hold, then any experimental findings may be systematically biased and lead to incorrect predictions of purchase decisions. For example, if a no-choice option tends to take greater share from an option that is preferred when one is forced to choose, then forced choice experiments will consistently overestimate the relative share of such options. More generally, it suggests that the predictions about consumer choice may not be accurate even if context effects are taken into account if the marketplace resembles one where consumers can and do defer choice.

The authors experimentally examined the impact of adding a no-choice option on consumer preferences. Building on the notion that the deferral option provides a way of resolving difficult choices, they proposed that inclusion of a no-choice option tends to decrease the relative shares of alternatives that are often chosen when no single alternatives has a decisive advantage. They examined this proposition in the context of the attraction (Huber et al. 1982) and compromise (Simonson 1989) effects as well as in choice sets with options that are either “average” on all dimensions or have advantages and disadvantages (Shafir 1993). Specifically, they suggested that a no-choice option decreases the magnitude of the compromise effect and the share of “average” alternatives and increases the magnitude of the attraction effect. They reported the results of four studies, which tested this proposition and discussed the implications of their findings for consumer choice research.

Debt Aversion as Precommitment not to Overconsume

Klaus Wertenbroch, Yale University, U.S.A. and INSEAD, France
Dilip Soman, University of Colorado, U.S.A.
Joseph C. Nunes University of Southern California, U.S.A.

While millions of U.S. households carry an average of $7,000 to $8,000 of revolving credit card debt at exorbitant interest rates, not much is known about the antecedents of consumers’ decisions of whether or not to carry revolving debt from one period to the next. The authors first presented results from two experiments that showed that consumers are more willing to go into debt and carry it longer for utilitarian goods (products whose benefits accrue after consumption and which are consumed for these instrumental purposes) than for hedonic goods (products whose benefits accrue concurrently with consumption and which are consumed for the pleasures inherent in consumption itself). These preferences become more pronounced as total expenditure increases, holding consumption stream length constant across goods.

The authors proposed two possible explanations. First, consumers may try to minimize the time during which they carry debt for hedonic goods because they want consumption to be unencumbered by thoughts of continued payments (cf. Prelec and Loewenstein 1998). The burden of debt detracts from the experiential excitement and gratification provided by hedonic consumption. This conflict does not occur with utilitarian goods, which are not purchased exclusively for their own enjoyment, but for instrumental, secondary purposes. Second, consumers may be exercising self-control by limiting their hedonic purchases to products, which they can afford to pay off within a certain time interval (cf. Wertenbroch 1998). If a loan must be paid off sooner, the liquidity available for future hedonic consumption is reduced by that payment, and as a result consumers will be less likely to engage in additional spending on hedonic goods that they may otherwise be tempted to overconsume.

A third experiment differentiated between these accounts. The authors considered goods that are consumed repeatedly over time, providing an ongoing stream of immediate consequences of consumption (concurrently with consecutive consumption episodes) plus some delayed consequences (more positive for utilitarian than for hedonic goods). The unencumbered consumption hypothesis suggests that consumers’ preferred payment periods decrease, the more hedonic and tempting the immediate consequences are, independent of the valence of the delayed consequences. This ensures that the period during which pleasure from consumption is tainted by the pain of making payments is minimized. The self-control hypothesis, in contrast, suggests that consumers don’t want their total hedonic consumption to get out of control (i.e., to exceed a mental budget for hedonic consumption). So the sooner they may be tempted again after financing a current episode of hedonic consumption, the sooner they force themselves to pay off their current hedonic debt. This decreases their liquidity available for future hedonic purchases and consequently prevents excessive overall hedonic consumption. The results provided evidence of self-management of liquidity constraints and ruled out the unencumbered consumption hypothesis as well as a justification-based alternative explanation. Consumers with a need for self-control exhibit debt aversion as a precommitment not to overconsume.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACT

Perceived justice of complaint response, intentions to repurchase, and positive and negative word-of-mouth behaviour were investigated among consumers who had experienced a negative critical incident with car repair. The study showed that satisfaction with the complaint response does not completely eliminate the negative effects of a dissatisfactory experience. Although the consumers intended to continue using the firm’s services, they were also likely to say negative things about the firm to others, and they were reluctant to recommend it if asked. Half of them spread negative word-of-mouth before raising a complaint and only a few told others about a satisfactory response to the complaint. Perceived distributive justice encouraged positive word-of-mouth, while a lack of interactive justice encouraged negative word-of-mouth.

INTRODUCTION

Research on services, and above all on consumer-perceived service quality, has developed steadily during the last two decades. There is no lack of empirical research on consumer perceptions of dimensions of service quality or of the importance of high quality for the consumer’s future responses to a firm. The positive effect of very satisfied or delighted consumers on repeat purchase behaviour has been demonstrated for both goods and services (Oliver, Rust and Variki 1997). However, far less attention has been paid to the consequences of consumer dissatisfaction with services. According to Singh (1990, p.1), research on service dissatisfaction ‘is a relatively neglected area’, despite it having been shown that ‘services entail far greater customer dissatisfaction than products’. To some extent, service failure and consequent recovery (Bitner, Booms and Tetreault 1990; Johnston 1995; Kelley, Hoffman and Davis 1993), or switching behaviour (Roos 1999), have been investigated, but less attention has been paid to factors that instigate or hinder service complaints, consumer reactions to complaint handling and its effect on future behaviour. According to Dellande (1995, p. 36), there is a “striking gap in the literature pertaining to redress in relation to dissatisfying consumption experiences involving services.”

A study on dissatisfaction with goods (Richins 1987) showed that the three dissatisfaction responses, complaints, negative word-of-mouth and intentions to switch brands, were independent constructs and differently influenced by problem characteristics, negative personal characteristics and the redress environment. These, and other factors, such as attitude towards complaining, consumer attributions and the likelihood of success have been found to affect consumer responses both directly and indirectly, through perceived justice of the company’s redress efforts (Blodgett, Hill and Tax 1997; Tax, Brown and Chandrashekaran 1998). These effects may vary for different services and responses (Wright et al. 1996).

This paper presents data from an empirical study on consumer complaining behaviour related to car repair services. The analyses are limited to the consumers who voiced a complaint to the repair shop. The purpose is to investigate the effect of consumer perceptions of perceived justice on repurchase and word-of-mouth behaviour.

Firstly, propositions regarding the effect of satisfaction with complaint handling on different consumer responses is outlined. The empirical study is then described and the data analysed. A short discussion follows.

PERCEIVED SERVICE REDRESS, WORD-OF-MOUTH AND REPURCHASE INTENTIONS

For a firm to be able to redress a dissatisfactory experience, the consumer has to inform it that he/she was not completely satisfied with the service. However, not all consumers voice their complaints, and many are dissatisfied with the response that they get if they do (Andreasen and Best 1977). Studies on critical incidents have shown that both successful and failed service recoveries are remembered by consumers (Bitner et al. 1990; Johnston 1995).

Dissatisfaction with the handling of complaints has been found to vary considerably for different services (Andreasen and Best 1977; Berry and Parasuraman 1991). Companies should avoid the negative consequences of failing the consumer twice: first the initial service failure, then the added aggravation of a failed recovery. In a study on customers who had completely or partly switched supermarkets, Roos (1999) found that some of the loyal customers tried to solve problems by informing the personnel about their dissatisfaction, and only switched when no improvements were made. Dissatisfied customers whose problems are not addressed are likely to use the company’s services less, to boycott a specific product or everything offered by the company, or to warn off other consumers (Fornell and Wernerfelt 1987). A study by Tax and Chandrashekaran (1992) showed that, of the subjects who were presented with the same dissatisfactory experience, those who were presented with a ‘no complaint handling’ condition were more likely to repurchase than those whose complaints were handled poorly. Satisfaction with complaint handling is believed to be positively related to repurchase intentions (Gilly and Gelb 1982).

On the other hand, a dissatisfied consumer may still use some of the firm’s services, for instance, having the oil and oil filter changed at a garage but will go elsewhere for major repairs.

The higher the satisfaction with redress that consumers perceive, the more likely they are to repurchase (Gilly and Gelb 1982). Consumers have been shown to evaluate satisfaction with complaint handling in terms of interactional, procedural and distributive justice (Tax, Brown and Chandrashekaran 1998). Studies on a variety of services have shown that both process and outcome aspects of complaint handling have an effect on consumers’ future behaviour towards the firm (Andreasen 1997; Blodgett, Granbois and Walters 1993; Tax et al. 1998; Wright et al. 1996). However, the effects have not been stable over different settings. For instance, Blodget et al. (1993) found a direct effect of overall perceived justice on repurchase and negative word-of-mouth behaviour (returning a good to a retailer), while Wright et al. found an effect only for repurchases (educational service). Using an experimental design Blodgett et. al (1997) found that procedural justice had no effect on repatronage or negative word-of-mouth intentions, and that high interactive justice seemed to compensate for lower distributive justice. This was interpreted as supporting the importance of the process dimension in service encounters. Another explanation for the small effect of distributive justice may be low perceived monetary loss (Gilly and Gelb 1982).

Word-of-mouth may be an alternative to voicing a complaint to the firm (Richins 1983), but it can also be used as a complement-
Satisfaction with the repair shop. Consumers were asked how satisfied they were with the car repair shop as a whole before the critical incident occurred, and how satisfied they were with the repair shop at the time of the interview, if they still used it (7-point satisfaction scales with the end-points very dissatisfaction–very satisfied).

Satisfaction with responses to complaints. Consumers who had complained to the workshop were asked how they perceived the response to their complaint. Six statements, based mainly on Blodgett (1994), measuring interactional, procedural and distributive justice, were presented on 5-point scales (completely disagree/agree): ‘The personnel was very courteous and helpful’, ‘I was very dissatisfied with how the personnel responded to my complaint’ (reverse coded), ‘As a whole, the personnel handled my complaint fairly’, ‘I got a quick answer to my complaint’, ‘I got the compensation that I asked for’ and ‘The compensation was sufficient’.

Word-of-mouth. Three different measures for word-of-mouth were used at different points in the questionnaire. Firstly, the consumers were asked if they had said negative things about the repair shop to others before they made their complaint to the firm (yes/no). Secondly, consumers were asked if they had told negative (yes/no) or positive things (yes/no) to others about the response to their complaint. Thirdly, the likelihood of the consumers saying positive or negative things about the mechanic or repair shop to others (4 scales), and recommending them if asked, were measured on 5-point scales ranging from very unlikely to very likely.

Intentions to repurchase. The following four statements were given: ‘I will continue to use this repair shop’s services as before’, ‘I may consider using some of this repair shop’s services’, ‘Because of what happened I will never again use any of their services’ (reverse scored) and ‘I would consider using other repair shops in

P1a: Overall perceived justice with the firm’s redress is positively related to repurchase intentions and positive word-of-mouth, and inversely to negative word-of-mouth.

P1b: Perceived interactional justice with redress has a greater effect on behaviour than procedural or distributive justice.

According to Singh and Widing (1991), there is little empirical support suggesting that an initial level of dissatisfaction affects consumer complaint responses. Halstead and Page (1992), however, investigated the joint effects of consumers’ original satisfaction when buying a carpet, and their satisfaction with complaint responses, on behavioural intentions. They found that the initially satisfied non-complainers had the highest repurchase intentions, but not significantly higher than for the initially satisfied consumers, who were also satisfied with the complaint response. Both groups had higher means than the initially dissatisfied who complained and were satisfied with the response. The results suggest that, in order to understand the behavioural consequences of consumer-perceived dis/satisfaction with a complaint response, information is also needed on consumer satisfaction before making the complaint. Proposition three follows form this.

P3: Consumers who are satisfied both prior to making a complaint and with the redress are more likely to engage in positive behaviour towards the firm, than consumers who are initially dissatisfied but satisfied with the complaint response.

STUDY

Car repair was chosen for the empirical study because it is a service where consumers often experience problems. Andreasen and Best (1977) found the highest consumer dissatisfaction with this service, and a study by Huefner and Hunt (1992) showed that department stores, restaurants, grocery stores and car-related services accounted for 81% of consumer avoidance behaviour. Antecedents of complaints regarding car repair have been investigated by Bearden and Teel (1983) and Singh (1990), for instance.

The data were collected by students as part of a master’s-level course on research methods at the Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration in Helsinki, Finland in February-March 1998. The students were asked to find consumers who had had a recent dissatisfactory experience with a car repair shop. The respondents were interviewed using a structured questionnaire, and 195 interviews were conducted. The consumers are not separated by type of complaint in the analyses.

The complaining process in Finland is similar to that described by Sto and Glefjell (1990) for Norway. Only complaints made directly to the service provider are included in the present analyses.
the same chain (if there are others). All the statements were measured on 5-point scales with the end-points completely disagree/agree.

Description of the data

The 122 consumers who complained directly to the workshop and had received a response to their complaint at the time of the interview were used in the analyses. Most of them (86%) complained to only one person at the repair shop. Fourteen complained to two persons, and three complained to a mechanic, a superior and someone else. Only 13 consumers wrote a letter of complaint. Respondent ages varied between 21 and 75 (mean 33), and the majority (59%) were male. Most of the cars in question were owned by the respondents (65%), or their families (24%). Half of the complainers had used an authorised brand repair shop, while the other half had used either an independent repair shop or one attached to a petrol station. Of all the complainers, 70% had used the repair shop twice or less.

The mean importance rating for the service was 4.1 for the complainers and 4.0 for the whole sample. Only 7% were certain that they would have been able to do the repair themselves. Thus the service was important to the consumers.

The internal consistency of the measures was analysed using exploratory factor analysis and reliability statistics (coefficient alpha). All of the items concerning perceived justice, repurchase intentions and likelihood of word-of-mouth and recommendation behaviour were factor analysed together and separately. When the three concepts were analysed together four factors were extracted which explained 73% of the variance in the data: 1) perceived justice (JUST, \( \alpha = .89 \)) which contained all the justice items except the response time, 2) positive word-of-mouth (PWOM, \( \alpha = .90 \)) including positive word-of-mouth and recommendation behaviour, 3) repurchase intentions (BUY, \( \alpha = .85 \)) including all four items, and 4) negative word-of-mouth (NWOM, \( \alpha = .89 \)) with two items. When the six items concerning perceived justice were analysed separately, three factors emerged that together explained 88% of the variance: 1) interactive justice including all three variables that referred to the personnel (\( \alpha = .86 \)), 2) procedural justice with only ‘response time’, and 3) distributive justice with the two compensation items (\( \alpha = .94 \)). Averages were computed for each factor, and these were used in the further analyses. Since ‘timeliness of response’ had a low item-to-total correlation with the other justice items, it was not included in the overall measure of satisfaction with complaint response (JUST).

FINDINGS

The results are presented in the following order: firstly, negative word-of-mouth expressed before complaining and word-of-mouth about the consequent complaint response are presented; secondly, customer responses at different levels of satisfaction with the redress are looked into; and thirdly, initial satisfaction is introduced into the analysis.

Word-of-mouth before voicing complaint

About half of the consumers (48%) had said negative things about the repair shop prior to complaining, thus supporting P2. This emphasises the importance of performing the service correctly the first time. Even if the consumer is compensated later for the failure, he/she may already have damaged the image of the firm by telling others about the bad experience. Consumers may not communicate the good news of the service recovery to the same person(s) who were first told the bad news. In the present study, 39% of the consumers who spread negative word-of-mouth before receiving a response were later satisfied with the recovery.

Word-of-mouth about the firm’s response to a complaint

The consumers were first grouped according to their dissatisfaction or satisfaction with the handling of the complaint (JUST). Consumers with a mean below the total mean of 3.1 were classified as dissatisfied (58), and the others as satisfied (64). Fifty-one of the 58 dissatisfied consumers had told others about their dissatisfaction, and five of the 51 also had something positive to say about the response, four consumers had only said positive things, and three had not told anyone about the response. On the other hand, only 33 of the 64 who were satisfied had told the good news to others. Seventeen of the satisfied consumers had said negative things about the response to others (of which 9 said only negative), which can be explained by the fact that not all of them were completely satisfied. In other words, the consumers who were dissatisfied with the response were more likely to tell others about their dissatisfaction than the satisfied ones were to tell others about the successful service recovery. This supports the theory that consumers are more likely to spread negative than positive word-of-mouth (Richins 1983).

Perceived justice of redress, repurchase intentions and word-of-mouth

Four groups were created according to the varying levels of response satisfaction (JUST): very dissatisfied (1.0–2.0), somewhat dissatisfied (2.1–3.0), somewhat satisfied (3.1–4.0) and very satisfied (4.1–5.0). The effect of response satisfaction on BUY, PWOM and NWOM were then analysed using one-way analysis of variance. The results are reported in Table 1. There was an effect of the level of satisfaction on behavioural intentions in the proposed direction (P1a). All models were highly significant.

Independent t-tests were performed for each pair of satisfaction levels. Only the means of ‘somewhat dissatisfied’ and ‘somewhat satisfied’ did not differ for any of the consumer responses. Paired-samples t-tests revealed that the means for BUY and PWOM were significantly different at p<0.001.

Some conclusions may be drawn from the analyses. Low levels of perceived justice of redress are related to a high likelihood of not using the same service in the future and spreading negative word-of-mouth. High levels of perceived justice have the opposite effect. Moderate levels of perceived justice have very similar effects on consumer responses. Thus support for P1a was found regarding very high and very low levels of perceived justice. Moreover, there was evidence of a non-linear relationship between dissatisfaction intensity and consumer responses, as suggested by Singh and Pandya (1991). A rise in dissatisfaction or satisfaction with the response will not affect behaviour unless a certain threshold is exceeded. It is also noteworthy that, even if both the very dissatisfied and the very satisfied consumers are likely to engage in word-of-mouth, the means for negative word-of-mouth are somewhat higher. Good recovery from a dissatisfactory experience will not completely abolish negative communication about the service provider. There is a higher likelihood that the consumer will continue using the service in the future, than that he/she will spread positive word-of-mouth to others about the firm. Service recovery seems to have a greater effect on loyalty in terms of intended buying behaviour than in terms of intended positive word-of-mouth.

Five consumer responses, BUY, PWOM, NWOM, and negative and positive communication about the response (dummy variables) were then regressed on perceived interactional, procedural and distributive justice. The results showed that PWOM and positive communication about the response were positively affected only by distributive justice (b=.404 and .484 respectively). The better the compensation was, the more likely the consumers were to say positive things to others about the firm, and about the
complaint response (Adj. R²=.29 and .23). All three justice components had a negative effect on negative communication about the complaint response (Adj. R²=.40), while only interactional justice affected negative word-of-mouth about the firm (b=.382, Adj. R²=.21). BUY was positively affected by both interactional (b=.307) and distributive (b=.306) justice (Adj. R²=.36). Contrary to P1b, these findings indicate that perceived interactional and procedural justice may have different effects on consumers’ positive and negative behaviour towards the firm. Lack of interactional justice provokes the customer into spreading negative word-of-mouth about the firm in general, while good distributive justice motivates him or her to recommend the firm. Lack of all three types of justice encourages the customer to tell others about the negative response that he/she received when complaining.

### Initial satisfaction, redress satisfaction and consumer responses

Some consumers expressed satisfaction with the firm before the incident happened, even if they had not used it before. Their experience was in making an appointment and interacting with various parts of the firm in connection with taking delivery of the car. Consumers were not separated according to previous usage. The consumers were into two groups according to their initial satisfaction level (satisfied/dissatisfied). Only two groups were created to maximise the number of respondents in each cell. Those who had marked four or less on the 7-point scale were categorised as dissatisfied, all others as satisfied. These two groups were further divided into two, according to their satisfaction with the complaint handling. Consumers with a mean score below the total mean of 3.1 were classified as dissatisfied, the others as satisfied. Of those who were dissatisfied with the complaint response, 19 were also dissatisfied before the incident, while 22 had been satisfied. Of those who were later satisfied with the redress, only eight had been dissatisfied initially, while 36 had been satisfied. This limits the conclusions that can be drawn from the analyses and the data cannot be fully compared with that in Halstead and Page (1992), who found that initially satisfied consumers who were also satisfied with the complaint response were more likely to repurchase than the initially dissatisfied ones who were satisfied with the response. The means for BUY, PWOM and NWOM were computed for the present data to explore the difference, but no differences were found between the two groups. This means that P3 could not be confirmed. The initially satisfied consumers who were also satisfied with the firm’s redress had significantly higher means for BUY and PWOM, and a lower mean for NWOM, than both the initially satisfied who were dissatisfied with the redress, and those whom the firm had failed twice, who were both initially dissatisfied and dissatisfied with the redress.

The variables BUY, PWOM and NWOM were also regressed on overall perceived justice (JUST) and initial satisfaction, and on JUST together with a disconfirmation measure in which initial satisfaction was subtracted from final satisfaction with the firm. Initial satisfaction only added slightly to the explanation of repurchase intentions. The more satisfied the consumers were initially (b=.186, p<0.05), and the better they perceived the justice of redress (b=.579), the more likely they were to return to the repair shop (Adj. R²=.43). Satisfaction disconfirmation, on the other hand, only affected negative word-of-mouth. Lower perceived justice (b=.434) and negative disconfirmation of satisfaction (final satisfaction lower than initial satisfaction, b=.271) led to a higher likelihood of spreading negative word-of-mouth (Adj. R²=.32). Thus, initial satisfaction, in combination with perceived justice, seems to affect consumer loyalty in terms of buying behaviour, but not word-of-mouth. However, the more initial satisfaction exceeds final satisfaction, in combination with redress dissatisfaction, the more likely consumers are to warn off others.

### DISCUSSION

These results highlight the importance of satisfying a complaining customer if the firm wants to avoid negative word-of-mouth and encourage repeat purchases. However, the data also showed that even consumers who are fairly or very satisfied with the response to their complaints are not wholeheartedly committed to using the firm’s services in the future. They are even less likely to recommend the firm, and they are still likely to spread negative word-of-mouth. The dissatisfactory experience is not completely left behind and forgotten, and “what has been done cannot be undone” (Dellande 1995, p. 36). Even when the problem is corrected, the consumer may have lost precious time waiting for the car to be repaired for the second time. If the consumer is well compensated, he/she is likely to spread positive word-of-mouth, but if the personnel is rude or otherwise perceived as behaving unfairly, negative word-of-mouth will be spread. A consumer may also remain temporally loyal (Davidow and Dacin 1997) while looking for alternative providers.

A limitation of the study was that intervening variables such as the severity of the problem and/or monetary loss were not taken into account.

### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JUST classification</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>BUY</th>
<th>PWOM</th>
<th>NWOM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANOVA (F)</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a=number of observations, b=p<0.001
account. Consumers may also react differently depending on whether the initial problem was a faulty spare part or the mechanic’s inability to repair the car, for instance. Moreover, the small number of respondents in some categories limits the conclusions that can be drawn from the sample.

Nevertheless, some interesting results were obtained concerning the whole sample of complainers. It seems that consumers of this service spread negative word-of-mouth before complaining, and they are more likely to spread negative word-of-mouth about a dissatisfactory response than positive word-of-mouth about a well-handled complaint. To these can be added all those who only spread negative word-of-mouth and never tell the firm about their dissatisfaction. This initial word-of-mouth behaviour is worth noting. In general, there seems to be more research on the antecedents of public than private complaints (or compliments). Morel, Poiesz and Wilke (1997) discuss consumers’ motivation, capacity and opportunity to complain about a product. Future research could also profitably look into the effect of these on word-of-mouth behaviour for different kinds of services. Some work in this direction already exists, such as Sundaram et al. (1998) on motivation and Richins’ (1987) social activity (opportunity).

Roos (1999) found that consumers who had a longer relationship with the service provider also had a longer switching process. In the present study, most of the complaining consumers had very little previous experience with the repair shop. It is possible that consumers use different repair shops for different purposes, and they may have another shop that they use more often and have been satisfied with. Different types of behaviour may be found towards repair shops that are used regularly, or for more extensive repairs, than for those which are used only occasionally. A larger study of consumers with relationships of different lengths with repair shops could reveal how tolerant regular customers are compared to occasional customers.

It is important that consumers who are not completely satisfied with a firm’s services inform the company about its shortcomings. This way the firm receives important information about how it could improve its services. There is no denying the costs of bad quality for the company, not only in terms of immediate monetary loss when dissatisfied consumers exit, or the costs of redress, but also those arising from the negative impact on the atmosphere among employees if they have to deal with continuously dissatisfied consumers. The costs of regain management should also be considered, since these may exceed the consumer’s life-time value to the firm (Stauss 1997). Therefore, it should be remembered that complaint management is not an alternative to satisfying the consumer in the first place.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACT

Almost all conceptualizations of brand equity agree today that the phenomenon involves the value added to a product by consumers’ associations and perceptions of a particular brand name (Aaker, 1996; Baldinger, 1990; Baldinger & Rubinson, 1996; Bello & Holbrook, 1995; Dyson, Farr & Hollis, 1996; Keller, 1993; Park & Srinivasan, 1994; Winters, 1991; see also special issue of Journal of Advertising Research on Brand Equity, 1997). This, in turn, results in greater value for the brand name from the firm’s perspective. Thus, there are two aspects to brand equity—one from the point of view of the firm and the other from that of the consumer. The firm/trade aspect of brand equity appears to be built around brand performance measures such as price and shelf facings, whereas customer-based brand equity (Keller, 1993) appears to have attitudinal associations at its core.

However, what, if any, is the nature of the relationship between customer based brand equity (attitudinal associations, etc.) and brand performance measures from the point of view of the firm? It has been suggested that consumer associations of a brand, such as brand attitudes, account for brand performance measures such as price (Aaker, 1996; Bello & Holbrook, 1995; Keller, 1998). However, the role that brand loyalty plays in the relationship of brand attitudes to brand performance measures has not been explicitly considered in the literature. It is suggested in this paper that brand loyalty is a separate construct from brand attitudes and that it plays a crucial intervening role in the relationship of customer-based brand equity to brand performance measures such as shelf facings and price.

Brand loyalty is a concept whose importance has been recognized in the marketing literature for many years. Howard and Sheth (1969) pointed out that greater brand loyalty among consumers leads to greater sales of the brand (p. 232). Aaker (1991) discussed the role of brand loyalty in the brand equity process and he specifically noted that brand loyalty leads to certain marketing advantages such as reduced marketing costs, more new customers and greater trade leverage. Additionally, Dick and Basu (1994) suggest other marketing advantages as a result of brand loyalty such as favorable word of mouth and greater resistance among loyal consumers to competitive strategies. Thus, brand loyalty is obviously an important element in the brand equity process. Yet, our present conceptualizations of brand loyalty mainly emphasize only the behavioral dimension of the concept and there is generally a need to understand in more detail its relationship with other variables at both the consumer and market levels. To cite Dick and Basu (1994):

Even though many marketers have emphasized the need to define brand loyalty beyond operational measures (mostly sequence of purchases), the nomology of brand loyalty in behavioral theory (i.e., its relationships with other concepts in the expanding vocabulary of marketing research) requires stronger integration. (p. 99)

Thus, it is the goal of the present study to explore the relationship between consumer level variables (specifically, brand attitudes) and firm level brand performance measures (shelf facings and price), and to also understand the role of brand loyalty in this regard. More specifically, the objectives of this study are first, to determine the direct effects (if any) of brand attitudes on both shelf facings and price; and second, to determine the indirect effects (if any) of brand attitudes on shelf facings and price with the indirect path occurring through the concept of brand loyalty. If these relationships exist, then consumer level measures can be included in the assortment of current brand valuation techniques. Also, marketing managers can justify expenditures on promotions, which create long term attitudinal effects, such as brand loyalty, on consumers. Moreover, our overall understanding of brand equity is enhanced if we are able to better relate the consumer and market based aspects of the construct.

This paper uses a causal modeling approach to analyze the direct and indirect influences of brand attitudes and brand loyalty on brand performance measures such as shelf facings and price. A model concerning these relationships is developed, tested and replicated in two separate studies. Results indicate that brand attitudes are directly and indirectly related to shelf facings and price, with the indirect path occurring through brand loyalty. The results are shown to replicate adequately when using different samples of shoppers and products. The implications of the study are discussed in terms of their significance for managers.

For more details on this paper please contact:
Arjun Chaudhuri
School of Business
Fairfield University
Fairfield, CT 06430 U.S.A.
ACHAUDHURI@FAIR1.FAIRFIELD.EDU
The Influence of Switching Costs on Customer Retention: A Study of the Cell Phone Market in France

Jonathan Lee, University of Pittsburgh, U.S.A.
Janghyuk Lee, Ecole Supéérieure des Sciences Économiques et Commerciales (ESSEC), France

ABSTRACT

The behavioral objective of customer satisfaction programs is to increase customer retention rates. In explaining the link between customer satisfaction and loyalty, switching costs play an important role and provide useful insight. If the market is competitive and switching costs are high, only satisfied customers repurchase products and services because of competition, which results in small number of false loyal customers who are dissatisfied but obliged to be loyal. The purposes of this paper are (1) to examine heterogeneity in the customer satisfaction-loyalty link, (2) to identify customer segments with asymmetric levels of satisfaction and loyalty, and (3) to analyze the role of switching costs among different types of the satisfaction-loyalty link. Empirical illustration of our study is based on the cellular phone market in France.

INTRODUCTION

As market becomes more competitive, firms are more inclined to maintain their market share through not only capturing new customers, but also to retain current customers who are recognized much easier and proven to be a more reliable source of economic performance (Fornell and Wernerfelt 1987; Peters 1988; Reichheld and Sasser 1990). To increase current customer’s retention rate, firms focus on the implementation of effective schemes as part of the defensive marketing strategy including customer satisfaction program (Anderson and Sullivan 1993; Rust and Zahorik 1993; Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann 1994; Jones and Sasser 1995), complaint management (Hirschman 1970; Fornell and Wernerfelt 1987), and loyalty programs (Reichheld 1996; Dowling and Uncles 1997). In developing various customer satisfaction programs, researchers also focused on the management of switching cost: developing strategies to meet customer expectations (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988), and explaining the impact of service quality on profit (Rust, Zahorik, and Keiningham 1995; Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1996). They focus mainly on the process in which customers form expectations of service, perceive the performance of delivered service, decide to remain or switch, and the analysis of performance implications.

In explaining the link between customer satisfaction and loyalty, marketing researchers have given little attention to the role of switching cost. Fornell (1992) introduced the switching barrier as an element of loyalty function in addition to customer satisfaction. Recently, Jones and Sasser (1995) mentioned it as one of the factors that determine the competitiveness of market environment. They argue that high switching costs discourage customers to switch from current product vendor or service provider. In the presence of switching costs, ex ante homogeneous products or services, that is, functionally identical services, become ex post heterogeneous (Klemperer 1987). Consequently it may result in the misrepresentation of the satisfaction-loyalty link by creating a group of customers having false loyalty. The purposes of this paper are (1) to examine heterogeneity in the customer satisfaction-loyalty link, (2) to identify customer segments with asymmetric levels of satisfaction and loyalty, and (3) to analyze the role of switching costs among different types of the satisfaction-loyalty link. Empirical illustration of our study is based on the cellular phone market in France.

Empirical illustration of our study is based on the cellular phone market in France. As of April 1999, the number of cell phone users has reached 12.9 million with 22.2% of penetration rate, the market recorded 37% growth rate for a 6-month period. It is of great interest to marketing researchers not only for its rapid growth but also for its implications to customer satisfaction management in the emerging market. The cell phone market inherently presents various types of switching costs including transaction cost and search cost. Therefore, consumers should consider the expected costs of switching in pre-purchase evaluation of services in addition to price and service quality. Given the importance of switching costs, we expect to find various types of consumer satisfaction-loyalty link and explain the variation in terms of the size of switching costs. For example, we can identify a group of dissatisfied-loyal customers with high switching costs or completely satisfied-disloyal customers with low switching costs.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Antecedents and Consequences of Service Quality

During the 1980s, service quality has received much attention as one of the key strategic factors of product differentiation to increase market share and to boost profits (Philips, Chang, and Buzzell 1983; Buzzell and Bradley 1987). Researchers focused on the process in which consumers evaluate service quality. Consumer expectations and perceived performance of services were found to be the main antecedents of measuring service quality. Service quality measure consists of dimensions such as tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985). Also, the importance of the influence of disconfirmation on service quality, arising from discrepancies between anticipated and perceived performance, was reported (Tse and Wilton 1988; Bolton and Drew 1991; Cronin and Taylor 1992). This process was developed into a dynamic model which traces the way customers form and update their perception of service quality and identifies the consequences of these perceptions on individual-level behavioral intention variables (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin and Zeithaml 1993). Customer retention is thought of as one of the various behavioral consequences of service quality (Steenkamp 1989) since it produces a direct and immediate impact on the market share of firms. The analysis of impacts of service quality on profit (Koska 1990; Rust, Zahorik, and Keiningham 1995; Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1996) completed the structure of service quality process from expectations to its financial consequences.

Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty

The behavioral objective of customer satisfaction programs is to increase customer retention rates (Fornell 1992). Recent attempts to understand customer satisfaction formation have produced several important findings. For example, disconfirmation and perceived quality were found to affect customer satisfaction more than expectations (Churchill and Suprenant 1982) and expectancy-disconfirmation (Oliver and DeSarbo 1988; Yi 1990). Anderson and Sullivan (1993) also showed satisfaction as a function of disconfirmation and perceived quality by analyzing Swedish data of customer satisfaction survey. Customer satisfaction program
was recognized by managers as a major tool that can increase profit by preventing customers from defection (Reichheld and Sasser 1990). Reichheld (1996) reported the economics of customer loyalty in terms of customer retention, that is, as customer retention rate increases by 5% from the current level, net present value of customer may increase by 35% for software company and by 95% for advertising agency. As a result of consistent high satisfaction level, a long-run reputation effect insulating firms by reducing customers’ price sensitivity (Anderson and Sullivan 1993).

According to Uncles and Laurent (1997), customer loyalty is viewed sometimes as a behavior measure (hard-core loyalty, repeat purchase probability, etc.) and as an attitude (brand preference, commitment, intention-to-buy). As a behavioral measure, customer loyalty was measured as the long-term choice probability (Jeuland 1979; Carpenter and Lehmann 1985; Colombo and Morrison 1989; Dekimpe, Steenkemp, and Mellens 1997), and a minimum differential needed for switching (Raju, Srivivasan, and Lal 1990). Attitudinal approach focused mainly on brand recommendation (Boulding et al. 1993), resistance to superior product (Narayandas 1996), repurchase intention (Cronin and Taylor 1992; Anderson and Sullivan 1993), and price premium to pay (Zeithaml et al. 1996; Narayandas 1996). As for the individual level relationship between satisfaction and loyalty, loyalty between merely satisfied and completely satisfied customers was found to be significantly different in competitive markets such as automobile industry (Jones and Sasser 1995). Narayandas (1996) also confirmed the different degree of loyalty between satisfied and delighted users of personal computing products.

**Satisfaction-Loyalty Linkage and Switching Cost**

Fornell (1992) argued that the impact of customer satisfaction for repeat business and customer loyalty is not the same for all industries. Different types of customer satisfaction-loyalty links were presented depending on factors such as market regulation, switching cost, brand equity, loyalty program, proprietary technology, and product differentiation at industry level (Jones and Sasser 1995). Hauser, Simester, and Wernerfelt (1994) also pointed out that consumers become less sensitive to satisfaction level as switching cost increases. Jones and Sasser (1995) present a very intuitive classification of satisfaction-loyalty linkage at the individual level. Customers were classified into 4 different groups: loyalist/apostle (high satisfaction–high loyalty), defector/terrorist (low satisfaction–low loyalty), mercenary (high satisfaction–low loyalty), and hostage (low satisfaction–high loyalty). As in Fornell (1992), switching costs play a crucial role by making it costly for customers to switch to another service provider. The results of Anderson and Sullivan (1993) similarly support the role of switching costs by observing the average satisfaction and retention elasticities for selected firms in 1989. They argue quality elasticity should increase as average satisfaction decreases. For airlines and banking industry, this relationship of average satisfaction and quality elasticity was correctly maintained because customers have to incur switching costs. However, in supermarket, where there exists almost no switching cost, this order was not respected between firms. It means customers’ quality elasticity may depend more on switching cost than on the level of satisfaction. In our context, this is an important finding that shows the impact of switching cost on the satisfaction-loyalty link in a competitive market.

**Switching Costs and Market Competition**

To uncover segment with false loyalty, we believe a more comprehensive model of the satisfaction-loyalty link is required, which accounts for both switching costs and market competition. If the market is not competitive (in case of monopoly), we may find a large proportion of false loyal customers who are locked-in due to no alternatives (such as local telephone and airlines industries in Jones and Sasser (1995)). If the market is competitive and switching costs are negligible, we may find a large portion of mercenary customers who are satisfied but disloyal because there is no switching cost to incur (such as personal computers, automobiles industries in Jones and Sasser (1995)). If the market is competitive and switching costs exist, only satisfied customers repurchase products and services because of competition, which may result in small number of false loyal customers. This seems to be the case in the cell phone market. Figure 1 describes the typology of satisfaction-loyalty linkage derived from Jones and Sasser (1995) with respect to both market competition and switching costs.

Therefore, the satisfaction-loyalty linkage can be more significant when the market is competitive and switching costs exist. This link can be reinforced by increased consumption of products and services, which in turn further increases switching cost. Controlling for switching costs alone can’t be effective since it basically exploits its locked-in customers with high switching costs. And loyalty programs such as bonus reward, can not be effective without properly structured satisfaction program.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

**Measurement of Loyalty, Satisfaction, and Switching Cost**

Subjects for this study consist of 256 respondents (by personal interview) who are currently subscribing wireless services from various vendors. Using the aforementioned literature, we develop three measures used in this study. To measure customer loyalty, we use a subset of the original measures developed in Narayandas (1996). They are (i) repurchase intent, (ii) resistance to switching to a competitor’s product that is superior to the preferred vendor’s product, and (iii) willingness to recommend preferred vendor’s product to friends and associates. They can be viewed as an attitudinal measure of loyalty (Uncles and Laurent 1997). For customer satisfaction measurement, we selected the relevant attributes based on the performance ratings for cellular phone published by Consumer Reports (Buying Guide 1998). They consist of customer satisfaction with respect to (i) pricing plan, (ii) coverage of the calling area, (iii) clarity of sound, and (iv) precision of billing service. Finally, to operationalize switching costs, we first measure three types of switching costs (transaction, learning, and contractual) following Klemperer (1987). Transaction costs, related to its volume, arise as a customer switches between completely identical brands such as long distance carrier. Learning costs are needed to get familiar with new products or services after switching. And contractual costs arise based on the terms of contract such as the early cancellation fee and the minimum length of subscription. In addition, we incorporate search cost. Search cost was considered as one of the key elements of switching costs for price discrimination in competitive markets (Holmes 1989; Borenstein 1991). Table 1 shows the summary of descriptive statistics of three measures used in this study.

**Identifying Consumer Segments**

We first examine whether there exist different types of satisfaction-loyalty link and how the level of switching cost varies among them. Using 3 variables (overall satisfaction, repurchase intention and difficulty to switch), we run a K-means cluster analysis that can handle large numbers of cases. Three segments provided an excellent fit, and a separate discriminant analysis using the same variables resulted in 99% classification accuracy into three groups. Table 2 shows the results of cluster analysis and segment classification results.
The results confirm previous findings (Narayandas 1996; Jones and Sasser 1995) that show heterogeneity in the satisfaction-loyalty link. Segment 1 shows low satisfaction—low loyalty type, which is termed the defector group in Jones and Sasser (1995). Firms need to understand the sources of dissatisfaction and to further develop customer satisfaction measurement program. Consumers in segment 2 are true loyalists who are very satisfied and show strong commitment to repurchase of services. For both segment 1 and segment 2, we find low switching costs. Whereas low switching costs make it easier for dissatisfied customer to defect in segment 1, they are not deemed to be important for loyalists in segment 2. The role of switching cost in the satisfaction-loyalty link is highlighted in segment 3 in which customers show low to medium satisfaction but relatively high loyalty. It can be characterized as forced loyalty due to high switching costs. Customers in segment 3 present a strong latent threat to a company since they will defect quickly if the competitors can provide incentives in terms of switching costs. Finally, we could not identify a group of customers who are completely satisfied but exhibit no loyalty. This so-called mercenary group (Jones and Sasser 1995) emerges as the degree of market competition intensifies. In the next section, we discuss the implications of the relationship between market competition and switching costs.

**Segment-level Analysis**

A principal component factor analysis was performed as a preliminary step to regression analysis. As shown in Table 4, three loyalty measures loaded on a single factor explaining 62% of the variance. For customer satisfaction, two factors explaining 65% of the variation in the data are found. Factor 1, termed the “price factor,” is composed of customer satisfaction regarding pricing and billing service. Factor 2, called the “quality factor,” is composed of the service area and sound quality. Similarly, two factors explaining 63% of the variation are found for switching costs. Factor 1, called the “information factor,” is composed of search cost and learning cost. Factor 2, termed the “usage factor,” is mainly composed of transaction costs that are proportional to the average number of calling hours and the number of contact person. In addition to two factors of switching costs, we also consider perceived difficulty in switching to account for the intangible aspect of switching.

For each segment identified above, loyalty factor is regressed on the satisfaction scores, switching-cost scores, and perceived difficulty in switching. Table 4 reports the results of segment-level regression.

It is interesting to note that none of the switching cost variables is significant in segment 1, the defector group. If they decide to switch to other providers, switching costs will not be the barrier considering low switching costs in this segment. For customers in segment 2, the quality factor of satisfaction is significant whereas the price factor is not at the 5% significance level. In other words, loyalists who are very satisfied with the current provider are less concerned with the pricing plan and willing to pay a price premium. Also, the significance of usage factor of switching costs shows that they are heavy users of services and therefore incur high transaction costs if they decide to switch. The opposite is the case for segment 3 in which customers show low to medium satisfaction but high loyalty. They are dissatisfied with the service, but the information factor becomes a switching barrier for them. That is, it is time-consuming and costly for them to search for a new vendor. This is also reflected in the significance of perceived difficulty in switching for both segment 2 and segment 3.

**DISCUSSION**

For the continued success of a firm, it is critical to retain its current customers and maintain loyalty to its brands. Hence the success depends heavily on the well-designed customer satisfac-
The Influence of Switching Costs on Customer Retention: A Study of the Cell Phone Market in France

TABLE 1
Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Satisfaction (5-point scale)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction</td>
<td>3.400</td>
<td>0.899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pricing Plan</td>
<td>2.941</td>
<td>1.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Coverage</td>
<td>3.400</td>
<td>1.169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of Sound</td>
<td>3.176</td>
<td>1.120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precision of Billing Service</td>
<td>2.890</td>
<td>1.250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loyalty</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repurchase Intent</td>
<td>3.558</td>
<td>1.367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance to Switch to a Better Offer</td>
<td>2.482</td>
<td>1.315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to Recommend to Others</td>
<td>3.565</td>
<td>1.179</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Switching Cost</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty to switch Transaction*</td>
<td>2.667</td>
<td>1.299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling Hours</td>
<td>3.5316</td>
<td>2.6157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Contact Person</td>
<td>22.40</td>
<td>7.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>1.671</td>
<td>0.971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>1.350</td>
<td>0.774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>1.725</td>
<td>1.070</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* measured in metrics, and others measured by 5-scale scoring

By understanding the role of switching costs in satisfaction-loyalty link, a firm can take advantage of the current structure of switching costs in preventing customers from switching and/or in attracting potential customers by creating high switching costs. As a matter of fact, inducing current customers to consume more products or services does not necessarily guarantee increased loyalty. However, since switching costs are in general proportional to the volume of consumption or the purchase frequency, it indirectly increases switching costs and in turn contributes to customer retention, specifically for mercenary consumer group. As switching costs reach a threshold that can deter switching, a reward program can be implemented to increase the benefits of membership, which results in higher loyalty or the state of inertia loyalty. In sum, management of switching cost can be directed towards both loyal and disloyal customers so that it increases customers’ incentives to repurchase products or services. Also, only loyalty programs accompanied by well-designed satisfaction program can be effective in increasing customer retention.

Finally, Hauser et al. (1994) argue that if customers can be segmented by switching costs, (a) a firm can improve its profits by placing different weights on customers with different levels of satisfaction with different switching costs, and (b) satisfaction receives the highest weight when the absolute values of the switching costs are small. The reason is that as switching costs decrease, it becomes easier for customers to switch. We like to point out that the clustering method used in this study is limited in its use if the primary concern is to find out a threshold of switching cost that can deter customers to switch. Given the managerial implications of switching costs, the further development and application of rigorous statistical approach seem to be a good topic for future research.
REFERENCES
TABLE 3
Factor Analysis results

**Customer Satisfaction (5-point scale)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Satisfaction</th>
<th>Rotated Pattern (Varimax)</th>
<th>Rotation sums of squared loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Factor 1</td>
<td>Factor 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pricing Plan</td>
<td>0.103</td>
<td>0.721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Coverage</td>
<td>0.844</td>
<td>-0.140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of Sound</td>
<td>0.800</td>
<td>0.209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precision of Billing Service</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.801</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Loyalty**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loyalty</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Cumulative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repurchase Intent</td>
<td>0.901</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.862</td>
<td>62.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance to Switch to a Better Offer</td>
<td>0.575</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to Recommend to Others</td>
<td>0.848</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Switching Cost**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Switching Cost</th>
<th>Rotated Pattern (Varimax)</th>
<th>Rotation sums of squared loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Factor 1</td>
<td>Factor 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transaction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling Hours</td>
<td>-0.124</td>
<td>0.835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Contact Person</td>
<td>0.121</td>
<td>0.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>0.741</td>
<td>-0.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search</td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>0.805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>0.716</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### TABLE 4
Segment-Level Regression Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0.639</td>
<td>0.141</td>
<td>-1.237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a</td>
<td>(0.179)</td>
<td>(0.169)</td>
<td>(0.483)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>0.176</td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>0.112</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a</td>
<td>(0.082)</td>
<td>(0.067)</td>
<td>(0.079)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price Factor</td>
<td>0.235</td>
<td>0.118</td>
<td>0.172</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a</td>
<td>(0.084)</td>
<td>(0.064)</td>
<td>(0.077)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>-0.136</td>
<td>-0.303</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Factor</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.067)</td>
<td>(0.070)</td>
<td>(0.079)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switching Cost</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.152</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Factor</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.039)</td>
<td>(0.069)</td>
<td>(0.067)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

( . ) Standard Error

a Significant at the 5% significance level

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**SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY**

**Linking Values and Consumer Behavior: Understanding the Nature of the Relationship in the Cultural Context**

John A. McCarty, George Mason University, U.S.A.

**SESSION OVERVIEW**

Over much of the history of consumer behavior research there has been an interest in the study of values and their relationship to consumer behavior. This interest has existed not only among academic researchers in their theoretical efforts to understand values and their connections with consumer attitudes and behavior, but among marketing and advertising practitioners in their attempts to more effectively market goods and services to consumers. Much of this activity has been aimed at linking personal values to the consumption of specific products or services. Although these attempts have met with modest success, values research has been plagued with methodological and measurement concerns. As with the study of any kind of phenomena, these methodological and measurement issues are heightened when studied in an international context. Therefore, although our understanding of values has come a long way over the past two decades, we are far from a clear realization of the interplay of values with consumer attitudes and behavior.

This session touched on two major themes that have emerged in values research. First, the session highlighted values as cultural phenomena and emphasized the need to understand how values relate to consumption both within a culture and across cultures. Values, whether personal or cultural, are culturally derived in that people learn their values via the teachings of their culture from educational institutions, religious institutions, and the family. Values, in a sense, define a culture. Although values are part of what distinguishes one culture from another, there may also be great commonality across cultures with respect to these fundamental beliefs.

Cross-cultural considerations are particularly relevant in the case of values. As marketers attempt to understand differences in consumption in different cultures, it would seem that very fundamental beliefs such as values may be of particular importance in explaining differences and similarities in consumer behavior. That is, given the fundamental and basic nature of values, they potentially provide a set of basic dimensions with which to explore the international dynamics of consumer behavior. Two of the presentations in the session (Beckmann; Horn) presented data from several countries that relate to the cross-cultural nature of values and the third paper (McCarty and Shrum) examined the importance of cultural level value orientations in understanding consumer activity within a culture.

Secondly, this session shed further light on the relationships of values to behavior, and the complex nature of these relationships. The study of values is important to consumer behavior only to the extent that values aid in our understanding of consumption. All three presentations tied the abstract constructs of values to specific consumer behaviors.

The session went beyond simply tying values to behaviors by addressing the nature of the relationships between abstract values and behaviors. Two of the papers in the session (Beckmann; McCarty and Shrum), in particular, dealt with these issues. The McCarty and Shrum presentation focused on the cultural values–attitudes–behavior hierarchy in an attempt to understand how cultural level orientations influence behavior, while the Beckmann presentation argued the need to understand general worldviews of consumers and their relationship to more specific attitudes and behaviors.

**PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS**

**A Cross-Cultural Examination of the Interplay Between Worldviews and Value Systems as Antecedents for Environmental Concern**

Suzanne C. Beckmann, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

Environmental concern of consumer-citizens is commonly considered to be a prerequisite for achieving environmental sustainability. However, as the level of environmental concern seems to have increased considerably over the past decade, related behaviors have not kept pace. This contradiction can, on a theoretical level, be explained by a gap between attitudes and behavior.

However, attempts to clarify the reasons for this gap have been scarce and mainly limited to criticizing the measurement of the constructs. Instead, it is argued here that the overall cultural context, which serves as a blueprint for individual motivations and beliefs, determines the degree to which concern can be transformed into action. Hence, it is the failure to assess individuals’ general frames of reference rather than the refinement of measuring attitudes and behavior that might be responsible for a lack of understanding why individuals act in seeming contradiction to their expressed beliefs in the environmental arena.

It is thus proposed here that researchers have failed to examine the relevant domains, which precipitate environmentally related behaviors. Specifically, the relationship examined suggests that such behaviors are the product of a chain of reasoning leading from one’s “amalgami” of technological, political, and economic beliefs (worldview) to individual value systems to environmental attitudes to behavior. By beginning the analysis with environmental attitudes, as has traditionally been the case, a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of policy and marketing decisions becomes problematic.

To test this proposition, a questionnaire study was conducted in the following countries: Denmark, The Netherlands, Austria, Australia, England, and New Zealand. The concepts measured were worldviews as expression of the institutional level of society, value systems, environmental attitudes, and perceived need for changing course.

The results of this study indicate that the failure to examine the entire chain might lead to environmental policies that are fundamentally incompatible with individual values. This would render such policies ineffective. These findings apply to all countries, though to a different degree. Further, as citizen-consumers are made aware of environmental problems and become increasingly concerned, their behavior might well make problems worse rather than better if they seek their solutions within the dominant social paradigm. The conclusion of the paper argues that to transform environmental behaviors toward sustainability, individual values must be addressed and this effort must be proceeded by an examination of the basic dimensions of the dominant worldview.

**Linking Values and Product Usage: Cross-Cultural Evidence from the DDB Needham World Style Study**

Martin I. Horn, DDB Needham, Chicago, U.S.A.

This study investigated the relationship of personal values to product usage across twelve countries in the continents of Europe, Asia, North and South America. The personal values were expressed in terms of self image as operationalized by the terms...
respondents selected that express how they would like to be seen by others. The aim of the study was to determine whether there was consistency across countries in self image and whether these consistencies could be related to product usage. In particular, the very practical consideration of the study focused on the question of how could information about people’s values be used to position products and communicate to consumers about them.

The study was conducted in 12 countries in the continents of Europe, Asia, North America, and South America. Roughly 1000 people were surveyed in each of these countries. Although there were slight variations in the methodology across the countries that were necessary, the basic methodological approach was similar in each case. Respondents were asked the question “How would you like to be seen by others?” They were then allowed to select value terms from groups of terms in response to this question. Roughly 50 terms were used in the study and these included values such as creative, honest, happy, dependable, hardworking, and friendly. Respondents were also asked about their usage of a number of product categories. Standard cross-cultural considerations were used in the development of the questionnaire in each of the countries (i.e., back-translation).

The results showed that there was a tremendous level of consistency across countries in terms of the values selected by respondents as those by which they would like to be seen by others. More importantly, for a variety of product categories, there appears to be a consistency across countries in terms of the values that are selected by users of the product category. For example, except for one country, those who are heavy users of photographic film value creativity as part of their self image. However, in spite of this consistency across countries in the importance of this one value among users of film, there were context effects with respect to other values selected. This raises the issue of the meaning of creativity vis-a-vis the other values held by the respondents in the different cultures. These context effects have implications for strategic decisions whether to adopt a global communication strategy for a product or service or to follow a multinational approach to communication.

Cultural Value Orientations, Attitudes, and Behavior

John A. McCarty, George Mason University, U.S.A.
L. J. Shrum, Rutgers University, U.S.A.

This presentation focused on the relationships of cultural value orientations to attitudes and behaviors, with an effort toward understanding the nature of these relationships. Cultural value orientations are very fundamental ways individuals within a culture respond to the world. Value orientations develop as a way of adapting to the world, and these orientations tend to relate to two basic issues with which a culture must deal; people’s relationship to nature and an individual’s relationship to others. Although there may be a great deal of consistency in beliefs across people in a culture with respect to these fundamental orientations, in highly heterogeneous cultures such as the U.S., there are individual differences in these fundamental beliefs.

The study investigated three value orientations (measured at the individual level) and their relationship to pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors. The value orientations included:

1) individualism—an emphasis on the individual, the importance of individual achievement and recognition; 2) collectivism—an emphasis on group goals and sharing; and 3) locus of control—a person’s (or culture’s) beliefs about the extent to which he/she controls nature or is controlled by nature, therefore, related to a fundamental value orientation about people’s relationship to nature. Using structural equation modeling, these value orientations were related to recycling attitudes (beliefs about the importance of recycling and beliefs about the convenience of recycling) and behaviors (the extent to which people recycle newspapers, cans, and jars). Results showed that the value orientations related to attitudes in predictable ways and that the recycling attitudes showed the hypothesized relationships with behaviors. Moreover, as expected, the attitudes mediated the effects of values on behaviors, thus supporting a values–attitudes–behavior hierarchy in our understanding of the ways that values influence behavior.
SESSION OVERVIEW

Conventional marketing thought suggests that associations between a brand (cue) and benefit (outcome) are strengthened whenever they co-occur, irrespective of other cues or outcomes. The papers in this special session show that formation and recall of brand associations is subject to “competition” between cues and between outcomes. The strength of brand associations and the recall of brand associates depend on the presence of other brand cues or brand associates during learning. This influences the value consumers place on brand names during product evaluation and choice.

Van Osselaer, Janiszewski, and Alba showed that brand-quality associations can “block” other associations between other cues and quality. Experiment 1 showed that when consumers learned about a brand name and quality information before they encountered information about an intrinsic attribute, consumers failed to learn the importance of the intrinsic attribute for product quality. This cue competition effect occurred despite the fact that brand names, in contrast to intrinsic attributes, do not have a direct causal influence on quality. The effect reduced the predicted quality of (generic) products containing the intrinsic attribute but not carrying the blocking brand. Experiment 2 showed that the effect was not due to reduced attention to the intrinsic attribute information. Experiment 3 provided evidence against an associative learning explanation. Results were consistent with an associative learning explanation. Experiment 4 replicated the blocking phenomenon when both cues were brand names and consumers learned from direct experience (tasting baked goods)—an interesting finding given previous findings of “non-competitive” learning from experience by Baeyens and colleagues.

Warlop, Baeyens, Lerouge, and Vanhouche tested boundary conditions of competitive versus non-competitive learning from experience. They contrasted influence of brand cues on predicted quality of future experiences (cf. van Osselaer et al.) with situations in which (1) the cues themselves were characteristics of the experience (flavors) instead of brands, or (2) subjects evaluated actual experiences instead of predicting future experiences. Results showed cue competition for both types of cues (brands and flavors) but only for quality predictions. For both cue-types, no significant competition was found for evaluations of actual experiences. In fact, brand cues did not have any significant influence on experience evaluations (i.e., brands did not actually make drinks taste better or worse).

Finally, Meyvis and Janiszewski demonstrated that extensions from brands with broad product portfolios may be preferred to those from narrow brands because the brand-benefit associations of broad brands suffer less output competition from strong brand-category associations during retrieval. Experiment 1 showed that subjects preferred an extension from a broad brand (carrying three dissimilar products) to that of a narrow brand (carrying three similar products), even though the extension category was more similar to the narrow brand’s products. Experiment 2 supported the hypothesis that the effect of brand breath was due to greater accessibility of the broad brand’s benefit associations by showing that the brand breath effect disappeared when the extension choice and provision of information about each brand’s current products were not separated in time. Experiment 3 supported the hypothesis that the brand breadth effect was mediated by differential accessibility of the brands’ benefit associations by showing that the effect depended on the desirability of the brands’ benefit associations in the extension category.

In sum, these three papers suggest that learning and retrieval of brand associations are subject to competition between associations. They show that competition between associations is a robust phenomenon that has significant influence on product evaluation and choice. Given this influence and our limited knowledge about its mechanisms and boundary conditions, competition between associations provides a promising area for future research.
BACKGROUND

No one doubts the increasing pace of daily life in the United States. The new technologies as well as increasingly complex work and social roles and schedules for husbands, wives and children have put considerable pressure on time, money and mental resources. As with most major trends, however, a counter trend has emerged. In books (e.g., Smollin 1996, Canfield and Hansen 1993), lectures, and newspaper columns, Americans are now admonished to slow down and experience daily life more deeply and spiritually. There are now Proustian-type instructions on how to consume daily life, on how to draw expressive as well as instrumental gratifications from a wide variety of products and services. Membership in organized religion is up (McCourt, 1998), and television and movie programming with spiritual themes are drawing larger and larger audiences.

One of the most popular writers on the new spirituality is Thomas Moore. One of Moore’s best-selling recent books, The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life (1996) is interesting because it is basically a how-to book about how to find soul in the consumption of everything from foods to architecture to automobiles and hotel rooms. Moore, an ex-priest, draws on theories and experiences from psychotherapy, Zen, Islam, art therapy, psychology and anthropology to describe how to live a soulful life. Moore’s book should interest consumer researchers for many reasons:

1. It is a good case study of one person’s subjective experiences of practically everything in daily life. For consumer researchers interested in the impact of spirituality, the book is a great place to start. While the data are introspective, Moore goes to great depth to describe a wide range of consumption experiences. From his book, it is possible to distill a set of “rules” on how to consume soulfully.

2. Many consumer researchers as well as marketing scholars are trying to make consumer research and marketing more accountable. There is a growing interest in products which are not only liked by consumers (and therefore market successes) – but are also good in a deeper and broader sense, that is, good for the environment, society, and for the individual consumer’s physical and emotional well-being (Porter and van der Linde 1995, Hamel and Prahalad 1994, Maio 1999). Simply put, there is a desire for products to have an inherent goodness. Products which are liked and which have this “goodness” quality are “win-win” opportunities for manufacturers and consumers. Many manufacturers are aware of this, and make advertising claims like “We Bring Good Things to Life” (General Electric) and “Good for the body and good for the soul” (Quaker Oats). When industrial design got its start in the 20s, many (Bayley, Garner, Sudjic, 1986) saw it as an opportunity to improve not only products’ outward appearances but also to elevate peoples’ lives morally, aesthetically and spiritually. While this effort was not entirely successful, the underlying motives still deserve attention. The graphic designer Milton Glaser (1991) said that great art makes people feel good about life in general.

3. Moore’s ideas have direct relevance for theories about materialism. Many of the items he consumes and describes are the sort of luxury items which are examined in studies of materialism. His ideas, however, are somewhat different from those in consumer research. In consumer research, materialism is defined as “importance attached to worldly possessions” (Belk, 1984), and materialism is generally equated with negative, anti-social values, for example nongenerosity, envy, and possessiveness. Not surprisingly, Belk (1985) notes a negative correlation between materialism and happiness in life. Moore, in contrast, suggests that soulful consumption includes consumption of many luxuries. As he says, “the soul requires luxuries” . . . and, while “luxury can get out of hand and represent a division of society into the haves and have-nots, (it) . . . can be a virtue when it is part of a life-affirming, soul-centered way of life. (Moore, 1996, p. 38) This tacit approval of luxuries and the suggestion that they nourish the soul points to a more constructive approach to the person-object relationship in research on materialism.

4. Moore’s ideas can serve as what Schon (1993) calls a “generative metaphor” to help us see consumption behavior in a new light. We can lay out Moore’s ideas about soulful consumption and hold them up to regular consumption in order to see new aspects of symbolic or “deep” consumption. Moore, for example, suggests that all things—from trees to cars – are embodied with spirit or “soul.” Whereas Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry (1991) stress differences between sacred consumption and profane consumption, Moore suggests that all things are sacred. Obviously, from an empirical standpoint, the idea that a person or thing might actually have a soul or spirit would be impossible to validate. It would be impossible to establish the existence of these spirits independently of the subjectivities of individual respondents. Suppose, however, that all things emanate spirituality. Some emanate a lot while others emanate only a little. Would the quality of life be improved if “low soul” items could be given more soul? How could this be done?

The purpose of this paper is to explore Moore’s theories about soulful products and what “soulful consumption” means more generally. The paper describes products Moore personally feels are “soulful” and why they have this quality. It also provides results from an ongoing program of research about soulful consumption. Specifically, it summarizes results from a small pilot study in which 45 adult respondents were shown pictures of different product designs and asked to indicate which they liked, which had the most soul, and why. The goal in the research was to understand soulful consumption, and, more importantly, to identify products which score high on likeability and soul. The latter products represent the win-win condition described above. If we understood consumption of items which are liked and have “high soul”, we could help manufacturers design new products which are commercially successful and which have deep positive impacts on peoples lives.

In terms of existing consumer research, this paper is close to the research on sacred consumption, for example, the research of Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry (1991), Hirschman (1988) and Rook (1985). Rook’s (1985) research, for example, is very applicable inasmuch as ritual behavior, like soulful consumption involves
actions which are carried out with an awareness of the underlying spiritual significance and deep meaning of the individual actions. Moore says he enjoys the ritual of washing dishes by hand because of the sensory enjoyment as well as the sense of a larger, deeper significance of cleaning per se.

This paper is particularly close to the Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry research insofar as these researchers carefully examine cultural processes through which an artifact becomes sacred or profane. They note, for example, how items become sacred through inheritance and gift-giving. As we will see, many of the same phenomenon account for a heightened feeling of “soul” in many personal possessions. People feel heightened soul in items which were inherited and items which were gifts from loved ones. The concept of “soul” is broader, however, than sacredness. Belk, et al. ground their notions of sacredness in religion. While there is a lot of overlap, the soul concept over time has touched on everything from other worlds described by Plato (in Van Peursen 1966) to Freud’s notions of the unconscious (Bettleheim, 1983). The soul concept also differs in tone from these researchers’ ideas of sacredness. The soul concept is generally a happy, positive concept—while the dominant tone in Rook’s research on ritual and the Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry research on sacred possessions is more solemn.

Moore’s book is essentially a how-to book about how to consume more soulfully. He defines soulful consumption as “enchantment” and says that, “enchantment is an ascendency of the soul, a condition that allows us to connect, for the most part lovingly and intimately, with the world we inhabit and the people who make up our families and communities.” (Moore, 1996, p. 32). If “soulful consumption” exists, this raises many interesting questions. What is it? What criteria define it? Are these criteria measurable? Is there such a thing as a “high soul” product? How are high soul products different from low soul products? What attributes of a product most account for its soul? Does high soul necessarily mean high market appeal? Given the trend toward spirituality, are high soul products gaining in popularity? Are the criteria for high soul products very different from one person to the next? What would a life be like that consisted entirely of high soul products? How are high soul criteria translated into design specifications? As we will see, Moore finds soul in many older items such as antiques and old homes. Can new designs have soulful properties of older items? How would consumers react to products which had been redesigned in terms of increased soulfulness?

This paper is a very early exploratory look at some of these questions. The next section reviews Moore’s definitions of soul and soulful consumption, and describes products he cites as particularly soulful products. Subsequent sections describe results of a small study of perceived soul in eight product categories.

MOORE’S IDEAS ABOUT THE SOUL

Like many other writers, (see Van Peursen, 1966) Moore notes the differences and independence between soul and body. Amorousness, for example, was thought to be a concern of the body while love was a concern of the soul. Moore also suggests that the soul is an entity which has its own needs and desires. He says it is, “not a mechanical problem that needs to be solved but rather a living thing that needs to be fed.” (Moore, 1996, p. 61) It’s main function is to be receptive. It thrives, he says, on time for reflection, conversation, reverence, beauty, and rest. At the same time, he also gives it many active properties: “It loves to wander… it craves novel sights and new belongings” and that it is “essentially epicurean; It’s primary objective is pleasure…” (Moore, 1996, p. 141) As we will see, people perceive eating and good foods as highly soulful pleasures. Art is also felt to be pleasant to the soul, an issue which has obvious importance to product design and aesthetics. While Moore’s definitions have an abstractness that might frustrate empirically minded social researchers, they provide a general sense of what the soul is about:

“Soul is not a thing, but a quality or a dimension of experiencing life and ourselves. It has to do with depth, value, relatedness, heart and personal substance.” (Moore, 1992, p. 5)

As we will see, product soul is deeper than concepts such as product image or essence. Product image, according to Levy and Glick (1973) consists of a condensation of all experiences a person has had in conjunction with the product. An image of a motorcycle, for example might coalesce around a theme of masculinity insofar as riders are mainly men, the bikes are physically hard to ride, advertising usually shows males, etc. The soul of the motorcycle, however, is much deeper, more emotional and more narrowly experienced.

While Moore sees the soul as being independent of the body, he also sees it as an important connection medium to the rest of the world. He notes the Renaissance idea that the soul is part of a larger soul, the soul of the world, “animus mundi.” According to him, “this world soul affects each individual thing, whether natural or human-made. You have a soul, the tree in front of your house has a soul, but so too does the car parked under that tree.” (Moore, 1992, p. 268)

This last point should interest marketers. The object of marketing is to give a tangible product a personality or soul, to make it “come alive” (Durgee, 1985/86). Marketers do this through names, advertising, package design and product form. According to Moore, the modern approach (what marketers do) of projecting life and personality onto things is troublesome in that it brings too much focus back to the ego. In the modern approach, that is, the person feels that all spiritual qualities and personality an item might possess are the result of his or her own action and subjectivity. It is quite a different approach to allow things themselves to have vitality and personality. In short, the difference here is the difference between an advertising copywriter and an American Indian. The copywriter says “the apple has personality and spirit because I gave it to it.” The Indian says, “the apple already had spirit in it.”

Moore likes art which enables the spirit of the object to come out. He says, for example:

“When the artist Merit Oppenheim got the crazy idea to line her teacup with fur, she was shocked to find her inspiration was thought to be a major artistic event. But she had found an elegant way to reveal the personality of the cup by eclipsing its function. Her revolutionary act was a breakthrough to soul, achieved by penetrating our dominant, blinding myth of use.” (Moore, 1996, p. 277)

ENCHANTMENT OR “SOULFUL CONSUMPTION”

Postmodernists (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995, Brown 1995) argue that the emphasis on rationally constructed, technologically ordered life has caused much consumer disaffection and alienation. Two results, they say, are trends toward interest in hyperreality and things of the past. Similarly, when Moore speaks of re-enchantment, he is referring to the act of reconnecting to the ethereal world of the soul. Also, he says that 1. we need to regain the sense of awe and wonder about the world that we felt as children, and 2. that we need to regain conditions from a mythical Golden Age. This age, common in the lore of many cultures, was a time of wholeness and
perfection. It is reflected in peoples’ general desires for “the good old days.”

Enchanted or “soulful” consumption involves seeing mystery and sacredness in everyday life. It requires proximity, contemplation, time, ritual, and a spirit of piety. As he says, “the values of the soul sometimes stand at odds with other values: speed versus a slow pace, efficiency versus quality, function versus imagination, and productivity versus creativity” (Moore, 1996, p.131)

This is very important and very interesting. It goes against the direction that technology pushes us in— but would seem to suggest that designers may be able to address this in their product designs.

In soulful consumption, the goal is a feeling of emotional connectedness. As he says, “enchanted conjures up the juices of vitality and a renewal of childhood, play, poetry, art, natural religious virtues, and community. Its characteristic emotion is joy, and its goal, deep pleasure.” (Moore, 1996, p. 242)

Enchantment requires consumption that is patient and attentive to the smallest details. Daily life, he says, is full of epiphanies. Similarly, as Virginia Woolf wrote, “One can’t write directly about the soul. Looked at, it vanishes. But look at the ceiling, at the cheaper beasts in the Zoo which are exposed to walkers in Regents Park, and the soul slips in.” (Muschamp, 1998)

Moore recommends education which teaches us how to be enchanted: “In an enchanted school, music and the other arts are primary and omnipresent. Science and technical skill are incomplete without them. The presence of soul requires a vivid and honored imagination, one that is developed over time through exposure to the arts, to intimate discussion.” (Moore, 1996, p. 380)

ITEMS MOORE WOULD CHARACTERIZE AS “HIGH SOUL”

To illustrate soulful consumption, Moore provides a number of everyday items and usage rituals that he finds particularly enriching. These include:

- Foods and cooking
- Cotton and Wool
- Gardens
- Family

CRITERIA FOR HIGH SOUL PRODUCTS

In describing items he feels are particularly spiritual, Moore often refers to the same criteria. These criteria can be summarized as follows.

1. **High in Detail, High in Contemplative Content**

   As Moore says, “what most satisfies the soul is that which is captivating, spellbinding, and full of charm.” (Moore, 1996 p. 132)

   He experiences high soulfulness in items which have a sense of mystery, which involve what he calls high “interiority”. These items require time to contemplate and appreciate. Art, for example, arrests attention. He says, “decoration can magically transform a door from a functional entry into an initiatory rite” (Moore, 1992, p. 78).

2. **Involves Hands-on Manufacture, Hands-on Consumption**

   He tends to find soul in hand-made products. Like Marx, he feels that, “machines increase production, shorten the time of manufacturing, and make work easier and more convenient, but these are not virtues of the soul. Anything of the soul requires time— and therefore lowering of productivity—and effort.” (Moore, 1996 p. 71). Directly opposite from machines in this regard is the artist: “A painter’s brush strokes on a canvas give us the supreme model of the hand’s imprint in our work. In those personal marks we can almost see the fingers and hand at work and trace in imagination the artist struggling to transfer inner images into color and line” (Moore, 1996, p. 72).

3. **Close Connections with nature and natural forces**

   Moore particularly feels soul in items which reflect or are somehow connected to nature: “My gardener friends are always telling me about the value of establishing a link, in the form of low bushes or tall grasses around the home, between the civility of the house and the wildness of the woods.” (Moore, 1996 p. 47) Other writers have noted the importance of nature and natural forces in effective design. (Alexander, 1966)

4. **Designed by someone who understands the spiritual context, the “Temenos”**

   Moore finds it fascinating that Japanese temple carpenters must be well versed in Buddhist theology and ritual, and are treated as members of the clergy during certain ceremonies. He mentions the concept of “temenos” or Chinese “Feng Shi” which refers to the sacredness of a site or location. As evidence of the power of temenos, he cites studies of people’s reactions when they learn that their home or apartment has been robbed. All report that the sense of sacredness in their homes has been violated.

   That effective designers are well versed in the relevant theology is not new learning. Shaker furniture is thought to reflect many of the spiritual values of the Shakers, and many new Moslem mosques were specifically designed to reflect Moslem spirituality. (Muschamp, 1998).

5. **Ties to the past, archetypal themes**

   Moore especially finds sacredness in ruins. He attributes the character and enchantment of Rome to its ruins, and suggests that with ruins, “we are left with objects that have a hollowness that we can fill with our own wonder and fantasy..” (Moore, 1996 p. 86)

6. **Has Imperfections**

   In describing soul in a house, Moore notes that “A home will never be perfect, for perfection is an idea and an ideal, and our home is always an approximation of our dream. I wouldn’t want to live in a perfect home, because enchantment and perfection do not lie in the same order of things. If you’re looking for perfection, you don’t pursue enchantment, and vice versa.” (Moore, 1996 p. 82) Frank Lloyd Wright buildings were reported to contain many flaws. Also, this criterion mirrors a recent finding regarding perceptions of “product rightness.” (Durgee and O’Connor, 1997). In this research, respondents were asked to list and discuss “objects in their daily lives which gave them a feeling of rightness.” Many items—from Big Bertha golf clubs to a Saab automobile—all contained imperfections. The Mercedes rode too hard, a Movado watch often stopped, and a favorite runners watch was felt to be ugly.

7. **Versatile, Touches People in many different ways**

   Moore’s appreciation of gardens and foods and how these impact many of our senses have already been described. He also appreciates soulful items for their versatility, for the many ways we can experience them. With a tree, for example, “We can sit on a tree’s limb, rest against its trunk, enjoy its fruits and nuts, sit under its shade, and watch it dance in the wind. The lessons we can learn from a tree are infinite, and its pleasures indescribable..” (Moore, 1996, p. 23) Further, Moore says we cannot experience soul or spirit directly. Rather, we should be attentive to the smallest elements, or as he quotes Emily Dickinson on food, “the smallest ingredient is the most powerful.” (Moore, 1996, p. 63). In a paper on brand personality (Durgee, 1988), small attributes or what the authors
EXPLORATORY RESEARCH ON HIGH SOUL PRODUCTS

To begin exploring people’s feelings about soulful consumption, I have conducted a series of small pilot projects. The purpose of the first project, therefore, was to explore how a small sample of randomly selected adults would describe soulful consumption. Specifically, 12 adults (equal male and female) were interviewed in depth and asked to list and describe their feelings about products or things they use in daily life that are “good for (their) soul, that are good in a deep, spiritual, life-enhancing sense.”

Results reflected a wide range of items: classical music, cats, dogs, woodworking tools, books, beds, refrigerators, outdoor hiking items, old houses, Dove soap, Italian food, Finesse shampoo, a window seat, teddy bear, mountain bike, Barbie doll, Lancome Skin Freshener. These items had “soul” because A. they were felt to be intrinsic or autotelic sources of soul (e.g., old house, Italian food) – or B. they gained soul by association, that is, they were closely connected to places or activities that were high in soul (e.g., mountain bike used to get into nature). What’s important is that the soulfulness of these items mirrored “high soul” criteria from Moore:

- hand-made, hands-on
- multi-sensory consumption
- high arresting properties and slow consumption
- high in detail, high contemplation, high involvement (Belk, Wallendorf, Sherry 1991)
- involve nature, natural forces
- don’t know what to expect, high surprise, high mystery
- designed by someone who understands “temenos”
- involves ties to past, to archetypes
- has imperfections
- high versatility

The purpose of the second project was to expose items with different “soul quotients” to people and see how they would respond. Specifically, I used the criteria above to select pictures of “high soul” and “low soul” items from hundreds of pictures of different consumer products. We wanted to see how they could classify the items in terms of soul content, and what dimensions of soulfulness they would use to support their choices. At the same time—and more importantly—I also wanted to see how a separate sample of respondents would rate and describe their feelings about the same items in terms of overall liking. The most interesting items here would be the “win-win” items, that is, items with high soul and high likeability. These would be items mentioned above that address deep goals of the manufacturer and the consumer. To repeat, the goals here were to A. learn more about soulful consumption and B. learn how to research it.

METHOD

Pictures of new, currently-for-sale, market items from eight categories of consumer products were selected: coffee pots, briefcases, popcorn makers, stools, teapots, children’s storybooks, easy chairs, and desks. Items were selected so they matched high and low soul criteria from above:

1. Coffeepots: An old, glass “French press” design (high soul), a modern, round, Krups design of plastic (low soul), and a 1950s percolator (low soul)
2. Briefcases: An old vinyl black briefcase (low soul), a newer design of leather (mid soul) and a new design of distressed leather (high soul)
3. Popcorn makers: microwave popper (low soul), electric countertop popper (low soul), hot air popper (low soul), handcrank stove-top, old-style popper (high soul), fire-place popper (high soul).
4. Stools: wood, hand-made “look” stool (high soul) and modern chrome and vinyl stool (low soul)
5. Teapots: whimsical, ceramic pot with feet (high soul) and a modern design of glass and steel (low soul)
6. Storybooks: A regular book (“Crocky Dilly”) (mid soul) and a book which consisted of a series of pages of text and cut-out pictures that the parent could use with a flashlight to throw story images on the wall (high mystery and high soul).
7. Easy chairs: An old-looking distressed leather chair (high soul) and a modern, black leather chair (mid soul)
8. Desks: A stained wood designers table (high soul) and a black, medal and formica office desk (low soul).

Respondents were shown the items on separate pages in a notebook. Twenty–three adult respondents (16 women and 7 men, ages 25-51) were asked to indicate which items on each page had the “most soul.” They were also asked which item had the most soul of all items and why that item had so much soul. A separate sample of 22 respondents (13 women, 9 men, 25-50) were shown the pictures and were asked to indicate which they most liked on each page, which they most liked overall, and why they liked that item. Open questions about “most soul” items and “most liked” items enabled us to learn about motivations regarding each dimension.

RESULTS

As indicated above, this work represents a small, early foray into a new area. The sample is small and the research design is not one that can provide much more than suggestions and some new hypotheses. Nevertheless, the data (Table 1) are interesting.

Based on these results, it appears as though there might be four types of products of interest:

1. High Soul- High Like

These are the win-win products described above. In our small study, they include a new (but old-looking) briefcase, a distressed leather easy chair, a wooden designer’s desk, and, to a lesser extent, a French-styled coffee pot. In describing their feelings about the briefcase and distressed leather chair, respondents who rated these highly in terms of soul said that they “looked like they had been through a lot” and that “they would have many stories to tell.” Those who rated them “most liked” said that they “looked comfortable” and very “versatile”.

These answers mirrored answers across all products, that is, that respondents felt an affinity with the “soul” items because of their drama, how they “lived another life”–whereas the “most liked” products were liked because of their functional properties (“can hold a lot” or “good for many different uses.”)

One woman said of the designer desk, “It gives me more than baseline functionality; it works on several different planes...”
Many people project themselves into these items: (Male R on desk) “It’s alive, it says ‘come work with me’”

2. Hi Soul–Low Like
This category includes items such as the fireplace popcorn maker and the wooden stool. People felt these had a lot of soul because they were simply old-looking. These comments reflect a common feeling about high soul items, namely, that they are somehow attached to “another life.” The fireplace popcorn maker and wood stool, however, were items people seemed to feel were “fine (that is, soulful), but not for me.”

3. Low Soul–High Like
This category included items such as the chrome stool and the microwave popcorn maker. These items were felt to be especially functional. They were felt to be nice-looking but mainly valued for functional reasons.

4. Mixed Items
These are the most interesting items. They were selected as “high soul” and “high like” by at least a third of the respondents—yet were not predicted to be high soul items. The modern teapot, for example, was felt to have more soul than the legged teapot and was generally well-liked. The round coffee pot was chosen as “most soulful” by a third of the respondents and was liked by forty percent of the second sample. These items appealed to unusual motivations. Respondents liked the mix of functional and aesthetic properties in these designs. As one woman said of the teapot, “it reminds me of simple, functional elegance…more artful with great functionality…” Another said of the coffee pot that “I like the whole feeling of fit..It fits nicely in the maker and would fit nicely in my kitchen.”

SUMMARY
It appears as though there are a set of products on the market that might have high soul and high general appeal. These products are based on old designs and probably draw much of their soul and appeal from associations with earlier times. More interesting are newer designs which are felt to be soulful and have high appeal.

As indicated earlier, a goal of this research was to learn how to learn about this area. The idea of researching the soul—and defining it in broader terms than previous research (e.g., Belk, Wallendorf, Sherry 1991 definition in terms of religion)—is so new in consumer
research that it is difficult knowing what questions to ask. The fact that this study suggests the existence of high soul–low like items suggests a new set of questions. Retailers such as the Pottery Barn and the Nature Company can offer products with “soul” built it. Pottery Barn items are made to look old, and the Nature Company features items containing “natural” components. It’s very possible that people would look at these items and say that they have a lot of soul because reflect common social definitions of what “soulful items” are (e.g., old, wooden, weathered, etc.) Our goal is authentic high soul–high like items. It is possible that the results came out as they did because respondents were asked “what items do you like– and what items have soul.” Liking here is about the person (“what I like or dislike”)–while perceived soul might simply reflect social definitions of what soulful items are supposed to be like. Future research will focus on asking respondents to describe items that they like and that warm their souls. The focus will be shifted from perceived soul in the product to the impact of the product on the respondent’s soul. Rather than research how and when an item becomes sacred or profane (Belk, Wallendorf, Sherry 1991), future probing will deal with the effect on the respondent’s soul.

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Syntax and Creolization in Cross-Cultural Readings of Rooms
Malene Djursaa, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
Simon Ulrik Kragh, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

ABSTRACT
Exposing respondents from an English mainly traditional furnishing culture to photographs of Danish mainly modernist domestic interiors, and vice versa, an analysis of these cross-cultural readings of rooms explores shifts in encoded and decoded social and cultural meanings of the consumption contexts shown. The paper demonstrates the role and cultural specificity of product syntax in the readings, and examines the coping strategies of respondents when faced with the incompletely understood messages of a foreign “consumption language”—coping strategies which from both a cultural analysis and a marketing perspective become particularly interesting when understood as creolizations.

1. INTRODUCTION
This paper aims to explore how one set of respondents “read” interiors from a different culture, focusing mainly on shifts between different consumption contexts1 and product syntax. Exposing respondents from a mainstream traditional furnishing culture (English) to photographs of living rooms and dining rooms from a mainstream modernist furnishing culture (Danish), and vice versa, the encoded and decoded social and cultural meanings of rooms are analysed, with particular emphasis on the impact of conflicting syntaxes, and on the “coping strategies” of respondents who are faced with interiors interpreted as holding offending or alien messages. These strategies often involve a reallocation of objects into alternative consumption contexts, or adjustments of product syntax within particular consumption contexts, both of which can usefully be understood as “creolizations”.

Although in this case we are working with European empirical material, we would like to acknowledge our debt to the mainly Northern American scholars (see theoretical outline) who have shown us the rich possibilities of studying products in combination rather than isolation, in their cultural embeddedness rather than in the isolation of the individual’s need-fulfilment.

The paper also draws on the field of (the history of) the material culture of the home in Britain as well as Denmark, as well as the rich field of ethnographic studies of domestic environments (e.g. Attfield 1997, Lawrence 1987, Putnam and Newton 1990, Putnam 1995, Hvidberg et al 1989).

While previous material culture studies have demonstrated the existence of syntactical differences between domestic interiors both in different subcultures (Pratt 1981 on Vancouver suburbs, Laumann and House on Detroit) and different national cultures (Chevalier 1993 and 1995 on French vs. English lounges, Lawrence 1987 on English vs. Australian domestic layouts) no previous work has come to our attention in which the point of interest is the respondents’ perception of culturally alien domestic scenarios, or the role of culturally specific product syntax in the cross-cultural understanding of domestic settings and objects.

2. THEORETICAL OUTLINE: PRODUCT SYNTAX, ACTORS AND CONTEXTS
As the name consumer research indicates, the focus of the discipline is heavily biased towards analysis of individuals in groups, their behaviour and its psychological background. From the point of view of Parsonian action theory, this approach represents one of two main theoretical and methodological directions.

According to Sheldon (1951:31), the basic unit of sociological analysis is the situation, encompassing both object(s) and actor(s), to be conceived of as an entity, but for analytical purposes separable into either the object situation or the actors.

Applying this basic notion to consumer theory, consumption is understood as a complete situation or, as we would prefer, context, encompassing both product(s) and consumer(s), conceived of as an entity. In this perspective, consumer research becomes the analysis of the total consumption context, but, purely as an analytical abstraction, separable into the analysis of the products (objects) and the consumers (actors), neither of which can be fully understood except by reference to the total context. The meaning of products is, in the last resort, part of the actors’ mental universe, just as the norms and values of consumers must ultimately refer to objects. Consequently, when we use the term product syntax in this paper, we draw a parallel to language.2 While syntax is part of the language, it must equally be understood as a mental property of the actors.

For analytical purposes, however, research has divided itself between the two foci, with certain costs. Mainstream consumer research shows a heavy bias towards the actor-dimension of the consumption context, while the focus on the object situation, i.e. products and especially product combinations, represents a minor, but complementary trend.

In our view, the prevailing cognitive psychological approach of consumer research runs the risk of losing sight of the products. Thus the focus on the psychological characteristics of the consumers combines with a tendency to see the products as mental concepts, stored in different kinds of memory, as if they did not also exist as concrete, tangible reality (Friedman 1990).

Neither does the actor-oriented approach sufficiently recognise that some important, culturally shared aspects of product meaning can best be analysed independently of the individual actor. In the course of a day, the consumer passes through a number of different universes of product meaning, some of which fit and some of which clearly contravene his personal lifestyle and identity. To take a simple example from the world of furniture, an individual may in the course of a day sit on any number of different chairs; the

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1The terms “consumption situation” and “consumption context” are apparently used interchangeably, but not consistently, in consumer research. In line with previous work we choose the latter term, in order to indicate a cultural setting rather than a narrow focus on one or more situational variables’ impact on the individual consumer.

2While some semioticians see product syntax as analogous to language syntax, i.e. the rules for ordering and structuring words in a sentence (Barthes 1984 [1964] p.130-31, Kehret-Ward 1987 p 220, 1988), others see it as a more restricted communicative tool (Baudrillard 1996 [1968] Douglas and Nicod 1974, McCracken 1988, McCracken and Roth 1989), being basically additive, as Nøth points out (1988 p.184) and lacking the power of features like predication in linguistic syntax to change the meaning of the other words in the sentence. We are content to allow this doubt about the power of the linguistic metaphor to resolve itself in practical work.
utilitarian chair in the dentist’s waiting room, the leather wing chair in the gentleman’s club, the rickety thing in mother’s kitchen and the designer’s chair in his own lounge. It is not even possible to object that only the chairs bought by the individual in question are of interest—since he may in fact be the dentist, and sit on the board of the gentleman’s club making the purchases. In those instances the purchase is primarily tied to the meaning of the contexts in which the products must function and not to the individual’s psychological dispositions, his individual lifestyle or identity.

The object-oriented direction in consumer research is basically semiotic, focusing on the meaning of the products rather than the objects as physical entities. A number of significant contributions have been made within this line of theory (Belk 1975a, 1975b, Douglas and Nicod 1974, Douglas 1996, Kehret-Ward 1987, 1988, McCracken 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, McCracken and Roth 1989, Solomon and Assael 1987). By analysing products as carriers of meaning, these authors have shown how individual products and product combinations serve as building blocks for identity formation, and how consumption contexts are constructed on the basis of culturally determined rules for selection and combination of products.

In the furniture example above, as in so many others, a different kind of sense is made of the objects by tying them not to the overall identity of an individual, but to the particular context in which they are consumed or used along with other objects by individuals pursuing their purposes. The totality of the physical setting, composed and used by people, becomes the unit of analysis, endowing the objects with meaning through human purpose, and reflecting the purposes and values of our shared culture.

Consumption contexts as institutions

The focus on consumption contexts comprising objects and actors can be seen as an institutional approach. In so far as contexts (situations) are grouped according to regularities of action in them, they become institutions, or systems of actors’ roles, which again aggregate into social systems (Sheldon 1951:40).

As private dining rooms and lounges are the settings of relatively rule-governed consumption contexts, we can see the items of furniture which make up the rooms as constituting the object dimension of the institutionalised context, whose rules constrain the free choice of the actors by requiring that the objects must be selected and combined in specific ways. These constraints appear as syntactical rules, simultaneously part of the products and of the consumer’s cultural learning.

Syntax and creolization in intercultural contacts

When products are transferred from one culture to another, or when consumers are confronted with product combinations which belong to a different culture, the receiver must employ the syntactical knowledge already learned, in order to assess if and how the products can function in a meaningful way in the range of the receiving culture’s possible consumption contexts.

Evidence from anthropological studies indicate that adoption of culturally different products and product combinations often take the form of creolization (sometimes called indigenization), meaning the appropriation of culturally alien imports to fit the receiving culture’s own purposes and structure; a partial adoption in a sense, in which the receiving culture accepts the product without necessarily accepting the full meaning complex or the syntactical rules which attached to it in the originator culture (see e.g. Appadurai 1990, Barber 1987, Belk 1988, Feld 1988, Friedman 1990, Hannenr 1992 and 1996, Howes 1996:5, Ivy 1988, Nicoll 1989). Colourful examples from anthropology are e.g. the tribal chief who had a three-piece suit tailored out of leopard skin (Comaroff 1996:29)—or the substitution of biros for the cannibals’ nose-piercing bones (Belk 1988:117)—but more mundanely we need only think of our adoption of individual foreign food ingredients (olive oil, mango chutney, various exotic spices etc.) which most of us use in ways and combinations quite different from the originator cultures, and presumably imbue with different meanings.

In sum, the use of the foreign products in the receiver’s culture and the meanings that are given to these products depend on the product syntax of the consumption context. By placing them—only in his imagination—in a culturally relevant consumption context, the consumer interprets and gives meaning to the products. (Baudrillard 1996 [1968], Chevalier 1993, Kehret-Ward 1988, Kragh 1996) The outcome is a negotiated meaning resulting from a dialogue between the respondent’s culture (shared codes) and the respondent’s personal interpretations, often based on a partial rather than a complete knowledge of the code. (McCracken and Roth 1989)

Syntactical rules are not equally strong in all consumption contexts. In what we may term “central” consumption contexts, products fill important identity-creating or identity-confirming functions in an individual’s or a culture’s life. The syntax is stronger, there is a high degree of institutionalisation and the demands placed on the objects’ symbolic properties are generally more exacting. In more peripheral consumption contexts, the institutionalisation can be weaker, the syntax more lax and the demands on the symbolic properties typically less pronounced.

Elsewhere, we have suggested that peripheral consumption contexts are more easily penetrated by culturally unknown products (Djursaa and Kragh 1998). In extension of this, we suggest in the present study that one way in which consumers can cope with products from cultures with different syntactical systems is to relocate them in a more peripheral consumption context; products which in the source culture belong to central consumption contexts may in the receiver culture be acceptable in more peripheral consumption contexts with less exacting syntactical rules.

3. THE DATA

The primary data supporting this paper was collected in 1996 and 1997 and consists of photographs of homes in Denmark and Britain, and interviews with 20 English and 10 Danish respondents. The respondents were asked to respond to photographs of 12 lounges and 12 dining rooms from private homes in “the other” country. The interviews were structured by the sequence of photographs, but otherwise left free within the basic instructions of 1) “Who do you think lives there?” 2) “Do you like it?” 3) “Please comment freely on anything that catches your attention.” Both sets of homes and respondents were as far as possible selected to be parallel in socio-economic and demographic terms, and to represent the spectrum of “economic and cultural capital” (Bourdieu 1984) except the most deprived and the most privileged. Immigrant or otherwise culturally atypical households were avoided in both countries, since the aim is to attempt to capture an aspect of a national aesthetic—but otherwise no attempt was made to monitor the expressions in the photographs, including the distribution

3Further details of the survey design are explained in Djursaa 1996. The data supports two further articles, both with substantively different foci: Djursaa and Kragh 1998 (see ref. list), and Kragh and Djursaa, “Product Syntax and Cross-cultural Marketing Strategies; a Model for Choice”, forthcoming.

4The interviews were taped, and transcriptions analysed with the aid of the qualitative data-processing programme NUD.IST.
between traditional and modernist homes. (The pictures shown in this article serve mainly illustrative purposes, and do not carry the analysis on their own.) Although clearly one cannot capture the range of furnishing expressions of a country in a set of 24 photographs, it is our belief, based on a close knowledge of both countries, that neither set is atypical.

4. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT: TWO SYNTACTICAL FURNISHING PARADIGMS

Before turning to the data analysis, it is necessary to sketch the recent furnishing design history of the two countries in the broadest of terms, since this forms the back-cloth to the respondents’ readings, including ideas of proper and improper syntax. Riding roughshod over finer distinctions, the analysis focuses solely on the distinction between the traditional and the modernist5 paradigms; between tradition as the adorned and ornamented aesthetic originating in previous centuries on the one hand, and modernism on the other hand as the unadorned, un-fussy, functionalist aesthetic of LeCorbusier and kindred spirits. Both paradigms have their origins in elitist architecture and design, but have since trickled down to the masses in cheaper imitations.

The Danish experience

Modernism has been an international phenomenon, but has only become the mainstream furnishing paradigm in a few countries, notably in Scandinavia. Traditional furniture such as English furniture of the 19th century Chippendale and Hepplewhite mould is found in a number of especially elderly Danish homes, and kept alive as a cultural expression in Denmark through the exposure to especially English upper-class interiors depicted in TV series and films—thus four of the 16 Danish homes depicted were in fact wholly or partly furnished in traditional English style.

Undoubtedly, however, the majority of Danish homes—and the majority of the homes in the survey—are found within the modernist paradigm. Strong designers in liaison with some fine cabinetmakers created a taste for modernism among the “experimenting classes” from the 1920s onwards, and during and after the war the equivalent to the English “utility movement” (though never by legislation in Denmark) created a following for modernist furniture in the broad population—and among the furniture manufacturers—which has never since been seriously challenged. Only recently, there seems to be a move away from modernism to “old charm” voluptuousness, but it is too early to tell if this will be a lasting phenomenon to challenge the modernist paradigm in Denmark.

The English experience

England, whose mainstream furnishing culture in contrast to Denmark is traditional, did have its modernist fashion period in the 1950s and 1960s, much of it via Danish and Swedish furniture imports, but has since reverted firmly to tradition. It seems that English people who furnish in the modernist style are mainly design-conscious urbanites and young unmarried men, and in fact some of the Danish furniture architects from the 1950s are experiencing a renaissance in the UK—but in terms of mainstream aesthetics, the mood and indeed fashion is once again firmly traditional, with modernism, and its syntactical structures like plain walls and restricted patterning, low-hanging lights, asymmetrical “group”-arrangements and coffee-tables, seen as old-fashioned.

Summary

Within any country, we will be able to find a number of aesthetic subcultures, but mostly the aesthetic of the power-holders will be dominant, with cheaper variants reproduced for the less wealthy. The most pertinent point for further analysis, then, is the observation that this dominant aesthetic in England is traditional, while it is modernist in Denmark—but of almost equal importance is the observation that both paradigms, differently weighted, are part of the historical and cultural experience of both countries.

Turning now to the cross-cultural readings, section five will give a number of examples from the data material of how syntax operates in practice as culturally determined rules both on the item combination and the room composition level, and which problems the respondents experience when they feel these rules are broken. Section six will focus on how syntactical rules are used in the creolization process.

5. DIFFERENCE SEEN AS FAULTY SYNTAX

Syntax as item combinations

In general, modernism insists on simplicity, where traditionalism indulges in a greater profusion of colours, lines and patterns—fundamental syntactical rules which had clearly been thoroughly internalised by the two nationalities. By way of example, several Danes objected to the English lounge shown as Figure 1, with statements like: “There are too many patterns—patterned carpet, patterned wallpaper, patterned cushions etc.” (Knud6), and “It’s really very overloaded with flowers everywhere, and cushions which don’t match the sofas.” (Birgit)

These objections should be read as syntactical insistence on simplicity, but should not be taken to mean that Danes can’t accept flowers or patterns, as reactions to other English rooms clearly show. Their acceptance, however, is within strict limits of one thing at a time. Even Danes who have traditional furniture themselves insist on pattern restraint.

Turning now to the English respondents, what they mind most about the Danish modernist rooms is of course precisely their absence of patterns, flowery textiles and other intricate details. English respondents complain that there are “bare floors and no curtains” (Mrs Baron), that rooms are “spartan and bare—something I admire rather than would live in” (Tracey), and that generally rooms are “very simple, whereas the Brits seem to add on embellishments.” (Philip) Here the traditionalist English syntax of pattern profusion emerges as critique of modernism’s restraint.

A number of the English respondents (Mrs Calder, Mrs Heath, Mr Heath, Ross, Terry, Tracey, Mrs Baron, Janice, Judy, Liz, Mrs Falconer, Mrs Wood) object to the frequent uses of different kinds of wood in the same room in Danish pictures, and other mixtures of materials like metals, while a couple (Philip, Richard) observe that matching woods is the English way, while they personally like the Danish mixtures. In general terms it is probably true to say that where Danes will tend to insist on natural materials and worry less about mixing them, the English will tolerate veneers and imitation materials as long as they superficially look the same.

6See appendix with a brief description of each respondent quoted.
Syntax as room compositions

The examples above show syntax played out at the level of item combinations, in local enactments of the fundamental rules of modernism and tradition. However, syntax is also played out at the level of room composition, i.e. in rules about how a room should be structured.

Where the traditional room is normally constructed symmetrically, with a focal point (the fireplace and/or the television) and the furniture lining the walls, the modernist room is normally constructed asymmetrically, composed in groups, with floor-space between groups rather than in the middle. (Bonnes et al 1987:224, Baudrillard 1996 [1968]:15-19).

Reflecting these syntactical rules, some of the English respondents search in vain for the “focal point” in Danish rooms (Mrs Heath: “There’s no focal point, like a television”; Judy: “Where we tend to group everything around the television…that’s our focal point, you don’t see a focal point”; Mrs Hughes: “So you don’t sit round the fire do you? You don’t feel you’ve got to have this focal [point]”); they find the Danish seating groups closed-in and even claustrophobic (Mrs Falconer: “A barrier to conversion”; Richard: “You’re in there and you’re not going, and the chairman’s going to sit there, and when you’ve had a good conversation you can go”), or reminiscent of public spaces like offices and waiting-rooms, which are mostly held within the modernist paradigm in Britain. In their turn, Danish respondents look at English rooms like the one pictured in Figure 1 and observe that “they are rather shouting at each other— you have to twist around in your chair to get eye contact” (Peter), that they place the furniture “in a half-moon” (Inger), “with the backs against the wall… you can’t sit in them and talk together” (Flemming), and almost all the Danish respondents wonder how the English cope without coffee tables, “what they do with their coffee and glasses and all that” (Lisbeth). Clearly the two aesthetics hold very different notions of the room structure which is most conducive to human togetherness.

Different ideas also apply to the relative merits of appearance vs. function. Many examples could be cited, but one will have to suffice: Where the English object to visible electric cords and radiators (Mrs Calder: “We have a thing about wires and cables. We seem to spend half a lifetime trying to conceal them”; Richard: “There are lots of ways of doing radiators these days”), Danes say that they are there to serve an “honest” function and need not be elaborately stowed away behind fake panelling. Such ideas give a glimpse of the value systems behind the syntactical rules.

Trading paradigms

The comments above are the average modernist Dane’s syntax objections to the average traditionalist English room, and vice versa. But in fact there are also syntax problems when Danes comment on the few modernist English rooms in the photo set, and English respondents comment on the few Danish traditional rooms.

The lounge in Figure 3 belongs to an English professional girl in her mid thirties, and is clearly modernist in inspiration—but the room structuring principle used is a hybrid between modernism and English tradition. The traditional symmetrical arrangement around the fire place has been abandoned (the fire-place is further up the room)—but as noted by a couple of the Danish respondents (Jørgen,
Lis), the furniture lines the walls without forming a group, as would be the modernist way, and the whole impression is “spartan” (Peter), “lacking something” (Signe), with the walls too bare (John, Flemming, Kaj, Susanne, Lisa, Signe), with the perceptive Jørgen (architect) noting that “once they’ve got the white walls it’s as if they don’t know what to do with them.” Where a traditional room would fill the space, saturate it, this hybrid between modernist and traditional follows neither paradigm’s fundamental principles.

Similar examples are found from the Danish photo set, where traditional lounges attracted criticism from English respondents attributable to perceptions of the Danes’ incomplete mastery of the traditional room syntax. In the Danish rooms, traditional furniture was arranged in modernist fashion in asymmetrical groups around coffee tables, with low hanging lights—and ornaments failed to be arranged symmetrically, as prescribed by tradition. As one English respondent (Mr Baron) said, “They’ve got the furniture right—they’ve even got the carpet right this time—it’s what they’ve done afterwards….”

What seems to happen is that the country’s dominant paradigm, traditionalism in England and modernism in Denmark, is the language we are familiar with, to such an extent that when we try to employ the other paradigm in our own home, some traces of our country’s dominant paradigm remain, most notably in the room compositions. As one Danish respondent (Jørgen) saw it, the English seemed comfortable in their own dark and textile-oriented design-language, but appeared to “lose their roots” and their sense of direction when they tried to move into modernism. As cultures we appear to be aesthetically monolingual, speaking foreign design languages with an accent.

In conclusion so far, the evidence supports the notion that syntactical rules are important tools in respondents’ decoding of product meaning; further, that they are culture specific and hence potentially unreliable as decoding tools; lastly, that they are to a certain extent culture-pervasive and can infuse attempts to move into different aesthetic expressions.

6. CREOLIZATIONS OF SYNTAX

The cross-cultural readings are more than catalogues of potential problems for the marketer, however. Perhaps the most interesting evidence to emerge concerns the respondents’ efforts to absorb the foreign products into their own culture. The readings also reflect the receiving culture’s and the consumers’ “creolizing” abilities to reshape the object world to their own purposes (Hannerz 1992, 1996, Howes 1996). These creolizing efforts take several forms.

Hybrid room compositions

Creolization takes place when items from a foreign culture are adopted and used and at the same time modified according to the syntactical rules of the receiving culture. Thus the sofas in Figure 3 may be IKEA (Habitat in fact, same difference), but it does not follow that the owner is trying for the complete Scandinavian or modernist expression, just as it would be naive to assume that the tribal chief with the leopard skin suit (Comaroff 1996:29) is trying to look like a city banker. Seen from the sender culture’s point of view, creolizations mean “getting it wrong”. But why indeed should the adopting culture be bound by another culture’s rules? The owner of the Figure 3 lounge is creating her own mixture of her native English tradition and modernism, avoiding those parts which are
now in England seen as old-fashioned. And why indeed introduce a coffee table, low lights and pictures into the Figure 3 lounge if the result is being seen as old-fashioned in one’s own culture? Similar arguments hold for the Danish traditional lounges like the one pictured in Figure 4: why adopt the English symmetrical open room composition and fill the space with patterns if that is seen by one’s Danish peers as overloaded?

Putting the room to rights

Creolization as a combination of adoption and modification of foreign cultural expressions can also be observed when the respondents seek to put the rooms to rights. Naturally much of the intercultural criticism which emerged involved implicit improvement suggestions, but sometimes they became explicit.

One example is a Danish lounge with English furniture; dark bookcases, Chesterfield furniture and light flowery curtains. Were the Danes trying to use English syntax? If they were, they did not pass muster. Most of the English respondents acknowledged the furniture, where, as one put it, you could do some “serious sitting down” (Mr Baron) and be served glasses of port, but quite a number (Mr Heath, Kevin, Mrs Falconer, Philip, Ross, Terry, Tracey) hastened to point out that light flowery curtains were all wrong. English syntax demands heavy velvety curtaining with that furniture, as in a stately home or a gentleman’s club.

Our favourite improvement suggestion, however, is the English owner of the room in Figure 1 (Mrs Wood) who felt that a set of Danish dining room chairs with woven seats similar to the ones in Figure 5 would be much improved if they were fitted with chintzy cushions. Danes in the know groan at the barbarity of the suggestion, which amounts to sacrilege. The chairs in question are designed by Denmark’s chair designer no. 1 Hans Wegner, and are recognized as “the Y Chair”. Still in production, they cost upwards of £800 a piece. To the English respondents, however, they were quite clearly just simple chairs with simple woven seats, albeit a slightly intriguing shape—and definitely, from the English point of view, much improved by chintzy cushions.

Changing the consumption context

A particularly interesting creolization strategy is employed when respondents suggest a different and more suitable consumption context than the one they are shown in the photographs. When presented with a deviating syntax, the respondents mentally change the consumption context to make the objects fit the reader’s own culture.

As reported in the next section, English respondents had a strong tendency to read Danish, modernist rooms as young and cheap. In the process of this mis-reading, they are shifting the consumption context from culturally central social roles to more peripheral ones, and saying at the same time that if such a shift is made, the room is culturally acceptable.

A Danish black ash and chrome dining room, owned by a single woman, in her mid to late forties with children, working as a secretary, was more or less consistently read by English respondents as either an office or a male, i.e. bachelor environment—or indeed as “something I had 20 years ago”. But apart from the old-fashioned aspect, these respondents’ mis-readings are positive expressions that in England, black ash furniture would now be acceptable in male or public-realm consumption contexts.
More deliberate situational shifts were carried out by respondents when they lifted the objects from the stated consumption context of lounges and dining rooms and relocated them in more suitable surroundings. Thus a Danish pine dining room was insufficiently formal to be acceptable in English central rooms of ordinary middle-class housing and was “relocated” by some of the English respondents to a bedsit (Mrs Falconer), a flat (Mr Baron, Mrs Falconer, Terry), or a study (Terry), and a Danish light-wood designer’s dining room was relocated as a kitchen or breakfast room (James, Mrs Falconer). A French wicker chair was thought better placed as a bedroom chair in England (James), and a set of Bruno Matsson (Swedish design) lounge chairs were generally admired by the English respondents but “relocated” to any number of imaginative places like a boardroom (Janice), a TV panel discussion area (Kevin), or the pilot’s cockpit in a space-ship (Mr Weaver, Richard, Tracey). A very flowery English lounge was relocated by a Danish respondent (Kaj) as a bedroom, and a large gilt mirror in an English dining room relocated by a Danish respondent (John) to a half or a bedroom, by others (Birgit, Flemming) to a restaurant.

As the respondents in this survey are only being shown central consumption contexts, i.e. dining rooms and lounges, any situational shifts performed must go towards more peripheral consumption contexts. The present evidence combines with material reported earlier, however (Djursaa and Kragh 1998), to suggest that in rooms which are important as the front stage of our identity-creating efforts (Goffmann 1959), the actors tend to avoid the adoption of “strange” items and maintain quite a strict adherence to the local syntactical paradigm at the same time as they tend to accept these same items in more peripheral rooms, where the constraints on product combinations and style are less pronounced.
Even outright rejections of the foreign items were often expressed as situational re-locations—as when Danes say of the English lounge in fig.1 that it looks like a hotel lounge (Lisa, Susanne, Kaj) or a brothel (Peter), and the English respondents who didn’t care for the Bruno Måsson lounge chairs “moved” them to a barber’s, a shoe-shine place (Ross) or a dentist’s (Mrs Heath, Mr Weaver). Even these more metaphorical situational re-locations are clear expressions of the importance of consumption context in the allocation of meaning and indicate that places—rooms and houses—constitute a social hierarchy of syntactical rules characterised by varying degrees of constraint on combinations of products and features of style.

7. PRODUCT SYNTAX AND THE ACTORS

It is clear from the readings that respondents deal with the foreign photographs with the help of their own culture’s syntactical rules, and that this results in both meanings and intended usages which are substantially different.

If, as stated from the outset, the consumption context encompasses both objects, syntactical rules and actor/consumer, it follows that the objects and their use should mirror the personalities, social characteristics and cultural identities of the actors. That this is so is common knowledge to both admen and consumers, many of whom are adept everyday social semioticians—within the limits of the culture or cultures they have learned.
Recognising that we were indeed exposing our respondents to a foreign “consumption dialect”, we were not really expecting them to be able to portray the occupants of the rooms they were shown accurately, but we were interested in possible patterns in the way they would get it wrong when asked “Who lives there?”

Socio-economic position
What everybody got most right was the occupants of their own furnishing paradigm, but there is a tendency for both sets of respondents generally to err to the low side, i.e. to place people in a lower social class than the one they actually belong to—especially if the overall valuation of the foreign room is negative. This reaction is consistent with the tendency reported above to mentally move a number of the pieces of furniture from the central consumption contexts in living and dining rooms as shown, to more peripheral rooms/consumption contexts with less symbolic value. In other words, the actors follow their objects in the readings; if the objects are lowered in status, so are their owners.

Age
The English respondents place all six Danish traditional pictures more or less correctly in terms of the occupants’ ages—and all nine modernist dining rooms, as well as three of the modernist lounges (including Figure 2 and 5), incorrectly as younger than they are. It would appear that the bare, simple lines of the Danish modernist dining rooms send the most consistently “wrong” signals, while the Danish upholstery and carpets in the lounges provide slightly better cues. When the Danish respondents go wrong on the English traditional pictures, they make them too old.

In itself, the interpretation of modernist as young and traditional as old is hardly surprising. Where it becomes interesting is with the identification of “young” with “poor”. Overall, probably the culturally most revealing reading error was that the three Danish dining-rooms (as e.g. Figure 5) representing the pride of Danish/Culturally most revealing reading error was that the three Danish both furniture and owners.

Age

8. CONCLUSIONS
It has been a starting assumption for the work reported here that the cultural analysis of consumption is best carried out at the consumption context level, understood as the totality of objects and the human purpose of their users—but also that for analytical purposes, it is necessary to choose either objects or actors as primary focus.

Following the lead of the mainly Northern American scholarly tradition which has shown the possibilities of deriving culturally shared meaning by studying products in combination, we have exposed respondents from a mainstream traditional furnishing aesthetic (English) to photographs of dining rooms and lounges from a mainstream modernist furnishing aesthetic (Danish), and vice versa, in an attempt to identify some of the syntactical rules and coping strategies used by the respondents (actors) when confronted with foreign product (object) constellations in given, culturally quite institutionalised, consumption contexts. The data indicates that foreign combinations of products are interpreted according to the respondents’ own syntax, changing the use and social meaning of the products in the process.

Danish and British furnishing traditions represent two dominant aesthetics tied to historical design paradigms. Responses show that while respondents prefer rooms in their own aesthetic paradigm, and the English in particular prefer Danish traditional rooms over the more frequently occurring modernist rooms, both sides find fault with both expressions of both paradigms.

Readings of rooms in terms of “who lives there”, i.e. getting the reader to link the objects and the setting shown to the culturally appropriate actors, reveal interesting mis-readings. Most startling was the insistence of the English respondents on seeing expensive Danish design rooms, especially the light-wood dining rooms, as young, cheap starter homes or as “something we had 20 years ago”–a reading which speaks volumes about the marginal place held by modernism in England today.

The differences between the two sets of respondents in syntax use can partly be ascribed to the differences between the rules governing modernism and tradition as general, ideal types, and partly to the two countries’ more local enactments of either paradigm. Although both paradigms are in principle known to and used by both nationalities, it seems that the native “dominant” paradigm becomes the yardstick against which both are measured, as regards item combinations as well as room compositions – just as it seems that the native dominant paradigm’s room compositional principles invade the rooms where the occupants try to employ the competing, non-dominant paradigm.

Last but not least, we have seen the ability of both cultures to make the unacceptable acceptable by a process of “creolization”, by moving objects to more suitable consumption contexts, in the process transposing their meaning, and by modifying syntactical structures. Understanding these creolization processes in more detail appears a real challenge.

REFERENCES
APPENDIX
Respondents quoted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Danish</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Birgit and Flemming</td>
<td>appr. 48</td>
<td>Historians/archivists both</td>
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<td>Inger and Knud</td>
<td>60, 54</td>
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<td>John</td>
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<td>Kaj</td>
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<td>Lisa</td>
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<td>Signe</td>
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<td>Susanne</td>
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<td>Mrs and Mr Heath</td>
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<td>James</td>
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<td>Mrs Wood</td>
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Syntax and Creolization in Cross-Cultural Readings of Rooms
Malene Djursaa, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
Simon Ulrik Kragh, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

ABSTRACT
Exposing respondents from an English mainly traditional furnishing culture to photographs of Danish mainly modernist domestic interiors, and vice versa, an analysis of these cross-cultural readings of rooms explores shifts in encoded and decoded social and cultural meanings of the consumption contexts shown. The paper demonstrates the role and cultural specificity of product syntax in the readings, and examines the coping strategies of respondents when faced with the incompletely understood messages of a foreign “consumption language” – coping strategies which from both a cultural analysis and a marketing perspective become particularly interesting when understood as creolizations.

1. INTRODUCTION
This paper aims to explore how one set of respondents “read” interiors from a different culture, focusing mainly on shifts between different consumption contexts and product syntax. Exposing respondents from a mainstream traditional furnishing culture (English) to photographs of living rooms and dining rooms from a mainstream modernist furnishing culture (Danish), and vice versa, the encoded and decoded social and cultural meanings of rooms are analysed, with particular emphasis on the impact of conflicting syntaxes, and on the “coping strategies” of respondents who are faced with interiors interpreted as holding offending or alien messages. These strategies often involve a reallocation of objects into alternative consumption contexts, or adjustments of product syntax within particular consumption contexts, both of which can usefully be understood as “creolizations”.

Although in this case we are working with European empirical material, we would like to acknowledge our debt to the mainly Northern American scholars (see theoretical outline) who have shown us the rich possibilities of studying products in combination rather than isolation, in their cultural embeddedness rather than in the isolation of the individual’s need-fulfilment.

The paper also draws on the field of (the history of) the material culture of the home in Britain as well as Denmark, as well as the rich field of ethnographic studies of domestic environments (e.g. Attfield 1997, Lawrence 1987, Putnam and Newton 1990, Putnam 1995, Hvidberg et al 1989).

While previous material culture studies have demonstrated the existence of syntactical differences between domestic interiors both in different subcultures (Pratt 1981 on Vancouver suburbs, Laumann and House on Detroit) and different national cultures (Chevalier 1993 and 1995 on French vs. English lounges, Lawrence 1987 on English vs. Australian domestic layouts) no previous work has come to our attention in which the point of interest is the respondents’ perception of culturally alien domestic scenarios, or the role of culturally specific product syntax in the cross-cultural understanding of domestic settings and objects.

2. THEORETICAL OUTLINE: PRODUCT SYNTAX, ACTORS AND CONTEXTS
As the name consumer research indicates, the focus of the discipline is heavily biased towards analysis of individuals in groups, their behaviour and its psychological background. From the point of view of Parsonian action theory, this approach represents one of two main theoretical and methodological directions.

According to Sheldon (1951:31), the basic unit of sociological analysis is the situation, encompassing both object(s) and actor(s), to be conceived of as an entity, but for analytical purposes separable into either the object situation or the actors.

Applying this basic notion to consumer theory, consumption is understood as a complete situation or, as we would prefer, context, encompassing both product(s) and consumer(s), conceived of as an entity. In this perspective, consumer research becomes the analysis of the total consumption context, but, purely as an analytical abstraction, separable into the analysis of the products (objects) and the consumers (actors), neither of which can be fully understood except by reference to the total context. The meaning of products is, in the last resort, part of the actors’ mental universe, just as the norms and values of consumers must ultimately refer to objects. Consequently, when we use the term product syntax in this paper, we draw a parallel to language.

While syntax is part of the language, it must equally be understood as a mental property of the actors.

For analytical purposes, however, research has divided itself between the two foci, with certain costs. Mainstream consumer research shows a heavy bias towards the actor-dimension of the consumption context, while the focus on the object situation, i.e. products and especially product combinations, represents a minor, but complementary trend.

In our view, the prevailing cognitive psychological approach of consumer research runs the risk of losing sight of the products. Thus the focus on the psychological characteristics of the consumers combines with a tendency to see the products as mental concepts, stored in different kinds of memory, as if they did not also exist as concrete, tangible reality (Friedman 1990).

Neither does the actor-oriented approach sufficiently recognise that some important, culturally shared aspects of product meaning can best be analysed independently of the individual actor. In the course of a day, the consumer passes through a number of different universes of product meaning, some of which fit and some of which clearly contravene his personal lifestyle and identity. To take a simple example from the world of furniture, an individual may in the course of a day sit on any number of different chairs; the

1 The terms “consumption situation” and “consumption context” are apparently used interchangeably, but not consistently, in consumer research. In line with previous work we choose the latter term, in order to indicate a cultural setting rather than a narrow focus on one or more situational variables’ impact on the individual consumer.

2 While some semioticians see product syntax as analogous to language syntax, i.e. the rules for ordering and structuring words in a sentence (Barthes 1984 [1964] p.130-31, Kehret-Ward 1987 p 220, 1988), others see it as a more restricted communicative tool (Baudrillard 1996 [1968] Douglas and Nicod 1974, McCracken 1988, McCracken and Roth 1989), being basically additive, as Nõth points out (1988 p.184) and lacking the power of features like predication in linguistic syntax to change the meaning of the other words in the sentence. We are content to allow this doubt about the power of the linguistic metaphor to resolve itself in practical work.
utilitarian chair in the dentist’s waiting room, the leather wing chair in the gentleman’s club, the rickety thing in mother’s kitchen and the designer’s chair in his own lounge. It is not even possible to object that only the chairs bought by the individual in question are of interest—since he may in fact be the dentist, and sit on the board of the gentleman’s club making the purchases. In those instances the purchase is primarily tied to the meaning of the contexts in which the products must function and not to the individual’s psychological dispositions, his individual lifestyle or identity.

The object-oriented direction in consumer research is basically semiotic, focusing on the meaning of the products rather than the objects as physical entities. A number of significant contributions have been made within this line of theory (Belk 1975a, 1975b, Douglas and Nicod 1974, Douglas 1996, Kehret-Ward 1987, 1988, McCracken 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, McCracken and Roth 1989, Solomon and Assael 1987). By analysing products as carriers of meaning, these authors have shown how individual products and product combinations serve as building blocks for identity formation, and how consumption contexts are constructed on the basis of culturally determined rules for selection and combination of products.

In the furniture example above, as in so many others, a different kind of sense is made of the objects by tying them not to the overall identity of an individual, but to the particular context in which they are consumed or used along with other objects by individuals pursuing their purposes. The totality of the physical setting, composed and used by people, becomes the unit of analysis, endowing the objects with meaning through human purpose, and reflecting the purposes and values of our shared culture.

Consumption contexts as institutions

The focus on consumption contexts comprising objects and actors can be seen as an institutional approach. In so far as contexts (situations) are grouped according to regularities of action in them, they become institutions, or systems of actors’ roles, which again aggregate into social systems (Sheldon 1951:40).

As private dining rooms and lounges are the settings of relatively rule-governed consumption contexts, we can see the items of furniture which make up the rooms as constituting the object dimension of the institutionalised context, whose rules constrain the free choice of the actors by requiring that the objects must be selected and combined in specific ways. These constraints appear as syntactical rules, simultaneously part of the products and of the consumer’s cultural learning.

Syntax and creolization in intercultural contacts

When products are transferred from one culture to another, or when consumers are confronted with product combinations which belong to a different culture, the receiver must employ the syntactical knowledge already learned, in order to assess if and how the products can function in a meaningful way in the range of the receiving culture’s possible consumption contexts.

Evidence from anthropological studies indicate that adoption of culturally different products and product combinations often take the form of creolization (sometimes called indiginization), meaning the appropriation of culturally alien imports to fit the receiving culture’s own purposes and structure; a partial adoption in a sense, in which the receiving culture accepts the product without necessarily accepting the full meaning complex or the syntactical rules which attached to it in the originator culture (see e.g. Appadurai 1990, Barber 1987, Belk 1988, Feld 1988, Friedman 1990, Hannerz 1992 and 1996, Howes 1996:5, Ivy 1988, Nicoll 1989). Colourful examples from anthropology are e.g. the tribal chief who had a three-piece suit tailored out of leopard skin (Comaroff 1996:29)—or the substitution of biros for the cannibals’ nose-piercing bones (Belk 1988:117)—but more mundanely we need only think of our adoption of individual foreign food ingredients (olive oil, mango chutney, various exotic spices etc.) which most of us use in ways and combinations quite different from the originator cultures, and presumably imbue with different meanings.

In sum, the use of the foreign products in the receiver’s culture and the meanings that are given to these products depend on the product syntax of the consumption context. By placing them—only in his imagination—in a culturally relevant consumption context, the consumer interprets and gives meaning to the products. (Baudrillard 1996 [1968], Chevalier 1993, Kehret-Ward 1988, Kragh 1996) The outcome is a negotiated meaning resulting from a dialogue between the respondent’s culture (shared codes) and the respondent’s personal interpretations, often based on a partial rather than a complete knowledge of the code. (McCracken and Roth 1989)

Syntactical rules are not equally strong in all consumption contexts. In what we may term “central” consumption contexts, products fill important identity-creating or identity-confirming functions in an individual’s or a culture’s life. The syntax is stronger, there is a high degree of institutionalisation and the demands placed on the objects’ symbolic properties are generally more exacting. In more peripheral consumption contexts, the institutionalisation can be weaker, the syntax more lax and the demands on the symbolic properties typically less pronounced.

Elsewhere, we have suggested that peripheral consumption contexts are more easily penetrated by culturally unknown products (Djursaa and Kragh 1998). In extension of this, we suggest in the present study that one way in which consumers can cope with products from cultures with different syntactical systems is to relocate them in a more peripheral consumption context; products which in the source culture belong to central consumption contexts may in the receiver culture be acceptable in more peripheral consumption contexts with less exacting syntactical rules.

3. THE DATA

The primary data supporting this paper was collected in 1996 and 1997 3 and consists of photographs of homes in Denmark and Britain, and interviews with 20 English and 10 Danish respondents. The respondents were asked to respond to photographs of 12 lounges and 12 dining rooms from private homes in “the other” country. The interviews were structured by the sequence of photographs, but otherwise left free within the basic instructions of 1) “Who do you think lives there?” 2) “Do you like it?” 3) “Please comment freely on anything that catches your attention.” 4 Both sets of homes and respondents were as far as possible selected to be parallel in socio-economic and demographic terms, and to represent the spectrum of “economic and cultural capital” (Bourdieu 1984) except the most deprived and the most privileged. Immigrant or otherwise culturally atypical households were avoided in both countries, since the aim is to attempt to capture an aspect of a national aesthetic—but otherwise no attempt was made to monitor the expressions in the photographs, including the distribution

3Further details of the survey design are explained in Djursaa 1996. The data supports two further articles, both with substantively different foci: Djursaa and Kragh 1998 (see ref. list), and Kragh and Djursaa, “Product Syntax and Cross-cultural Marketing Strategies: a Model for Choice”, forthcoming.

4The interviews were taped, and transcriptions analysed with the aid of the qualitative data-processing programme NUD.IST.
between traditional and modernist homes. (The pictures shown in this article serve mainly illustrative purposes, and do not carry the analysis on their own.) Although clearly one cannot capture the range of furnishing expressions of a country in a set of 24 photographs, it is our belief, based on a close knowledge of both countries, that neither set is atypical.

### 4. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT: TWO SYNTACTICAL FURNISHING PARADIGMS

Before turning to the data analysis, it is necessary to sketch the recent furnishing design history of the two countries in the broadest of terms, since this forms the back-cloth to the respondents’ readings, including ideas of proper and improper syntax. Riding roughshod over finer distinctions, the analysis focuses solely on the distinction between the traditional and the modernist paradigms; between tradition as the adorned and ornamented aesthetic originating in previous centuries on the one hand, and modernism on the other hand as the unadorned, un-fussy, functionalist aesthetic of LeCorbusier and kindred spirits. Both paradigms have their origins in elitist architecture and design, but have since trickled down to the masses in cheaper imitations.

#### The Danish experience

Modernism has been an international phenomenon, but has only become the mainstream furnishing paradigm in a few countries, notably in Scandinavia.

Traditional furniture such as English furniture of the 18th century Chippendale and Hepplewhite mould is found in a number of especially elderly Danish homes, and kept alive as a cultural expression in Denmark through the exposure to especially English upper-class interiors depicted in TV series and films—thus four of the 16 Danish homes depicted were in fact wholly or partly furnished in traditional English style.

Undoubtedly, however, the majority of Danish homes—and the majority of the homes in the survey—are found within the modernist paradigm. Strong designers in liaison with some fine cabinetmakers created a taste for modernism among the “experimenting classes” from the 1920s onwards, and during and after the war the equivalent to the English “utility movement” (though never by legislation in Denmark) created a following for modernist furniture in the broad population—and among the furniture manufacturers—which has never since been seriously challenged. Only recently, there seems to be a move away from modernism to “old charm” voluptuousness, but it is too early to tell if this will be a lasting phenomenon to challenge the modernist paradigm in Denmark.

#### The English experience

England, whose mainstream furnishing culture in contrast to Denmark is traditional, did have its modernist fashion period in the 1950s and 1960s, much of it via Danish and Swedish furniture imports, but has since reverted firmly to tradition. It seems that English people who furnish in the modernist style are mainly design-conscious urbanites and young unmarried men, and in fact some of the Danish furniture architects from the 1950s are experiencing a renaissance in the UK—both in terms of mainstream aesthetics, the mood and indeed fashion is once again firmly traditional, with modernism, and its syntactical structures like plain walls and restricted patterning, low-hanging lights, asymmetrical “group”-arrangements and coffee-tables, seen as old-fashioned.

### Summary

Within any country, we will be able to find a number of aesthetic subcultures, but mostly the aesthetic of the power-holders will be dominant, with cheaper variants reproduced for the less wealthy. The most pertinent point for further analysis, then, is the observation that this dominant aesthetic in England is traditional, while it is modernist in Denmark—but of almost equal importance is the observation that both paradigms, differently weighted, are part of the historical and cultural experience of both countries.

Turning now to the cross-cultural readings, section five will give a number of examples from the data material of how syntax operates in practice as culturally determined rules both on the item combination and the room composition level, and which problems the respondents experience when they feel these rules are broken. Section six will focus on how syntactical rules are used in the creolization process.

### 5. DIFFERENCE SEEN AS FAULTY SYNTAX

#### Syntax as item combinations

In general, modernism insists on simplicity, where traditionalism indulge[s] in a greater profusion of colours, lines and patterns—fundamental syntactical rules which has clearly been thoroughly internalised by the two nationalities. By way of example, several Danes objected to the English lounge shown as Figure 1, with statements like: “There are too many patterns—patterned carpet, patterned wallpaper, patterned cushions etc.” (Knud6), and “It’s really very overloaded with flowers everywhere, and cushions which don’t match the sofas.” (Birgit)

These objections should be read as syntactical insistence on simplicity, yet should not be taken to mean that Danes can’t accept flowers or patterns, as reactions to other English rooms clearly show. Their acceptance, however, is within strict limits of one thing at a time. Even Danes who have traditional furniture themselves insist on pattern restraint.

Turning now to the English respondents, what they mind most about the Danish modernist rooms is of course precisely their absence of patterns, flowery textiles and other intricate details. English respondents complain that there are “bare floors and no curtains” (Mrs Baron), that rooms are “spartan and bare—something I admire rather than would live in” (Tracey), and that generally rooms are “very simple, whereas the Brits seem to add on embellishments.” (Philip) Here the traditionalist English syntax of pattern profusion emerges as critique of modernism’s restraint.

A number of the English respondents (Mrs Calder, Mrs Heath, Mr Heath, Ross, Terry, Tracey, Mrs Baron, Janice, Judy, Liz, Mrs Falconer, Mrs Wood) object to the frequent uses of different kinds of wood in the same room in Danish pictures, and other mixtures of materials like metals, while a couple (Philip, Richard) observe that matching woods is the English way, while they personally like the Danish mixtures. In general terms it is probably true to say that where Danes will tend to insist on natural materials and worry less about mixing them, the English will tolerate veneers and imitation materials as long as they superficially look the same.

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5Although design history distinguishes between modernism as a movement and modernity as a broader “cultural condition” (Atfield 1997:269), both tradition and modernism are here used as paradigms encompassing high and low quality, original design as well as copies and craftsmanship, pieces of high aesthetic appeal within the given paradigm, and pieces which at best could be said to serve a function.

6See appendix with a brief description of each respondent quoted.
Syntax as room compositions

The examples above show syntax played out at the level of item combinations, in local enactments of the fundamental rules of modernism and tradition. However, syntax is also played out at the level of room composition, i.e. in rules about how a room should be structured.

Where the traditional room is normally constructed symmetrically, with a focal point (the fireplace and/or the television) and the furniture lining the walls, the modernist room is normally constructed asymmetrically, composed in groups, with floor-space between groups rather than in the middle. (Bonnes et al 1987:224, Baudrillard 1996 [1968]:15-19).

Reflecting these syntactical rules, some of the English respondents search in vain for the “focal point” in Danish rooms (Mrs Heath: “There’s no focal point, like a television”; Judy: “Where we tend to group everything around the television…that’s our focal point, you don’t see a focal point”; Mrs Hughes: “So you don’t sit round the fire do you? You don’t feel you’ve got to have this focal [point]”); they find the Danish seating groups closed-in and even claustrophobic (Mrs Falconer: “A barrier to conversion”; Richard: “You’re in there and you’re not going, and the chairman’s going to sit there, and when you’ve had a good conversation you can go”), or reminiscent of public spaces like offices and waiting-rooms, which are mostly held within the modernist paradigm in Britain. In their turn, Danish respondents look at English rooms like the one pictured in Figure 1 and observe that “they are rather shouting at each other—you have to twist around in your chair to get eye contact” (Peter), that they place the furniture “in a half-moon” (Inger), “with the backs against the wall…you can’t sit in them and talk together” (Flemming), and almost all the Danish respondents wonder how the English cope without coffee tables, “what they do with their coffee and glasses and all that” (Lisbeth). Clearly the two aesthetics hold very different notions of the room structure which is most conducive to human togetherness.

Different ideas also apply to the relative merits of appearance vs. function. Many examples could be cited, but one will have to suffice: Where the English object to visible electric cords and radiators (Mrs Calder: “We have a thing about wires and cables. We seem to spend half a lifetime trying to conceal them”; Richard: “There are lots of ways of doing radiators these days”), Danes say that they are there to serve an “honest” function and need not be elaborately stowed away behind fake panelling. Such ideas give a glimpse of the value systems behind the syntactical rules.

Trading paradigms

The comments above are the average modernist Dane’s syntax objections to the average traditionalist English room, and vice versa. But in fact there are also syntax problems when Danes comment on the few modernist English rooms in the photo set, and English respondents comment on the few Danish traditional rooms.

The lounge in Figure 3 belongs to an English professional girl in her mid thirties, and is clearly modernist in inspiration—but the room structuring principle used is a hybrid between modernism and English tradition. The traditional symmetrical arrangement around the fire place has been abandoned (the fire-place is further up the room)—but as noted by a couple of the Danish respondents (Jørgen,
Lis), the furniture lines the walls without forming a group, as would be the modernist way, and the whole impression is “spartan” (Peter), “lacking something” (Signe), with the walls too bare (John, Flemming, Kaj, Susanne, Lisa, Signe), with the perceptive Jørgen (architect) noting that “once they’ve got the white walls it’s as if they don’t know what to do with them.” Where a traditional room would fill the space, saturate it, this hybrid between modernist and traditional follows neither paradigm’s fundamental principles.

Similar examples are found from the Danish photo set, where traditional lounges attracted criticism from English respondents attributable to perceptions of the Danes’ incomplete mastery of the traditional room syntax. In the Danish rooms, traditional furniture was arranged in modernist fashion in asymmetrical groups around coffee tables, with low hanging lights—and ornaments failed to be arranged symmetrically, as prescribed by tradition. As one English respondent (Mr Baron) said, “They’ve got the furniture right—they’ve even got the carpet right this time—it’s what they’ve done afterwards....”

What seems to happen is that the country’s dominant paradigm, traditionalism in England and modernism in Denmark, is the language we are familiar with, to such an extent that when we try to employ the other paradigm in our own home, some traces of our country’s dominant paradigm remain, most notably in the room compositions. As one Danish respondent (Jørgen) saw it, the English seemed comfortable in their own dark and textile-oriented design-language, but appeared to “lose their roots” and their sense of direction when they tried to move into modernism. As cultures we appear to be aesthetically monolingual, speaking foreign design languages with an accent.

In conclusion so far, the evidence supports the notion that syntactical rules are important tools in respondents’ decoding of product meaning; further, that they are culture specific and hence potentially unreliable as decoding tools; lastly, that they are to a certain extent culture-pervasive and can infuse attempts to move into different aesthetic expressions.

6. CREOLIZATIONS OF SYNTAX

The cross-cultural readings are more than catalogues of potential problems for the marketer, however. Perhaps the most interesting evidence to emerge concerns the respondents’ efforts to absorb the foreign products into their own culture. The readings also reflect the receiving culture’s and the consumers’ “creolizing” abilities to reshape the object world to their own purposes (Hannerz 1992, 1996, Howes 1996). These creolizing efforts take several forms.

Hybrid room compositions

Creolization takes place when items from a foreign culture are adopted and used and at the same time modified according to the syntactical rules of the receiving culture. Thus the sofas in Figure 3 may be IKEA (Habitat in fact, same difference), but it does not follow that the owner is trying for the complete Scandinavian or modernist expression, just as it would be naive to assume that the tribal chief with the leopard skin suit (Comaroff 1996:29) is trying to look like a city banker. Seen from the sender culture’s point of view, creolizations mean “getting it wrong”. But why indeed should the adopting culture be bound by another culture’s rules? The owner of the Figure 3 lounge is creating her own mixture of her native English tradition and modernism, avoiding those parts which are

FIGURE 2
Danish modernist lounge
now in England seen as old-fashioned. And why indeed introduce a coffee table, low lights and pictures into the Figure 3 lounge if the result is being seen as old-fashioned in one’s own culture? Similar arguments hold for the Danish traditional lounges like the one pictured in Figure 4; why adopt the English symmetrical open room composition and fill the space with patterns if that is seen by one’s Danish peers as overloaded?

### Putting the room to rights

Creolization as a combination of adoption and modification of foreign cultural expressions can also be observed when the respondents seek to put the rooms to rights. Naturally much of the intercultural criticism which emerged involved implicit improvement suggestions, but sometimes they became explicit.

One example is a Danish lounge with English furniture; dark bookcases, Chesterfield furniture and light flowery curtains. Were the Danes trying to use English syntax? If they were, they did not pass muster. Most of the English respondents acknowledged the furniture, where, as one put it, you could do some “serious sitting down” (Mr Baron) and be served glasses of port, but quite a number (Mr Heath, Kevin, Mrs Falconer, Philip, Ross, Terry, Tracey) hastened to point out that light flowery curtains were all wrong. English syntax demands heavy velvety curtaining with that furniture, as in a stately home or a gentleman’s club.

Our favourite improvement suggestion, however, is the English owner of the room in Figure 1 (Mrs Wood) who felt that a set of Danish dining room chairs with woven seats similar to the ones in Figure 5 would be much improved if they were fitted with chintzy cushions. Danes in the know groan at the barbarity of the suggestion, which amounts to sacrilege. The chairs in question are designed by Denmark’s chair designer no. 1 Hans Wegner, and are recognized as “the Y Chair”. Still in production, they cost upwards of £800 a piece. To the English respondents, however, they were quite clearly just simple chairs with simple woven seats, albeit a slightly intriguing shape—and definitely, from the English point of view, much improved by chintzy cushions.

### Changing the consumption context

A particularly interesting creolization strategy is employed when respondents suggest a different and more suitable consumption context than the one they are shown in the photographs. When presented with a deviating syntax, the respondents mentally change the consumption context to make the objects fit the reader’s own culture.

As reported in the next section, English respondents had a strong tendency to read Danish, modernist rooms as young and cheap. In the process of this mis-reading, they are shifting the consumption context from culturally central social roles to more peripheral ones, and saying at the same time that if such a shift is made, the room is culturally acceptable.

A Danish black ash and chrome dining room, owned by a single woman, in her mid to late forties with children, working as a secretary, was more or less consistently read by English respondents as either an office or a male, i.e. bachelor environment—or indeed as “something I had 20 years ago”. But apart from the old-fashioned aspect, these respondents’ mis-readings are positive expressions that in England, black ash furniture would now be acceptable in male or public-realm consumption contexts.
More deliberate situational shifts were carried out by respondents when they lifted the objects from the stated consumption context of lounges and dining rooms and relocated them in more suitable surroundings. Thus a Danish pine dining room was insufficiently formal to be acceptable in English central rooms of ordinary middle-class housing and was “relocated” by some of the English respondents to a bedsit (Mrs Falconer), a flat (Mr Baron, Mrs Falconer, Terry), or a study (Terry), and a Danish light-wood designer’s dining room was relocated as a kitchen or breakfast room (James, Mrs Falconer). A French wicker chair was thought better placed as a bedroom chair in England (James), and a set of Bruno Matsson (Swedish design) lounge chairs were generally admired by the English respondents but “relocated” to any number of imaginative places like a boardroom (Janice), a TV panel discussion area (Kevin), or the pilot’s cockpit in a space-ship (Mr Weaver, Richard, Tracey). A very flowery English lounge was relocated by a Danish respondent (Kaj) as a bedroom, and a large gilt mirror in an English dining room relocated by a Danish respondent (John) to a hall or a bedroom, by others (Birgit, Flemming) to a restaurant.

As the respondents in this survey are only being shown central consumption contexts, i.e. dining rooms and lounges, any situational shifts performed must go towards more peripheral consumption contexts. The present evidence combines with material reported earlier, however (Djursaa and Kragh 1998), to suggest that in rooms which are important as the front stage of our identity-creating efforts (Goffmann 1959), the actors tend to avoid the adoption of “strange” items and maintain quite a strict adherence to the local syntactical paradigm at the same time as they tend to accept these same items in more peripheral rooms, where the constraints on product combinations and style are less pronounced.
Even outright rejections of the foreign items were often expressed as situational re-locations—as when Danes say of the English lounge in fig.1 that it looks like a hotel lounge (Lisa, Susanne, Kaj) or a brothel (Peter), and the English respondents who didn’t care for the Bruno Matsson lounge chairs “moved” them to a barber’s, a shoe-shine place (Ross) or a dentist’s (Mrs Heath, Mr Weaver). Even these more metaphorical situational re-locations are clear expressions of the importance of consumption context in the allocation of meaning and indicate that places—rooms and houses—constitute a social hierarchy of syntactical rules characterised by varying degrees of constraint on combinations of products and features of style.

7. PRODUCT SYNTAX AND THE ACTORS

It is clear from the readings that respondents deal with the foreign photographs with the help of their own culture’s syntactical rules, and that this results in both meanings and intended usages which are substantially different.

If, as stated from the outset, the consumption context encompasses both objects, syntactical rules and actor/consumer, it follows that the objects and their use should mirror the personalities, social characteristics and cultural identities of the actors. That this is so is common knowledge to both admen and consumers, many of whom are adept everyday social semioticians—within the limits of the culture or cultures they have learned.
Recognising that we were indeed exposing our respondents to a foreign “consumption dialect”, we were not really expecting them to be able to portray the occupants of the rooms they were shown accurately, but we were interested in possible patterns in the way they would get it wrong when asked “Who lives there?”

Socio-economic position

What everybody got most right was the occupants of their own furnishing paradigm, but there is a tendency for both sets of respondents generally to err to the low side, i.e. to place people in a lower social class than the one they actually belong to—especially if the overall valuation of the foreign room is negative. This reaction is consistent with the tendency reported above to mentally move a number of the pieces of furniture from the central consumption contexts in living and dining rooms as shown, to more peripheral rooms/consumption contexts with less symbolic value. In other words, the actors follow their objects in the readings; if the objects are lowered in status, so are their owners.

Age

The English respondents place all six Danish traditional pictures more or less correctly in terms of the occupants’ ages—and all nine modernist dining rooms, as well as three of the modernist lounges (including Figure 2 and 5), incorrectly as younger than they are. It would appear that the bare, simple lines of the Danish modernist dining rooms send the most consistently “wrong” signals, while the Danish upholstery and carpets in the lounges provide slightly better cues. When the Danish respondents go wrong on the English traditional pictures, they make them too old.

In itself, the interpretation of modernist as young and traditional as old is hardly surprising. Where it becomes interesting is with the identification of “young” with “poor”. Overall, probably the culturally most revealing reading error was that the three Danish dining-rooms (as e.g. Figure 5) representing the pride of Danish/Scandinavian design, exclusively furnished (at great cost) with the big architectural names from the ‘40s and ‘50s, were dismissed by a number of the English respondents as young, cheap beginners’ homes, a fate also suffered, though to a lesser degree, by two expensive Danish design-lounges (including Figure 2). Here, too, the cultural difference of syntax implies a social downgrading of both furniture and owners.

8. CONCLUSIONS

It has been a starting assumption for the work reported here that the cultural analysis of consumption is best carried out at the consumption context level, understood as the totality of objects and the human purpose of their users—but also that for analytical purposes, it is necessary to choose either objects or actors as primary focus.

Following the lead of the mainly Northern American scholarly tradition which has shown the possibilities of deriving culturally shared meaning by studying products in combination, we have exposed respondents from a mainstream traditional furnishing aesthetic (English) to photographs of dining rooms and lounges from a mainstream modernist furnishing aesthetic (Danish), and vice versa, in an attempt to identify some of the syntactical rules and coping strategies used by the respondents (actors) when confronted with foreign product (object) constellations in given, culturally quite institutionalised, consumption contexts. The data indicates that foreign combinations of products are interpreted according to the respondents’ own syntax, changing the use and social meaning of the products in the process.

Danish and British furnishing traditions represent two dominant aesthetics tied to historical design paradigms. Responses show that while respondents prefer rooms in their own aesthetic paradigm, and the English in particular prefer Danish traditional rooms over the more frequently occurring modernist rooms, both sides find fault with both expressions of both paradigms.

Readings of rooms in terms of “who lives there”, i.e. getting the reader to link the objects and the setting shown to the culturally appropriate actors, reveal interesting mis-readings. Most startling was the insistence of the English respondents on seeing expensive Danish design rooms, especially the light-wood dining rooms, as young, cheap starter homes or as “something we had 20 years ago” - a reading which speaks volumes about the marginal place held by modernism in England today.

The differences between the two sets of respondents in syntax use can partly be ascribed to the differences between the rules governing modernism and tradition as general, ideal types, and partly to the two countries’ more local enactments of either paradigm. Although both paradigms are in principle known to and used by both nationalities, it seems that the native “dominant” paradigm becomes the yardstick against which both are measured, as regards item combinations as well as room compositions—just as it seems that the native dominant paradigm’s room compositional principles invade the rooms where the occupants try to employ the competing, non-dominant paradigm.

Last but not least, we have seen the ability of both cultures to make the unacceptable acceptable by a process of “creolization”, by moving objects to more suitable consumption contexts, in the process transposing their meaning, and by modifying syntactical structures. Understanding these creolization processes in more detail appears a real challenge.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX
Respondents quoted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Danish</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birgit and Flemming</td>
<td>appr. 48</td>
<td>Historians/archivists both</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inger and Knud</td>
<td>60, 54</td>
<td>Head teacher, house painter (independent)</td>
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<td>John</td>
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<td>Chemical technician</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaj</td>
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<td>Mechanic</td>
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<td>Lis and Jørgen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
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<td>Secretary</td>
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<td>Lisbeth</td>
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<td>Bank clerk</td>
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<td>Peter</td>
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<td>Hospital specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Signe</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Housewife (husband retired school caretaker)</td>
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<td>Susanne</td>
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<td>Housewife (husband independent plumber)</td>
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<td>Mrs and Mr Baron</td>
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<td>Hospital manager, retired advert/magazine agent</td>
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<td>Mrs Calder, Mr Calder</td>
<td>42, 50</td>
<td>Receptionist, truck driver</td>
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<td>Mrs Falconer</td>
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<td>College lecturer</td>
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<td>Mrs and Mr Heath</td>
<td>50, 54</td>
<td>Hairdresser, training/development advisor</td>
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<td>Mrs Hughes</td>
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<td>Housewife (husband technical drawer)</td>
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<td>James</td>
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<td>Engineering/management consultancy</td>
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<td>Janice</td>
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<td>BT customer service</td>
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<td>Judy</td>
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<td>Kevin</td>
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<td>Ross</td>
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<td>Terry</td>
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<td>Accountant/finance director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracey</td>
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<td>Police project management assistant</td>
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<td>Mr Weaver</td>
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<td>Ex-miner, teacher at technical college.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs Wood</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Legal secretary</td>
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The Utopian Imagination: Spatial Play in a Festival Marketplace

Pauline Maclaran, The Queen’s University of Belfast, Northern Ireland
Stephen Brown, University of Ulster, Northern Ireland
Lorna Stevens, University of Ulster, Northern Ireland

ABSTRACT
This study introduces the work of French philosopher, Louis Marin, one of utopia’s most original thinkers. It shows how his theoretical reflections on utopic signifying practices and notion of ‘spatial play’ can offer fresh insights into the spaces that contribute to the consumer experience in a festival marketplace. The research highlights the interplay and tensions that exist between the physical space that is the shopping centre location and the symbolic space that is the consumer imagination.

INTRODUCTION
The utopian imagination has long held a privileged position in the human heart and can justifiably claim to have originated over three thousand visions of perfection (Manuel and Manuel, 1979). These visions of ideal societies where an individual can lead the ‘good life’ in complete harmony and community with the environment have taken many forms. They have ranged from the idealisation of times past, such as the Golden Age or the idea of the noble savage, to times future, with perfection to be found in other-worldly regions or distant planets (Kumar, 1991). Advertising creatives have responded to this ‘human propensity’ (Manuel and Manuel, 1979) by frequently portraying idealised vistas to which their target audience may aspire through consumption of a particular product or service, indulging consumers’ aspirations for both literal and imaginative ideal states.

Indeed, unlocking the imagination is now increasingly recognised as playing a crucial role in explaining marketing phenomena, such as experiential and hedonic consumption (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). Campbell (1987) has shown that consumption is as much a matter of emotion and feeling as rational behaviour. A purchase may frequently be less important than the overall experience, with the desire for, rather than the actual purchase of goods, often serving as a bridge to displaced hopes and ideals (Belk, 1996; McCracken, 1988), and with the joys of longing often rivalling those of actual gratification. Retail environments have responded to this experiential quality of consumer behaviour by developing ever more sophisticated and fantastic shopping locations which encourage leisure and browsing (Maynard and Milligen, 1995; McCloud, 1989) and the utopian qualities of such environments have been noted by many (Goss, 1993; Langman, 1992; Crawford, 1992; Chaney, 1990; Kowinski, 1985). These references to utopia, however, have only made colloquial use of the term and, so far, there has been no theorisation around the concept in relation to consumption.

In pursuit of this utopian consumption analogy, then, this study introduces the work of French philosopher, Louis Marin, one of utopia’s most original thinkers and a major contributor to the nature and functioning of the utopian imagination (Hill, 1989). It considers his theoretical reflections on utopic signifying practices and notion of ‘spatial play’ (Les Utopics) which have revitalised a body of literature that has frequently been denigrated and dismissed in terms of any relevant contribution to twentieth century thought. Drawing on this work by Marin (1984) the research seeks to offer fresh insights into the spaces that contribute to the consumer experience in the context of retailing environments by exploring a type of shopping centre known as a festival marketplace. Festive markets are often located in historic structures such as railroad terminals, warehouses and industrial buildings that have fallen into disuse (Robertson, 1995). These environments encourage browsing, with few necessities available to purchase. Any goods that may be seen as a little out of the ordinary, including craft items and luxuries are given precedence (Reekie, 1992). Famous developments of this nature include San Francisco’s Ghirardelli Square, Baltimore’s Harborplace, Boston’s Faneuil Hall, New Orleans’ Jackson Brewery, London’s Covent Garden and Brisbane’s McWhirter’s Marketplace.

First this paper examines the work of Louis Marin in more detail and expands on his key concepts. Next it considers these in relation to the festival marketplace, showing how Marin’s concepts can give a heightened appreciation of the nature of the festival marketplace and the characteristics that differentiate it from the traditional shopping mall. It then discusses these same concepts in relation to a longitudinal study carried out with consumers, retailers and management in the Powerscourt Townhouse Centre, a festival marketplace in Dublin. The conclusion highlights the interplay and tensions that exist between the physical space that is the shopping centre location and the symbolic space that is the consumer imagination.

THE ‘UTOPICS’ OF LOUIS MARIN
Louis Marin, although highly acclaimed in France for his writings on semiotics, literature and philosophy, is one of the lesser known French poststructuralist thinkers outside his home country. This is possibly due to the fact that up until his death in 1992, at the age of sixty-one, few of his writings had been translated into English. More recently several works have been translated which reveal an exciting and provocative approach to the readings of texts. These include Cross-Readings, a wide-ranging series of readings of texts from classical works by Herodotus and Ovid to children’s literature such as Robinson Crusoe and Jules Verne (Marin, 1998); and Food for Thought, which looks at the body as represented in text and image from fairy tales to biblical narratives (Marin, 1997).

For the purposes of this present study, however, we are going to concentrate on what is generally regarded as his best known work and his first available in English in 1984. This is his study entitled Utopics: The Semiological Play of Textual Spaces in which he takes Thomas More’s (1516) novel Utopia as his principal object of study and develops an innovative analytic method that becomes applicable to the reading of any utopian text (Hill, 1989).

Sir Thomas More’s seminal work offers the detailed depiction of a perfect society, hidden away on the island of Utopia. In his book he describes meticulously the workings of this ideal society, with detailed discussions on the form of government and even the society’s language and poetry. Although many readers will be familiar with this work they will probably be less knowledgeable about the genre of utopian writings that this work spawned. Broadly speaking, these writings divide into two groupings:

- the literary utopias, which like More’s, describe some type of ideal commonwealth where social harmony and perfection have been achieved. Typically these are of the travel-
ogue variety and are dominated by a narrator who acts as objective commentator and mediator between the existing world and the ideal that is portrayed. These literary utopian writings tend to give a comprehensive prescription for the ideal life with the minutiae of day-to-day living spelt out in their imaginary domains. Examples of this type of utopian writing one are Edward Bellamy’s Looking Backwards and Francis Bacon’s New Atlantis (Levitas, 1990).

- the emancipatory utopias which place more emphasis on critical content and less on literary form. These put forward a critical portrayal of the future that is intended to transcend the existing and, usually unsatisfactory conditions, and work towards a more perfect world. Typically these utopian visions are produced by socialists or Marxist writers and are temporal rather than spatial (Brown et al, 1996). Rather than specifying detailed workings of some imaginary society these emancipatory utopian writings stipulate goals for which to universally strive. Examples of this type of utopian writing are Karl Mannheim’s Ideology and Utopia and Ernst Bloch’s Principle of Hope (Levitas, 1990).

Marin’s work provides a unique bridge between these two distinct utopian groupings and between what has been up until now the separation of the utopian format from the actual function of utopia (Levitas, 1990; Moylan, 1986; Plattel, 1972). Marin revisits More’s Utopia and deconstructs the meaning of the text to shed new light on its significance. His focus is on the process of utopia, on the set of mental operations that go into its conception (Jameson, 1977). He begins with the word utopia itself, seeing the negation (‘u’ of utopia) as signifying a space that is between affirmation and negation, a space which is neither yes or no, true or false, neither one nor the other. He emphasises the importance of this space, conceptualising it as ‘the neutral’, a space of neutrality in which contradictions are allowed to play against one another rather than being resolved or hidden in the text. Leading on from this, he makes an important analytical distinction between utopia and myth. Whilst myth dissembles contradictions, as in the Lévi-Straussian interpretation (Lévi-Strauss, 1979), by mediating basic contradictions within a culture (life/death etc.), Marin argues that utopia performs the inverse function. It allows basic contradictions to play out against each other. Marin’s interpretation of the word ‘play’ is of particular significance: he intends its use to indicate the interplay between tensions, as in the way two taut ropes ‘play’ against each other. The fact that the word utopia is also a play on both the Greek ou-topos (no-place) and eu-topos (a place of happiness) is a further indication to Marin that happiness is to be found in indeterminacy, or neutralisation (Hill, 1989).

In Marin’s view utopia is not a perfected version of More’s sixteenth century society but a dislocated version, a fictional space in which the normal presuppositions of discourse have been suspended. For example, More takes what is normally used as a temporal symbol, the new moon, and makes it a spatial one in the form of the Island of Utopia which is in the shape of a half moon (Hill, 1989). The island itself is no place; it does not exist anywhere, other than in the space of the text. Other names in Utopia contribute to this overarching theme of neutralisation, such as the river called No-water (Anydrus) and the prince called No-people (Ademus). It is neither the old world nor the new, neither the present, past nor future. In this way a utopian text becomes self-deconstructive; its referent is always an absent one. Utopian practice, therefore, establishes itself in the distance between reality and its other, or, according to Marin, the gap between the text.

A utopia becomes degenerate when, like Disneyland, fiction gives way to representation and becomes immobilised in ideology. Disneyland functions more like the Lévi-Straussian view of myth: it papers over contradictions instead of allowing them to play; and it acts as a narrative that resolves formally a fundamental social contradiction. In these respects Marin shares the view of many well-known utopian thinkers, such as Bloch (1988), and Marcuse (1970), who maintain that utopia is not a realisable project, nor even a prescriptive format to be attained. In fact, a utopia once gained negates itself (Baudrillard, 1988), becoming in turn the status quo to be questioned and critiqued. In effect, it is the function of utopia that is of most significance. This rests upon hope and desire, looking for the future in the present and inspiring creativity, innovation and change. Amongst other things, such as fairy tales, Bloch (1988) sees this function in simple daydreams. By deconstructing More’s text Marin shows that it also provides this function; and that More did not intend his Utopia to indicate a realisable project, nor offer a prescriptive format as a recipe for the initiation of human perfection. Rather, the purpose of More’s vision is to present a creative and playful set of imaginings that contrast with the reality of the times in which he was living.

In summary, it seems that there are four main issues to emerge from Marin’s work on utopia: 1) utopia as a neutral space; 2) utopia as a space where contradictions can be played out; 3) utopia as existing in the gaps between the text; 4) utopia as degenerate when it becomes an ideology. It is these concepts, then, that we bring to bear on the utopian aspects of the festival marketplace and our interpretation of the consumer experiences therein.

**THE FESTIVAL MARKETPLACE**

The role of the festival marketplace is to rejuvenate decaying historical business and waterfront districts in inner city areas (Goss, 1993) and markets of this nature have dramatically changed the image of many American cities (Fondersmith, 1988). Although they have been described as downtown’s answer to the suburban mall (Maitland, 1985) markets such as these actually provide a very different function from the average out-of-town shopping centre. Whilst they certainly bring shoppers and tourists back to downtown, perhaps their most crucial feature is that they also re-create the social dynamism that attracts people to cities in the first place (Zoglin, 1996). Although it is well recognised that they breathe life back into the city through the creation of new civic gathering places, there has been little scrutiny of how they actually achieve these effects. This is where Marin’s four concepts can prove particularly useful in revealing some of the underlying subtleties at play in such a space.

**Utopia as a Neutral Space**

In terms of his concept of the ‘neutral’, Wood (1985, p.81) describes festival marketplaces as ‘pseudoplaces’, places that stand for something that never existed. Indeed, this signification seems to be their very essence: at once they hark back to an idealised past through their refurbishment of an historic setting, whilst offering the promise of an idealised future through the proliferation of consumption fantasies within the setting. Spaces such as these articulate an ideology of nostalgia which, according to Goss (1993), can be understood as a lament on the perceived loss of authenticity, spontaneity and community. This nostalgia accompanies the ‘millennial unease’ (Brown, 1997), an ending to the twentieth century that is characterised by a popular feeling of anxiety (Dunant and Porter, 1996). There is an overriding sense of disillusionment which means that as hopes of progress fade and the grand narratives of modernity crumble to dust, we console ourselves by looking
backwards towards our heritage and tradition (Lowenthal, 1998). The festival marketplace maximises these feelings to create a sense of ‘nowhereness’ both in time and space.

Utopia as a Space for Contradictions
There are, thus, many contradictions inherent in the overall conception of such a marketplace. Indeed, these are the very factors that differentiate it from its suburban rival, the traditional shopping mall:-

1. **Past vs. Present**: It includes the redevelopment of an historic building which, rather than being a museum, consists of an eclectic, postmodern blending of the old with the new, that does not attempt to make chronological sense (Reekie, 1992).

2. **Local vs. Global**: A unique sense of place is created through the distinctive identity that the shopping centre management create for their sites. This identity is firmly located within the character of the immediate surroundings and gives a sense of heritage and community to a downtown area.

3. **Unique Retail vs. Mass Market**: the festive market covers not only luxuries, but any commodity that might be seen as a little out of the ordinary. For example, small, independent retailers offer hand-made craft items and usually there are no chain store operators or anchor stores.

4. **Hedonistic vs. Utilitarian Shopping**: it is an environment dedicated to leisure retailing. The emphasis is on an informal, relaxed style of shopping, removed from everyday, utilitarian shopping. The overall atmosphere is one of browsing and gazing, either at the array of products, other shoppers or the setting itself. An abundance of restaurants and seating areas facilitates this spectatorship. There will also be the provision of entertainment to create a venue that is reminiscent of fairs or markets of bygone eras. For example, there may be frequent musical performances or even period-type actors strolling around the area.

5. **Consumption vs. Production**: the significance of the festive market to postmodern forms of retailing lies particularly in a physical proximity between artistic creation, design and consumption. This effect is often created through spaces devoted to art exhibitions or hand crafting displays. Spatial arrangements are used in this way to suggest to consumers that the creation of works of art and the act of consumption are parallel, synonymous behaviours.

Utopia as the Gaps between the Text
The differentiating features of a festival market, then, hold many implicit contradictions that create the gaps where the mind can roam and explore: spaces where the experience, and fantasy elements can take over. Indeed, studies undertaken by the Rouse Company (the original developers of Faneuil Hall in 1976) have indicated that seventy percent of visitors come just ‘for the experience’ (Maynard and Milligen, 1995). Given that the modern shopping trip fulfils many different needs above and beyond any utilitarian function, a purchase is frequently the least significant factor, superceded by an immersion in the overall multisensory experience (Bloch and Bruce, 1984). Campbell (1987) has shown how modern pleasure-seeking is characterised by a highly rational-ized form of self-illusory hedonism. Not only is this a behaviour fed by desire for, and anticipation of, a promised sensory experience, but it also depends on emotional pleasure and the ability of an individual to imaginatively create mental images for self-consumption. Campbell (p.77) refers to this day-dreaming or fantasizing as ‘modern autonomous imaginative hedonism’. The festival marketplace is dedicated to this consumer imagination, as a retail space that also provides a space for the mind; a mindspace, as it were, within a unique physical space.

Utopia as Degenerate
The last of Marin’s four concepts, that of the degenerate utopia, also seems particularly pertinent to the history of the festival marketplace. Whilst Rouse’s vision to create this type of unique downtown space has been supremely successful, as evidenced by its proliferation worldwide, he is not without critics. Zoglin (1996) describes Rouse’s vision as being so influential that it eventually took on an ‘anesthetising quality’ of its own in terms of the clichéd nature of its restored buildings, speciality shops and side shows. In his view too much novelty becomes self-defeating with the speciality market itself becoming saturated and the consumer becoming increasingly immune to its attractions (Robertson, 1995; Sawicki, 1989).

Other criticisms concerning the issues of private and public partnerships over such ventures testify to further potential degeneration and to a ‘mythic’ representation. The rationale behind a festive market development is to provide business opportunities to local merchants and, accordingly, it attracts civic investment. However speciality stores are not necessarily owned by private independents and, in a more sinister turn, large companies may masquerade as small ones in order to enter the urban market in this manner (Sawicki, 1992). Also, although there are no conspicuously contrived traffic flows between anchor stores as in the traditional shopping mall, these environments are every bit as manipulated by the management, albeit to mimic the disordered, chaotic nature of a traditional marketplace. Indeed, the atmosphere is deliberately engineered to be reminiscent of market squares and communal gathering places from bygone times (Bivins, 1989).

**METHODOLOGY**
The findings that we are now going to discuss in relation to Marin’s concepts are part of an ongoing interpretive project, a longitudinal study of the Powerscourt Townhouse Centre in Dublin. In keeping with this type of approach we have used multiple data sources (Belk et al, 1989; Wallendorf and Belk, 1988; Lincoln and Guba, 1985) which required a variety of research methods: observation studies and photographic recordings over a period of two years; 25 in-depth interviews with retailers and management in the centre; 4 group discussions with past and present shoppers; and 60 subjective personal introspection accounts written by male and female shoppers from a wide variety of backgrounds and age ranges. In particular, this latter, somewhat controversial technique (cf. Brown, 1997 for a full discussion), has yielded rich insights into consumer feelings in relation to the Powerscourt experience. Furthermore the methodological approach to this study has been developed around the core premise made by Hirschman and Holbrook (1992) that all consumer behaviour can be regarded as a text in search of interpretation. In keeping with standard literary theory practice, the reading of all the findings interweaves Marin’s perspectives with the data and each informs the other (cf. Brown et al, 1999).

The location for this present study, the Powerscourt Townhouse Centre in Dublin, is the refurbished Georgian residence of Lord Powerscourt, built in the late eighteenth century. It was chosen for
the study because it is the only festival marketplace in Ireland, North or South. Situated just off Dublin’s busiest shopping area, Grafton Street, it was developed into a shopping centre in 1981. Its advertising literature stresses its credentials as a festival marketplace. It describes itself as one of the finest examples of Georgian architecture open to the public and as a meeting place where special events throughout the year are free of charge to its visitors. These include string quartet recitals, jazz concerts, flower exhibitions, fashion shows and craft demonstrations. A focal point is the grand piano. On a raised central stage its melodic tones resonate throughout the building. The speciality shops include antiques and art galleries, housing some of the leading dealers in Ireland; fashion shops containing some of Ireland’s leading young designers as well as European designer labels; jewellers and goldsmiths offering handmade pieces; a wide selection of craft shops selling everything from wooden toys to handmade shoes and boots; and many restaurants catering for a wide variety of tastes.

**POWERSCOURT AS A NEUTRAL ZONE**

There are several factors that contribute to Powerscourt being a no-place, or in Marin’s terminology, a ‘neutral’ place. First there is the fact that many visitors stumble across the centre by chance and it is therefore not associated with the main central Dublin shopping. Signage to the centre is almost non-existent except for one small discrete sign on the main thoroughfare, Grafton Street, and thus is easily missed. This means that often the centre is a serendipitous find which surprises and delights. Consumers describe it as ‘out of the way’, ‘hidden’ and ‘tucked away like a hidden treasure’. There is often an overriding sense of exploration, a voyage of discovery that characterises the traditional literary utopian finds. The Powerscourt Centre, therefore, is seen as a place apart. It provides a welcome antidote to the hectic streets of a busy Dublin day, teaming with tourists; and it offers a welcome rest from the swirling crowds and jostling bodies on Grafton Street. In this sense it is viewed as very different, a peaceful place, as an oasis, a haven; and as a respite from normal everyday life, whether it be the everyday world of shopping or the everyday world of work. One habitué related how he loved to leave the office telephones far behind and escape for coffee. He referred to the gentler pace in Powerscourt as having ‘a fantasy escapist element’.

All this contributes to the overall feelings of otherwhereness, a dislocation from the present, and a distancing which is both spatial and temporal. This removal from normal activities enhances the potential fantasy elements of the experience. Indeed, more than one introspective essay conveyed the feeling of walking into a dream or of ‘leaving the hurly-burly of Dublin’s main shopping area and entering a bygone time’, as one essayist expressed it.

Frequently, with its abundance of stalls and nooks and crannies, accounts describe Powerscourt as being like a traditional market or bazaar. Markets, of course, have long held connotations of being in-between spaces because traditionally they were located at crossroads. They have provided bridges between communities and stood between the sacred and secular, the mundane and exotic, the local and global (Stallybrass and White, 1986). Consequently, markets have many connotations of strangeness, of a mingling of unfamiliar worlds where anything is possible; where there may be chance encounters with things unfamiliar and pleasurable. Essentially they are liminoid zones, in-between places and spaces, which echo Marin’s definition of the neutral.

**A SPACE FOR CONTRADICTIONS**

As a retail space Powerscourt is full of contradictions and underlying tensions that remain unresolved and that play against each other. Like More’s Island of Utopia, this is neither the old world nor the new, neither eighteenth century Georgian times or modern day Ireland. One of the attractions mentioned by consumers, is that it seems less commercialised and bland that the rest of the main street, an ‘anchor’ in an otherwise large and impersonal city. Some even venerate it as a ‘testament to time’ describing a ‘coming home feeling’ of tradition that sets it apart. At once it is a commercial space and somewhere that evokes other, more aesthetic values, both in terms of its preservation of a historic building and the arts, crafts and antiques contained within. One consumer described this feeling as ‘a cultural superiority which masks its innate commerciality’.

Its two entrances symbolise these inherent contradictions. The original front entrance with its marbled black and white floor, its empty fireplace and its high ceiling is somewhat cold and forbidding, reminiscent of distant times and an even more distant aristocracy. In sharp contrast the original back entrance (now used more frequently as the front) is a profusion of flowers and fruit that spill out onto the street. Its welcoming earthen flagstones and cozy ambience invite consumers to enter and go beyond, to investigate and explore. Contradictions in these two entrances abound: urban/rural, high culture/low culture, aristocracy/peasantry, coldness/warmth, temperance/indulgence. Within the centre itself these tensions remain unresolved, playing against each other and underlying the overall design and layout. Powerscourt consists of three levels, tiered balconies with restaurants and shops that overlook a central courtyard that holds another restaurant and a grand piano on a raised platform. Whereas the higher levels are devoted to designer labels, shops, goldsmiths, antiques and art galleries, the ground floor is characterised by an abundance of bric-a-brac shops and cheap jewellery stalls. As one consumer put it: ‘there are some really tacky products and some really lovely products’. The centre defies the traditional marketing-oriented approach of segmentation, targeting and positioning, exhibiting instead a de-differentiation associated with postmodern times.

**THE FANTASY GAPS**

The unresolved contradictions that abound in Powerscourt create gaps that leave room for the utopian imagination. These are the missing details that we fill in through the mind’s eye as we consciously and unconsciously rearrange reality and our place in that reality (Geoghegan, 1987). For example, one consumer recalled how, as a student, he had relished having access to this site of the Anglo-Irish landed gentry. He talked of his subliminal feelings of being able to hold his head up in the townhouse of a titled family, describing his sense that this was just one slightly beyond him. He added ‘you’re going into a new world or something fantastic as in fantasy’.

Others recounted the thrill of experiencing a retail area where the rooms had once been used for something else and of walking along ‘other people’s footsteps’. The gaps this creates between past and present produces many nostalgic feelings which enchant and inspire. ‘Charmed’ is a word that recurs often in this context together with many references to feelings of history, the open space of the courtyard, and the piano’s melodies, ‘redolent of soulful evenings gathered round a fire’.

Several consumers who had visited at Christmas time, when the centre is lavishly decorated, recalled childhood emotions in their accounts. For one ‘the pretty twinkly lights and garlands of holly’ carried her back to the past and gave her ‘a warm anticipatory feeling of lovely surprises to come’. Nostalgia and anticipation thus become intermingled, evoking both past and future in a present that is neither one nor the other. Another shopper talked of her excitement at climbing the heavy wooden staircase. She described the many doorways as ‘beckoning to come forth’.
Sometimes the utopian gaps become dystopian as realisation approaches. One retailer, a well-known Dublin hairdresser, recounted how a client, on the morning of her wedding, had rushed out of his salon screaming, threatening legal action over her finished hairstyle which had failed to meet her expectations. A young lecturer spoke of the anticipation she had had over an outfit in the centre’s most prestigious clothes shop, The Design Centre. Once having put it on, however, her anticipation turned to antipathy when she realised she had seen the same suit on a middle-aged TV personality. She related how, feeling 50 and middle-aged, she left the centre in a dejected mood and without a purchase.

**THE DEGENERATION OF POWERSCOURT?**

A dystopian theme is very pertinent to the current state of the shopping centre, which for the last year has been undergoing a major refurbishment. The management’s intention is to revitalise an image that they acknowledge has become somewhat jaded in recent times. For locals, certainly, the novelty value of Powerscourt has long since worn off and most look elsewhere for a leisure time distraction. Management’s intention is to reposition the centre towards an eighteen to forty year age group and include certain national chain stores, albeit the smaller and more select ones. In adopting this more traditional marketing approach many contradictions and anomalies will then be resolved. For instance, all the bric-a-brac stalls on the ground floor will disappear, to be replaced by good quality merchandise; and traffic flows will be given careful consideration. There are plans to institute a ‘circular pedestrian flow’ on the upstairs floors where there has often been considerable chaos and even disorientation caused amongst consumers. The central space, leading the eye from the piano on its raised platform to the soaring heights of the atrium, is to have an additional floor that will carry an upmarket coffee chain. Much of the feeling of light and space will therefore be obliterated in this re-design.

Consequently, at present there is an overriding air of uncertainty, which sometimes manifests itself as mistrust and even hostility amongst the retailers. The management are taking more that three times the predicted timeframe for the refurbishment; there is dust and dirt everywhere; and many shops stand empty and dilapidated. Eager consumers who visit the centre leave with a sense of disappointment and disillusionment. Furthermore, certain tenants have been asked to leave because they no longer equate to the management vision of the appropriate tenant mix for Powerscourt. It seems that the management is thus trying to bring all the Powerscourt spaces, both mental and physical, under its control. Of course in any utopian vision there must always be a boundary definition, a limitation to its horizons (Marin, 1993). This requires a delicate balance between individual and communal needs; or, in the case of Powerscourt, a sensitive mix of retail space and mindspace. Yet now a certain homogeneity seems inevitable together with the resultant implication that the creation of a management ‘myth’, or ideology, will leave no room for ‘spatial play’.

As if testifying to this degeneration, the grand piano, once such a splendid symbol of the consumer anticipation that Powerscourt could evoke, sits amid the dirt and rubble. It is now only used by the builders as a convenient resting place for coffee mugs and working tools. Most certainly, it will never play again.

**CONCLUSION**

In summary, then, this paper has demonstrated how Marin’s concepts can deepen our understanding of ‘being-in-the-marketplace’ (Sherry, 1998), both at the generic level (the festival marketplace) and at the specific level (Powerscourt Townhouse Centre). In particular, it has illustrated the nature of retail spaces in relation to the utopian imagination and the changes that may happen to those spaces, both mental and physical, over time. Marin’s overarching theme of spatial play highlights several important points: how this imagination is fuelled by contradictions; how there are many underlying tensions that exist and contribute to a location’s imaginative potential; and how there is a particular tension between the consumer imagination and the quest for managerial control. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Marin’s notion of spatial play conveys perfectly the playfulness of the consumer imagination, its creative spirit which seeks to find spaces where it may celebrate what Belk (1996) describes as the ‘myself-that-could-be’.

**REFERENCES**


Understanding Luxury Brands in Hong Kong
Angela Chung Yan Wong, Simon Fraser University, Canada
Judith Lynne Zaichkowsky, Simon Fraser University, Canada

ABSTRACT
A survey of 70 residents of Hong Kong on their attitudes, perceptions and buying behaviours towards 40 luxury brands was carried out. Comparisons were made with findings in prior studies completed in Europe and the United States. Additional measurements were included to understand the impact of the Asian economic crisis on the luxury market. Findings showed, in Hong Kong, desire to own luxury goods was mainly generated by brand awareness. Unlike in the United States, the number of luxury goods consumers already own did not affect this desire. Moreover, people in Hong Kong hold a pessimistic view toward the future economy, and therefore they are expected to reduce their spending on luxury goods in the future. In particular, people, who had spent larger amount of money on luxury goods, planned to shrink their budgets on these goods in the future.

INTRODUCTION
The growth of the luxury market has been substantial for the past 20 years (Echikson, 1995). According to Dubois and Duquesne (1993), the global sales figure of the luxury market in 1993 was $60 million, and this figure has increased at an annual rate of 20 percent. This 20 percent increase is supported by the remarkable performance of some luxury brands. For example, “In 1977, Louis Vuitton was only a small family business with sales under $20 million” (Dubois and Duquesne, 1993, p.36). Eighteen years later, this company attained sales of $4.6 billion, and it is now the biggest luxury group in the world—Louis Vuitton Moet Hennessy—having assets of over USD$14 billion (www.lvm.com, May 1998).

In addition, the rapid economic growth in Asia has increased people’s purchasing power and, thus, has opened the market for luxury brands. As people become wealthier, their self-image and lifestyle change. Due to the communist history of some Asian countries, European and North American luxury goods were not allowed in these countries (Keng & Yang, 1993). Now that the political situation has changed, the market potential for luxury business in Asia is strong. The question arises, “Should luxury-brand marketers develop different marketing strategies for Asian markets?”

Prior studies (Dubois & Duquesne, 1993; Dubois & Paternault, 1995; Garfein, 1989) tested the differences in consumer behaviour between luxury purchases and other types of consumption. These studies showed that different marketing strategies are needed to promote and retail luxury goods in different markets. However, these studies took place in the European and North American markets only. Therefore, to understand what kinds of strategies are needed in Asia, it is beneficial to replicate these studies in different Asian markets. For the purpose of this study, Hong Kong was chosen as the test market because of the wide availability of luxury brands and for the apparent strong desire of Hong Kong consumers to own luxury goods (www.irasia.com/listco/hk/joyce/index.htm). It is also important to consider the recent economic crisis in Asia and its impact on the luxury goods market.

SELECTED LITERATURE REVIEW
The Asian Market for Luxury Brands
Despite the recent economic crisis, the economic growth in Asia introduced tremendous business opportunities for many North American and European companies in the past 20 years (Echikson, 1995). For example, the economic growth for China is approximately 12-13% annually. The unemployment rate in some of the Asian cities is much lower than that of most North American countries (e.g., 2.2% for Hong Kong and 2.7% for Singapore versus 9.0% for Canada in 1997).

The population of Asia is almost four times as large as the population of the rest of the world. In particular, China has a population of 1.2 billion people, which is almost one-third of the world’s population. In Asia, the population of the age group from 20 to 40, which makes the greatest contribution to economic growth, is increasing steadily; and the expenditures of this population is estimated to hit $616 million US by the year 2000 (Wedel, 1993). Comparatively, the population of the same age group in Europe will decline from 104 million to 86 million by the year 2010 (Wedel, 1993). This population growth of the highest-spending group in Asia creates tremendous market potential for luxury goods. Thus, it is of marketers’ interest to examine if alternative marketing strategies are needed to further the current success. Marketing strategies for luxury brands include specific luxury market segmentation, prestige brand positioning, and appropriate brand diffusion.

Components of Luxury Brands
Before the development of effective marketing strategies for a particular market, it is essential to understanding the basic components and functions of a luxury brand. According to Biel (1992), components of a luxury brand (identity, awareness, perceived quality and loyalty) serve different functions (self-concept congruency, fragmented relationship, and consumption simplification) for different luxury purchases. In addition, the brand image or the identity of a luxury brand, is composed of two sub-images—the image of the manufacturer and the image of the user. These images simplify the purchase-decision-making process. Luxury brands are competing based on the ability to 1) create a well-known brand identity, 2) increase brand awareness and perceived quality, thereby increasing brand preference and purchases, and 3) retain sales levels and customers’ loyalty. In other words, luxury brands must not only be good quality, but also be able to fulfill customers’ emotional needs.

The International Research Institute on Social Change (RISC) completed a survey to investigate the positioning strategies, on the basis of brand awareness and purchase level, for luxury brands. The purpose of the study was to understand “the sequence of stages luxury brands go through before being fully accepted by consumers (Dubois & Paternault, p.69)”. In other words, researchers attempted to understand the secret of successful brand positioning of some luxury brands. The respondents were asked about their buying habits, perceptions, and attitudes toward a set of 34 luxury brands. Researchers analyzed the data and developed a regression equation, which explains the relationship among brand awareness, dream value (desire to own), and purchasing behaviour of luxury brands. Researchers named the equation the “dream formula”:

\[
D_{REAM} = -8.6 + 0.58 \text{ AWARENESS} – 0.59 \text{ PURCHASE}
\]

(Dubois & Paternault, 1995, p.73).
According to this equation, awareness and purchase of a luxury brand have significant relationships to the dream value. The negative intercept (-8.6) indicates that when the awareness and purchasing variables are equal to zero, the dream value of a brand is negative. That is, the dream value of a new brand, without any promotion or trial, is negative, meaning that consumers do not desire to own the brand at all. The awareness variable holds a positive relationship with the dream value, indicating that the purchasing intention of a luxury brand increases while consumers are more aware of the brand.

In the regression, an increase of the ownership of a luxury brand decreases the purchasing intention of the brand. It is logical to assume that awareness of a brand stimulates consumers to dream of owning a brand, and eventually buying products made by the brand. However, a conflicting argument is that “by making the dream come true, the purchase act itself takes away some of the inaccessible and, therefore, luxury nature of the brand” (Dubois & Paternault, 1995, p.70). This supports the concept of the “rarity principle”. According to the principle, scarce products, such as luxury items, when over-diffused, gradually lose their prestigious character” (Dubois & Paternault, 1995).

To measure the dream value of a luxury brand, respondents were asked the following question, “Imagine that you have the possibility of choosing a beautiful present because you won a contest. Which are the five brands you would like the best?” (Dubois & Paternault, 1995, p.70). The top five brands that they would like to buy without any financial constraint were 1) “Rolex”, 2) “Gucci”, 3) “Christian Dior”, 4) “Estee Lauder”, and 5) “Cartier” (Dubois & Paternault, 1995).

Using the regression equation, researchers calculated the “expected dream value” for each brand by subtracting a brand’s purchase level from its awareness level. Thus, there is an “expected dream value” of each brand. Brands fell into three categories, 1) “normal”, 2) “premium”, and 3) “dream deficit”. Four situations emerged with different managerial implications. In situation one, the desire to own a brand is limited because the awareness is low. Marketers for this kind of brands should first develop brand awareness. In situation two, the awareness is good but the dream value is low because the purchase level is already high. Researchers recommended marketers “refrain from excessive licensing and maintain highly selective distribution channels in order to protect the brand equity” (Dubois & Paternault, 1995). In other cases (situation three), the awareness level is “normal” but the purchase level is low. These brands are recommended to carefully develop their expansion strategies. Lastly, brands in situation four have very strong awareness and highly controlled brand diffusion, and the desire to own these brands is high. An example of this kind of brands is DeBeers, which has avoided hazardous diversification and limits its buyers to about 200 people worldwide (Dubois & Paternault, 1995).

These findings suggest that marketers are facing a challenge to build their brands without jeopardizing the luxurious appeal. Luxury-brand marketers should develop a high level of awareness and tightly control the supply and distribution of their products in order to maintain a level of scarcity and to control the level of brand diffusion. If these factors are improperly managed, the dream value of their brands will decrease and the purchasing intention will also decline. In addition, the avoidance of hazardous diversification and line extensions is also important to maintain the prestigious identity of a luxury brand.

**Strategies for Luxury Brands in Hong Kong**

Purchasing luxury items, in a hedonic perspective, assists consumers in projecting their personalities through their possessions. Possessing luxury items reflects self-achievement needs (Dubois and Duquesne, 1993). In other words, desire for and intention to purchase luxury goods are positively correlated with these needs. According to Tai and Tam (1996), people in Hong Kong are very conscious about their public self-image, and this is shown by the strong desire to own luxury brands across different levels in the society.

People in Hong Kong are less optimistic about their future financial situation, leading to an increased importance of education and an increased tendency towards personal development (Tai & Tam, 1996). According to Dubois and Duquesne (1993), people have higher purchasing intentions toward luxury goods if they have a strong desire for personal development. It can be concluded that people in Hong Kong have a higher intention to buy luxury goods because they have a strong sense of self-improvement and personal development.

Hong Kong is an ideal city to investigate because of its extensive availability of luxury brands. Marketers should be careful in the follow issues: 1) identifying the target segment in the market, 2) understanding the preferred public-self images of the target consumers, and 3) using the appropriate emphases in marketing communications and promotions. Moreover, the recent downturn of the Asian economy has seriously affected business, including the luxury market. In Hong Kong, the unemployment rate has risen to the highest point in the past fifteen years. Income is no longer increasing, and the economic growth was negative for the first half of the 1998 fiscal year. Under this situation, luxury-brand marketers are facing the challenge of developing new business strategies and surviving the period of economic hardship in Asia.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study replicated a survey undertaken by the International Research Institute on Social Change (RISC) in 1990 that was designed to measure people’s attitudes, perception, and purchasing behaviour of luxury goods in Hong Kong. Changes have been made from the original set of brands developed by RISC to include popular goods perceived to be luxury brands by people in Hong Kong. Sectors included in the list are primarily men’s and women’s fashions, perfumes, jewelry, and accessories such as watches and pens. The four measurements are as follows:

- **Aided Awareness:** provided with the set of brands, respondents were asked to indicate which ones they know at least by name.
- **Recent Purchases:** respondents were subsequently asked to indicate from which brands they had purchased an item during the past two years.
- **Dream Value:** to measure how strongly respondents desired to own a brand, they were asked to imagine that they were given the possibility of choosing a beautiful present because they had won a lottery. They were allowed to choose five brands from the list.

An additional measurement, “expenditure” (respondents were asked to provide the average dollar amount they had spent) was employed to investigate the relationship between spending on luxury goods in the past with expected spending on these goods in the future. Two questions were also included to measure consumers’ propensity to spend on luxury goods during the present economic hardship in Asia (1) “strongly disagree” to (7) “strongly
The answers were then correlated with people’s personal expectations of different future economic situations. These economic situations were: 1) “economic uncertainty”, 2) “lowered income”, 3) reduced income from other sources”, 4) “increased expenses”, and 5) “unemployment”. The responses were measured on a scale ranging from (1) “very unlikely to happen” to (5) “very likely to happen”.

Information was collected by personal interviews with Hong Kong residents in May 1998. These interviews took place on the streets or inside the shopping malls in popular shopping areas (Central, Causeway Bay, and Chim Sha Tsui), where most of the luxury brands are located. Permission to interview people inside the shopping malls was requested by sending a letter and explaining the purpose of the project to the managers.

Interested individuals were first presented with a letter explaining the purpose of the study. If interest was shown, they had to answer a screening question before they completed the questionnaire. The screening question was as follows: “Have you, in the past three years, purchased any product from this list (forty luxury brands in the questionnaire)?” All respondents answered “yes” to the screening question. Each respondent took approximately 20 to 25 minutes to complete the questionnaire. A total of 70 completed questionnaires were collected.

RESULTS

There were 40 male and 30 female respondents in the sample. More than half (61 percent) of the respondents were between 18 to 34 of age. The majority of the sample had a monthly income between $0 to $30,000 Hong Kong dollars (approximately $0 to $6,000CDN). The demographic profile of respondents is summarized in Table 1.

Awareness. The awareness level of various luxury brands in Hong Kong ranged from 20 percent (Todd Oldham) to 97 percent (Chanel). In comparison, the awareness level in Dubois and Paternault’s (1995) study varied from 5 percent (Daum) to 92 percent (Revlon). Table 2 shows the awareness scores of brands that were listed in both the US study and the current study. As shown by the results in this study, Hong Kong consumers have a much higher awareness level of luxury brands.

Dream Value. The top six brands which Hong Kong consumers dreamed of are 1) “Rolex” (59%), 2) “Cartier” (53%), 3) “Louis Vuitton” (44%), 4) “Chanel” (33%), 5) “Gucci” (33%) and 6) “Patek Philippe” (29%). No respondents dreamed of owning a product from Celine and Paloma Picasso. Correspondingly, the brands “Rolex”, “Gucci”, “Christian Dior”, “Estee Lauder”, “Cartier” and “Pierre Cardin” were the top-six luxury brands that US consumers dreamed to own. The differences could be due to culture or the time lapse between studies. Table 3 summarized the dream scores of the common brands in both studies.

Relationship Between Awareness, Purchase, and Dream Value

People rarely buy brands that they are not familiar with. The brand “Calvin Klein” had the highest purchase score (40 percent) and a relatively high level of brand awareness (93 percent). The
least-known brand, Todd Oldham, had an awareness level of 20 percent and purchase score of 1 percent. Forty-eight percent of the variation in brand diffusion was due to awareness.

The brands “Rolex”, “Cartier”, and “Louis Vuitton” have the highest awareness-dream scores. Awareness explained only 22 percent of the variation in dream value in Hong Kong. Dubois and Paternault (1995) found a much stronger linkage for this relationship with 71 percent of the variation in dream levels due to awareness in the United States.

Eighteen percent of the variation in dream levels was due to the purchasing variable. As Dubois and Paternault (1995) mentioned in their study, the relationship between dream and purchase levels is difficult to analyze since both factors are influenced by awareness. Thus, a partial correlation test was done between dream and purchase levels, with awareness as the controlling factor. Surprisingly, the correlation coefficient was not significant, meaning that the dream value of a luxury brand was largely accounted by its awareness, and the ownership of that brand had minimal impact on

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Brands</th>
<th>The US study (%)</th>
<th>The Current Study (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alfred Dunhill</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulgari</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cartier</td>
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<td>Chanel</td>
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<td>Christian Dior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giorgio Armani</td>
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<td>89</td>
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<td>Givenchy</td>
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<td>73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hermes</td>
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<td>81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louis Vuitton</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>Omega</td>
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<td>74</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pierre Cardin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yves Saint-Laurent</td>
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<th>Brands</th>
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<td>Christian Dior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louis Vuitton</td>
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<td>Pierre Cardin</td>
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<td>Ralph Lauren</td>
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<td>Rolex</td>
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<td>Yves Saint-Laurent</td>
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*Not provided.
its dream value in the market. This finding is completely different from that in Dubois and Paternault’s (1995) study, in which the relationship between dream and purchase levels was negative. That is, people dream less of a luxury brand as they purchase more products from that brand.

To ascertain that purchase has a minimal effect on dream value, a regression analysis was run to examine the relationship. In the regression analysis, the tolerance value of the two independent variables (awareness and dream) was 0.52, meaning that 52 percent of the variability of the awareness variable was not explained by the purchasing variable or vice versa. From the results, the purchasing variable did not have a significant impact on dream value. Since no adverse impact of the purchasing variable was found in the analysis, ownership of a luxury brand had no affect on its appeal in Hong Kong. The eagerness to own luxury goods remains high as long as the awareness level of the brands remains high. Appendix I summarized the scores of awareness, purchase, and dream value.

**Future Spending on Luxury Goods**

A small portion of Hong Kong respondents (27 percent) expected their spending on luxury goods would increase in the next year, 36 percent thought it would decrease, and 37 percent took a neutral position. These figures suggest that Hong Kong consumers were not sure about their future financial condition, and therefore were not able to give certain estimates about their future spending.

**Expectations of the Future Economic Situation**

Respondents were uncertain about the future economic situation and believed that their income from investments are likely to be reduced. The mean scores of these expectations were 3.61 (uncertain economy), 2.97 (lowered income), 3.54 (reduced income from investments), 3.14 (increase expenses) and 2.46 (unemployment). Fortunately, they still had confidence about keeping their present jobs and salary levels. A correlation analysis was run, showing significant relationships between future spending and the uncertain economy, lowered earned income, and reduced income from investments. The linkages between future spending and expectations of economic-related variables were further examined by a regression analysis. In the regression analysis, “uncertain economy” was the only significant predictor of negative future spending.

The R square value of this equation was 0.15. This result is perfectly reasonable, as people save more money when they are uncertain about future conditions.

Another interesting finding was the relationship between future spending and spending in the past on luxury goods. The two variables were negatively correlated at 0.37, indicting that every dollar a respondent spent in the past causes a 37 cents decrease in future spending on luxury goods. In other words, people who spent more in the past tend to spend less in the future.

**DISCUSSION**

The study supports the assumption that Hong Kong consumers have different buying behaviour in relation to luxury purchases. Thus, strategies used in other markets, such as the U.S., may not implement directly in Hong Kong and therefore marketers need to develop different marketing strategies for this market.

Purchase does not have the adverse effect, which appeared in the U.S., on the desire to own luxury brands. Findings show that the “dream” of owning a luxury brand is mainly generated by the popularity (awareness) of the brand in Hong Kong. As people in Hong Kong are pessimistic about the future economy, they feel unsure about their future financial status. Fortunately, they still feel secure with their jobs and salary levels. Among the economic-related factors, “uncertain economy” had the greatest impact on consumers’ intention of future spending on luxury goods. Only 27 percent of respondents expected to increase spending on luxury goods in the future, while the rest of the respondents either expected a decrease in spending or took a neutral position.

One possible explanation is that people who spent more on luxury goods in the past were likely people who earned a large portion of their income from the real estate and the stock markets. During the period of the Asian economic turmoil, prices in these markets have dropped significantly and have seen no improvement up to this point in time. However, people who earned “easy” money through the stock market in good times are less likely to spend money than high-paid wage earners, who can at least count on their regular wage in tough times. Thus, these people currently have less money to spend on luxury goods. Nevertheless, there was no difference in dream value between respondents with different purchase levels. In other words, Hong Kong consumers’ desire to own luxury brands is not limited by their financial status. Therefore, marketers are facing the challenge to redesign their business strategies without sacrificing the prestigious image of their brands. The image should be well maintained to flourish the brand again when the economy improves.

**Marketing Implications**

According to Leclerc, Schmitt and Dube (1994), two dimensions determine the demand of a luxury brand. First, the brand must be easy to encode into, retain in, and retrieve from memory (brand awareness). Secondly, the marketing communication must be consistent with the strategic position of the brand in the market. In the Hong Kong luxury market, increasing awareness yields higher levels of brand preference, which generates stronger purchase intentions. Therefore, successful luxury brands are promoted through active-marketing communication in Hong Kong. Communication must focus on strengthening the brand image and delivering benefits that the brands could provide.

As shown in the result section, the brands “Alberta Ferratti”, “Baume & Mercier”, “J.P. Tod’s”, and “Todd Oldham” had awareness scores lower than 33 percent and purchase scores lower than 6 percent. The dream values of these brands were also low (smaller than 9 percent). Thus, marketers of these brands should re-evaluate their marketing strategies. They may need to redefine their target segments, increase the awareness level of their brands, and use different emphases in their communication.

To conclude, the main implications of this study are: 1) well-established brands should concentrate their efforts in maintaining current brand image and increasing brand awareness; and 2) all luxury brands (new, well established, and medium) should carefully re-evaluate and redesign their marketing strategies to survive the period of economic uncertainty. However, they should never sacrifice their product quality and prestigious brand image because, in essence, these are what made luxury goods special.

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Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong, http://www.info.gov.hk/censtatd/eindex.htm


APPENDIX
Perception, Purchase Intention, and Buying Behaviour of Luxury Brands in H.K.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Names</th>
<th>Awareness*</th>
<th>Purchase*</th>
<th>Average Dollar Spent*</th>
<th>Dream Value*</th>
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<td>2 Alberta Ferratti</td>
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<td>31.4</td>
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<td>31.4</td>
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<td>56</td>
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<td>12 Chanel</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>97.1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Chole</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Christian Dior</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>94.3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Dolce &amp; Gabbana</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Donna Karan</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Escada</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Fendi</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Gianfranco Ferre</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Gianni Versace</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Giorgio Armani</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Givenchy</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Gucci</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Hermes</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
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<td>25 J.P. Tod’s</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Louis Vuitton</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 Moschino</td>
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<td>87.1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
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<td>59</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.3</td>
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<td>29 Omega</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Paloma Picasso</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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<td>61.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>52.9</td>
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<td>5.7</td>
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<td>82.9</td>
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<td>8.6</td>
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<td>34 Prada</td>
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<td>72.9</td>
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<td>28.6</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31.4</td>
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<td>36 Rolex</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>94.3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>37 S. Dupont</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 Tiffany &amp; Co.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 Todd Oldham</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 Yves Saint-Laurent</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**a** Please indicate which ones you know at least by name.

**b** Please indicate if you have bought an item during the past three years.

**c** On average, how much did you spend on each purchase?

**d** Imagine you are given the possibility of choosing a beautiful present because you won a lottery. Which are the FIVE brands you would like to receive.
316 / Understanding Luxury Brands in Hong Kong


Louis Vuitton Moet Hennesy website, http://www.lvmh.com


Greeting Cards and Gifts: An Exploratory Study of Young Singaporeans
Saroja Subrahmanyan, National University of Singapore, Singapore

ABSTRACT

This article reports an exploratory study on greeting card and gift giving behaviors of young Singaporeans. We examined whether greeting cards exchanged for non-professional reasons are perceived to be gifts and also if there are similarities between gift giving and greeting card giving behaviors in terms of perceived ability to communicate with friends and family, obligation to reciprocate, perceived amount given, perceived effort, importance of personal values and gender. We also examined the various occasions when gifts and cards are commonly exchanged. Results show that the card is considered to be a gift and that those who perceive themselves as good communicators gave more cards and gifts. Several dimensions of card giving behavior were related to values in the LOV scale as in the case of gift-giving. Birthdays and the Christmas/New Year Season are two popular occasions for exchanging gifts and cards.

INTRODUCTION

Greeting Cards are considered to be a contemporary American token gift (Sherry, 1983). In the western world, sending greeting cards became a custom for people of all socioeconomic classes when England adopted the Uniform Postage Act in 1840 (Cacioppo and Andersen, 1981). In America, the greeting card industry started in the early 1900’s (Chase 1956). By 1995, it had become a $6.3 billion industry with Americans purchasing an estimated 7.4 billion cards that year (Mogelonsky 1996). This contemporary American ritual has become popular in other parts of the world including Asia in the last three decades. Worldwide sales of industry leader Hallmark, which has wholly owned subsidiaries in 12 countries and distribution in more than 100 countries, was $3.7 billion (Business Wire 1998).

According to Erbaugh (forthcoming 1999), there was practically no greeting card in China or even Taiwan in the 1970’s. While, it did exist in other parts of Asia even earlier, such as in Singapore and certain cities in India, perhaps due to their colonial past, its frequency and usage has definitely increased in the last two decades. In India, this industry is now estimated to be worth about $100 million (Raval 1997). In Singapore, the post offices have even started selling greeting cards in their premises since the early 1990’s. The Malaysian post offices delivered 50 million greeting cards during the Hari Raya and Chinese New Year celebrations in 1998 (The New Straits Times, 1998). [Note: Hari Raya marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan and is celebrated by the Muslims].

Why do we send greeting cards? One reason to explain this ritual is that greeting card developers provide us with cards that are appropriate for a wide variety of circumstances (Hirshey, 1995). Cards could also provide a means of communicating our sentiments to people we cannot meet on several important occasions (Davis 1972, Erbaugh 1999, Tong 1998). Another reason is that cards can explicitly communicate our feelings and sentiments and thus reduce decoding errors during the symbolic communication process (Ruth, 1996). As opposed to this reasoning, Dodson and Belk (1996) suggest that in fact the card can be a potential landmine that may cause miscommunication. Still others suggest (Brabant and Mooney 1989, Hirshey 1995) that people give cards as it provides an avenue for communicating messages difficult to deliver face-to-face. This is also echoed by several greeting card manufacturers and retailers as reported by Davis (1972), Raval (1997) and Business Line (1998). Does this popular wisdom then imply that a sender’s perception of how well she communicates her feelings towards friends and family affect the perceived amount, perceived effort or any other measures of greeting card giving behavior? There appears to be no research that specifically addresses this question.

Cards seem to share aspects of a gift as well aspects of other forms of communication such as letter-writing. According to Belk (1979), gifts serve four functions: communication, social exchange, socialization and economic exchange. Cards may only marginally serve as a means of economic exchange perhaps as a form of house decoration during festivals (Sapawi 1997) or posters that brighten up the walls like calenders (Erbaugh 1999). However, it can serve the other functions effectively. In spite of being a token gift, one can spend quite a bit of time searching for an appropriate card. As Sherry (1983) mentions, a husband or wife can spend many thoughtful hours searching for the “right” 75 cents card with which to delight a spouse. Is a card then perceived to be a gift? Would a receiver be motivated to reciprocate to a card? In many rituals such as birthdays, when a gift is given, one may in addition give a card. So, it is not clear whether cards are thought of as a form of gift. Erbaugh’s students in China mentioned that cards are better than gifts as they are easier to select and entail lesser obligation than gifts. Papson (1986), however, suggests that a card’s price might mediate in the relationship signified by the exchange and since there is a lack of ambivalence in this symbolic exchange, it demands equivalence. Would a receiver then be motivated to reciprocate to a card as in the case of a gift? Rucker, Freitas and Kangas (1996) suggest that financial sacrifice may be more appreciated than investments of time and effort by eastern cultures. They find support for this in their study, which examines gift-giving behaviors of Asian students in America. Would this then imply that cards would not be as perceived as gifts and been seen as being meaningful in an eastern culture?

If cards share many aspects of gift-giving, then would it also be related to personal values? Beatty, Kahle and Homer (1991) and Beatty et al (1996) find that people who perceive themselves as giving more gifts and putting more effort into giving them also rated social values (warm relationships with others, sense of belonging and self-respect) higher than others. They found this relationship held for peoples from the U.S. and some European countries as well as for Asian students in America. Would such relationships hold for greeting cards as well?

Purpose of Research:

The purpose of this exploratory study is to examine the questions that we raised so far in a Singapore context. Thus, we will explore the following issues: Is a greeting card perceived to be a gift? Would a receiver feel obliged to reciprocate to a card? Would this level of reciprocation be lower than for gifts? Would a sender of cards feel that she does not communicate well with her family and friends? Would measures of greeting card giving behavior such as the perceived amount, perceived effort and reciprocity be related to personal values? In doing so, we also extend the earlier studies that examine gift-giving behaviors and personal values by studying new dimensions as well as applying it to a new subculture that has hitherto not been studied in this specific context. In addition, we will examine the occasions on which cards and gifts are exchanged and the effect of demographic variables such as gender on measures of gift and greeting card giving behavior. This study does not
consider cards exchanged for professional networking, corporate communication or direct marketing purposes.

McCullough, Tan and Wong (1986) and Wallendorf and Reilly (1983), point out that research on ethnic groups is important not only from a marketers viewpoint but also to gain a greater understanding of international markets and to determine how broadly we can generalize various consumer behavior models. Otanes and Beltramini (1996) and Sherry (1983) also underscore the importance of studying gift-giving among people with different national heritages as it would help us understand how this exchange process is evaluated among diverse peoples. Since greeting cards are closely related to gift-giving (and may very well be considered a gift by many), this study though exploratory in nature, will be a step in that direction.

Singapore is a relatively wealthy urban country on the increasingly important Pacific Rim (Tan and Farley 1987). It has a per capita GDP of over 28 thousand U.S. dollars, which is a level comparable to that of the U.S (AsiaWeek 1998). About 75% of its population are of ethnic Chinese origin, about 15% Malay and about 7% of Indian origin. Western style greeting cards with words in English are sold in many outlets. Stores selling cards and gifts such as the ones in the U.S are also found here. Judging by the cards available in the stores, popular occasions for sending cards appear to be festivals such as Christmas, New Year, Chinese New Year, Hari Raya and Deepavali. Hari Raya is celebrated by the Muslim community, which consists of people mainly of Malay origin whereas Deepavali is celebrated by the Hindus, who are mainly of Indian origin. Cards for other occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, birth of baby etc. were also found in the stores. Prior to conducting this study, in-depth interviews were conducted with 8 young Singaporeans between the ages of 18 and 25. It appears that for this age group, cards are not normally given to family members as most stay at home and were mostly exchanged among friends.

METHOD

Sampling and Sample Profile:
This exploratory study was conducted by means of a survey. A convenience sample was taken with undergraduate students from a large university in Singapore as participants. After excluding responses from foreign students and those not of ethnic Chinese origin, a sample size of 137 was obtained. Out of these, 45 were males and 92 females. Except for five students who were 25, the rest were between 18 and 24 years of age. 91% of the sample lived with their parents while the rest stayed in the university halls of residence or with friends. None were married or had children.

Questionnaire Format:
The questionnaire was in English as it is the primary language of instruction in most schools right from kindergarten. Students learn other languages including their mother tongues, Mandarin, Malay or Tamil, only as a second language. The questionnaire consisted of five sections. The first section asked respondents to read the List of Values developed by Kahle and Kennedy (1988), then state the most important value out of the list and then the least important value. Following this they rated all the nine values on a 6-point Likert scale with 1 being ‘Not At All Important’ and 6 ‘Very Important.’ This method of least-most followed by rating values is recommended by Shrum and McCarty (1997) to achieve greater differentiation in the ratings for the values.

The second section consisted of 13 statements regarding gift-giving and receiving behaviors, which were responded to on 6-point Likert scales (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Disagree Somewhat, Agree Somewhat, Agree and Strongly Agree). These statements included the 7 items that have been used in previous studies (Beatty et al 1996 and Beatty, Kahle and Homer 1991) to measure perceived amount of gift given and perceived effort involved in gift-giving. Other items were added based on in-depth interviews conducted prior to developing the survey to elicit responses on reciprocity, how cash gifts were viewed and whether practical gifts or mementos were preferred.

The third section consisted of 12 statements on greeting card giving and receiving behaviors, which were also responded to on a similar 6-point Likert scale. These included items to measure perceived amount of greeting cards given, perceived effort, obligation to reciprocate, meaningfulness of the card, how well the respondent considered himself to be at communicating his feelings towards friends and family and whether the cards received were kept as mementos. Items in sections 2 and 3 are reproduced in the Results section in Tables 1. The fourth section asked respondents to indicate in a table the number of gifts and greeting cards that they gave and received for various occasions during the last year (specified as one year before the date they filled out the questionnaire). The last section assessed demographic data including gender, age-range, number of siblings and religion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gift & Card Giving Measures:
To identify the dimensions of gift and card giving behaviors, all 25 items from the second and third sections of the questionnaire were subject to factor analysis using varimax rotation. A seven-factor solution explaining 66% of total variance was obtained. These items are listed in Table 1. Note that the first thirteen items G1, G2, G3 & G13 appear to measure the effort involved in giving cards, C5, seems to load on the same factor. These appear to measure whether a person considered himself as having a lot of greeting cards and also whether cards were seen as a meaningful way of communicating. These items were summed up to form a new scale called GiftAmt with scale reliability of 0.82.

Factor 1: Five items (C1, C2, C3, C4 and C11) loaded at>0.5 on this factor. This appears to be specifically related to cards and seems to measure whether a person considered herself as giving a lot of greeting cards and also whether cards were seen as a meaningful way of communicating. These items were summed up to form a new scale called CardAmt with scale reliability of 0.82.

Factor 2: Three items (C1, G2 & G3) loaded at>0.8 on this factor. This appears to represent perceived amount of gift given and is consistent with scales used by Beatty (1991, 1996). However, the fourth item used in their study, which was also the fourth item in ours, did not load highly on this amount factor. Instead, G13 loaded at 0.584 suggesting that one who receives more gifts may also give more or vice versa. G13 also had significantly high correlation with the first three items (all with p<0.0005). All these four items G1, G2, G3 & G13 were added up to form a new scale called GiftAmt resulting in a scale reliability of 0.81.

Factor 3: Six items, G4, G5, G6, G7, G8 and C4 loaded at>0.5 on this factor. These appear to measure perceived effort involved in giving gifts or cards. Items related to gift giving are again consistent with those from prior studies. The effort involved in giving cards, G5, seems to load on the same factor as effort for gifts suggesting that a person who expends more effort in giving gifts is likely to do so for cards as well. All these items are summed up to represent Effort with scale reliability of 0.78.
**TABLE 1**

Gift and Card Giving Measures and Factor Loadings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F1</th>
<th>F2</th>
<th>F3</th>
<th>F4</th>
<th>F5</th>
<th>F6</th>
<th>F7</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G1</td>
<td>I show my friendship towards others by giving them gifts occasionally.</td>
<td>0.821</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G2</td>
<td>I almost never give gifts to people unless it is for a special occasion.#</td>
<td>0.801</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G3</td>
<td>I consider myself as someone who gives a lot of gifts.</td>
<td>0.806</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G4</td>
<td>I consider gifts to be an important way of communicating love or friendship to others.</td>
<td>0.407</td>
<td>0.352</td>
<td>0.512</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G5</td>
<td>I prefer not to give cash gifts.</td>
<td>0.605</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G6</td>
<td>I almost always exert considerable effort to select or make special gifts for close family.</td>
<td>0.645</td>
<td>0.301</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G7</td>
<td>I almost always exert considerable effort to select or make special gifts for close friends.</td>
<td>0.772</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G8</td>
<td>Carefully selecting and giving gifts is an important tradition for me.</td>
<td>0.695</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G9</td>
<td>If I receive a gift from friends, I normally feel obliged to reciprocate by giving a suitable gift at a later occasion.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.779</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G10</td>
<td>I prefer to receive cash gifts.</td>
<td>-.317</td>
<td>-.381</td>
<td>-.604</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G11</td>
<td>I prefer to receive gifts that have practical use.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.837</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G12</td>
<td>I prefer to receive gifts that can be kept as mementos.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.772</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G13</td>
<td>I consider myself as someone who receives a lot of gifts.</td>
<td>0.584</td>
<td>0.325</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>I express my feelings to others by giving them cards occasionally.</td>
<td>0.740</td>
<td>0.340</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>I almost never give greeting cards to others unless it is for a special occasion/holiday.#</td>
<td>0.556</td>
<td>0.398</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>I consider myself as someone who receives a lot of greeting cards.</td>
<td>0.671</td>
<td>0.327</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>I consider greeting cards as an important way of communicating love or friendship to others.</td>
<td>0.805</td>
<td>0.373</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>I almost always exert considerable effort to select or make greeting cards for close friends or family.</td>
<td>0.486</td>
<td>0.554</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6</td>
<td>Giving greeting cards to family members is not a tradition for me.#</td>
<td>0.368</td>
<td>0.425</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C7</td>
<td>I consider greeting cards as a form of gift.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.538</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C8</td>
<td>If I receive a card, I normally feel obliged to reciprocate by giving a card for a suitable occasion later on.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.881</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Factor loadings less than 0.3 are left blank.

# denotes that these items were reverse coded.
Factor 4: Two items, C_{9} and C_{10} loaded at>0.7 on this factor. This appeared to measure the participant’s perception of how well she communicated with family and friends. We notice that respondents on an average felt they communicated better with their close friends (mean 4.43) than with their families (mean 3.73). This difference is significant (p<0.0005) and is consistent with results reported in a Singapore newspaper (Mathi 1997) which mentions that the young “hide their true feelings at home and let down their hair with friends.” However, C_{9} and C_{10} had a significant positive correlation of 0.603 (p<0.0005). This implies that those who felt they communicated better with close friends also perceived themselves as communicating better with their families. Both these items were summed up to form a new scale called *PerceivedCom* with scale reliability of 0.75. Item C_{6}, which had its highest loading on this factor was dropped from further analysis as it considerably reduced scale reliability.

Factor 5: Items G_{12}, C_{11} and C_{12} loaded at 0.5 on this factor. This factor appeared to measure whether respondents kept gifts or cards as mementos. These items were added up to form the scale, *Keepsakes*, with scale reliability of 0.67.

Factor 6: Items G_{9} and C_{8} loaded at>0.77 on this item. This factor appears to measure how obligated the respondent feels to reciprocate for both cards and gifts. We notice that mean for gift reciprocity (Mean G_{9}=4.71) is higher than that for card reciprocity (Mean C_{8}=4.32) with the difference between them significant (p<0.0005). This confirms to the common notion that one would feel more obligated to reciprocate to a gift than to a card. However, the mean for C_{8} is significantly different from 3 which represents Disagree Somewhat (t=13.17, df=136). So, overall, respondents did feel obligated to reciprocate to a card. However, C_{8} & G_{9} also have a significant positive correlation of 0.59 (p<0.0005). Thus, a person who is more inclined to reciprocate to a gift seems to also be more inclined to reciprocate to a card. These two items were summed up to form the scale, *Reciprocity*, and had a scale reliability of 0.73.

Factor 7: This factor loads positively on C_{7} at>0.5 and negatively on G_{10} and G_{11} with absolute values>0.6. Thus, those who prefer practical or cash gifts do not seem to consider greeting cards as a form of gift. That seems to be consistent with the notion that cards are only symbolic gifts and hence not valued by those who preferred practical gifts. C_{7} was reverse coded and added up along with G_{10} & G_{11} to form a scale called *PracticalGift*. This had a scale reliability of 0.5.

So, is a greeting card a gift? The mean response to this question is 4.01. This is significantly different from 3 which represents Disagree Somewhat (t=9.49, p<0.0005). However, since on the Likert scale represented only Agree Somewhat, a card is obviously not considered the same as a gift. What is interesting though is those who considered the card as a gift gave more gifts and (correlation to G_{1} and G_{3} were significant at the 0.01 level) and did not prefer practical gifts (correlation was significantly negative with G_{11} at the 0.01 level). We also examined the relationship among these new scales by doing a correlation analysis (see Table 2).

We see that those who perceived themselves as giving more cards also perceived themselves as giving more gifts (or vice versa) and expending more effort in giving them. They also perceived themselves as better communicators with friends & family, preferred to keep gifts and cards as mementos and considered cards as a form of gift. Such people did feel obligated to reciprocate, although this relationship was not strong.

Do people send cards because they feel they are not good communicators? On the contrary, we see from Table 2 that those who felt they were good at communicating with friends and family also perceived themselves as giving more gifts and cards and also expending more effort in giving them. Perhaps a person who feels she is good at communicating with others finds cards and gifts an appropriate or effective medium of communication.

**Measures of gift and greeting cards and their Relation to Values:**

The most frequent value for “The Most Important Value” was *Warm Relationship with Others* (21.9% of sample), followed by *A Sense of Accomplishment* (21.2%), *Self-Fulfillment* (18.2 %) and *Fun and Enjoyment of Life* (12.4 %). None rated *Excitement as the Most Important Value*. In spite of the most-least value being asked first, respondents rated 6 (the highest rating and representing Very
Important) for more than one value subsequently. Hence the analysis of values were done using ratings of the individual values. A correlation analysis of the measures of gift and card giving derived earlier (F1 to F7) versus the values was done and results shown in Table 3.

We see that those who rated *Warm Relationship with Others* highly tended to give more gifts and cards, expended more effort and perceived themselves as better communicators. This is consistent with prior studies by Beatty (1991). However, unlike prior studies, our research shows that those rating *Security* and *Fun & Enjoyment* also perceived themselves as giving more gifts. Also, those rating *A Sense of Accomplishment* highly, seem to expend more effort into giving both cards and gifts.

Those who perceived themselves as good communicators seemed to value *Sense of Belonging*, *Being Well Respected* and *Security* the most. They also value *Warm Relationships* and *Fun and Enjoyment* to some extent. Surprisingly, those who valued *Fun & Enjoyment of Life* seemed to be strong on Reciprocity. It was noticed that *Warm Relationship with Others* was strongly correlated with *Fun and Enjoyment* \( r=0.249, p=0.004 \) which may explain why this value seem to be related to gift and card giving measures. Finally, those who preferred practical gifts did not value *Warm Relationship with Others* and *Being Well-Respected* highly.

Does gender make a difference in terms of gift and greeting card giving behavior? An ANOVA was done with gift and greeting card measures as dependent variables and gender as the independent variable. Although there was no significant difference between men and women regarding effort involved and reciprocity for both gift and card giving, women perceived themselves as giving more cards as shown in Table 4 (significant at the 0.05 level). Women also seemed to prefer keeping gifts and cards as mementos. *GiftAmt* was not significantly related to gender \( F=3.79 & p=0.054 \).

However, an ANOVA done on reported amounts of total gifts and cards given and received during the last year yielded a different result. Women seemed to report giving and receiving more gifts whereas the relationship for cards was not significant (Table 5). The other demographic variables (number of siblings, income, religion, age-group) did not yield significant results.

We next examined the various occasions for which gifts and cards were given and received. This is reported in Table 6. Birthday was the most popular occasion for giving and receiving gifts. Christmas/ New Year season seemed to be the next most popular occasion for exchanging gifts while for cards it is most popular occasion. Cards and gifts exchanged during the Chinese New Year were lower. Perhaps, this is due to the fact that the Chinese New Year is celebrated in a traditional way and mostly with family. Cards are probably sent out by older people (respondents’ parents for example) to relatives. Also, gifts of cash are generally given by the older relatives to the younger and may not have been reported. Also, our sample consisting of non-earning students are probably not expected to give any gifts at this time. Interestingly, although only 29.29% of the sample reported as being Christians (all denominations), more gifts and cards seem to be exchanged at Christmas time compared to those during other festivals. One reason for this

| TABLE 2 |
| Correlation of Gift and Card Measures |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F1</th>
<th>F2</th>
<th>F3</th>
<th>F4</th>
<th>F5</th>
<th>F6</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1: CardAmt</td>
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<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
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<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>F2: GiftAmt</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>F3: Effort</td>
<td>0.515**</td>
<td>0.391**</td>
<td>0.000</td>
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<td>F4: PerceivedCom</td>
<td>0.397**</td>
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<td>0.411**</td>
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<tr>
<td>F5: Keepsakes</td>
<td>0.544**</td>
<td>0.210</td>
<td>0.445**</td>
<td>0.345**</td>
<td>0.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>F6: Reciprocity</td>
<td>0.202</td>
<td>0.200</td>
<td>0.188</td>
<td>0.082</td>
<td>0.292**</td>
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<tr>
<td>F7: Practical</td>
<td>-0.268**</td>
<td>-0.278**</td>
<td>-0.238**</td>
<td>-0.179</td>
<td>-0.223**</td>
<td>-0.014</td>
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<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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</table>

** denotes significant at the 0.01 level.
could be that Christmas/New Year is increasingly celebrated as a secular festival. This festival season is also used as a marketing tool to extend winter festivities for over a month before the lunar or Chinese New Year (Erbaugh 1999).

Less than 4% of the sample reported giving cards or gifts for Hari Raya or Deepavali, which are two major festivals celebrated by the other ethnic groups. Valentine’s day does not appear to be as big a gift or card oriented occasion as in the U.S. Also, none of the respondents mentioned giving cards for Mothers Day. Clearly, the greeting card has not reached its maturity in Singapore as in the U.S as many occasions for sending a card have yet to be "exploited."

**CONCLUSIONS**

This exploratory study has investigated the modern ritual of giving greeting cards in addition to gift-giving among young Chinese Singaporeans. The study has extended prior research on gift giving by examining its similarity with card giving behavior. New measures of gift /card giving are developed such as perceived ability to communicate with friends and family, reciprocity, preference for practical gifts and for storing gifts/ cards as mementos.

We found that overall for the sample under consideration, a card was considered as somewhat of a gift. One reason why cards could be considered as a gift by this group, is that card-giving has not yet become a part of their work-related or familial obligations. We also noticed that occasions for sending a card have not been developed to the extent it has been in the U.S. Thus a novelty factor still exists for cards. Also, a card may still be considered expensive for this group of non-working students. This may also explain why reciprocity level for cards was also significant overall. Although, overall, cards were considered at least as somewhat of a gift and treasured as mementos, there were some people who preferred practical gifts and did not value cards as gifts.

The study also showed that those who felt they communicated better with others tended to give more cards. If a person feels she is a good communicator, why is a card necessary? Perhaps a card serves as a symbolic gift in addition to being a vehicle for explicit verbal communication (Ruth 1996). Since cards are mostly exchanged among friends for our sample, it is more likely that they are given to confirm friendship, love or other sentiments rather than to express difficult to deliver face-to-face messages.

The various measures of cards/gifts and their relationship to values in the LOV scale were not all consistent with results from prior studies (Beatty 1991, 1996). As in earlier studies, those endorsing Warm Relationship with Others and Self-Respect per-

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**TABLE 3**

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<td><em>Keepsakes</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Notes
1. Only correlations which are significant at least at the 0.05 level are reported.
2. Negative correlations which are not significant are reported as -ve.
3. The nine values which are denoted as Vi (i=1, 9) are:
   - V1: Sense of Belonging
   - V2: Excitement
   - V3: Warm Relationship with Others
   - V4: Self-Fulfillment
   - V5: Being Well Respected
   - V6: Fun & Enjoyment of Life
   - V7: Security
   - V8: Self-Respect
   - V9: A Sense of Accomplishment
TABLE 4
Gender and Gift and Card Giving Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Squares</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Card *</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>102.78</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>102.78</td>
<td>4.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Within Groups Total</td>
<td>3108.99</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>23.03</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Mean M=18.67</td>
<td>3211.77</td>
<td>136</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>F=20.51</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keepsakes*</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>28.69</td>
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<td>28.69</td>
<td>4.44</td>
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<td>*</td>
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<td>872.49</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>6.46</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td>Mean M=13.18</td>
<td>901.14</td>
<td>136</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td>F=14.15</td>
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</table>

TABLE 5
Gender and Reported Number of Gifts Given & Received

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<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Squares</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<td>Total Gifts Given *</td>
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<td>960.56</td>
<td>8.55</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td>Within Groups Total</td>
<td>15047.84</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>112.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Mean M=9.09</td>
<td>16008.40</td>
<td>135</td>
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<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>F=14.77</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Gifts Received *</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1239.27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1239.27</td>
<td>11.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Within Groups Total</td>
<td>14930.46</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>111.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Mean M= 8.09</td>
<td>16169.74</td>
<td>136</td>
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<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>F=14.54</td>
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</table>

TABLE 6
Average Number of Gifts and Cards Given & Received By Occasion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occasions</th>
<th>Gifts Given</th>
<th>Gifts Received</th>
<th>Cards Given</th>
<th>Cards Received</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birthday</td>
<td>7.21</td>
<td>6.42</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>6.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christmas/New Year</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>10.15</td>
<td>7.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese New Year</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valentine's Day</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12.93</td>
<td>12.46</td>
<td>23.49</td>
<td>19.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Cards given for other occasions had means less than 0.5 and hence not included.

...received that they gave more gifts. However, in our study, even those who endorsed Fun & Enjoyment perceived they gave more gifts. It is likely that for our sample, Fun & Enjoyment has a different meaning and may be associated with people oriented activities.

The study being exploratory in nature has limitations. A larger sample size and also including people of Malay and Indian ethnic origins would help us understand whether there are some generalizations that can be drawn for people of a specific nationality. Comparison with a U.S sample might help us understand differences in card giving behavior not only among nationalities, but also among people who experience different stages of this product’s life cycle.

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Chase, Ernest Dudley (1956), The Romance of Greeting Cards, Cambridge, MA:UP.


ABSTRACT

This study compares the effectiveness of standardized, semi-localized, and local television commercials in Israel. The central argument is that international commercials, which address common basic consumers’ needs and values and are language-adjusted can be as effective as local commercials. Such international commercials should be transferable cross-culturally. Our study operationalized effectiveness by aided recognition, recall, and perceived believability. Our findings in support of the theoretical arguments can be used to identify potential execution elements that can be used to reduce the negative impact of standardized advertising. Theoretical and practical implication of these findings are discussed.

The debate about standardized versus adapted global marketing strategy has not been resolved. Furthermore, this issue has become increasingly important in recent years as firms have internationalized. The advantages of standardization include economies of scale (Levitt 1983) and preservation of brand image (Douglas and Wind 1987; Roth 1995). In contrast, adapted programs are more accurately tuned to the unique cultures of foreign countries (Duncan and Ramaprasad 1995; Roth 1995). While needs are mostly universal, however, addressing these needs is not (Kanso 1992). The question, then, is the extent to which partial adaptation of the marketing mix can be used to benefit from both worlds (Duncan and Ramaprasad 1995). In other words, the uniqueness of target markets’ cultures should be addressed while also taking advantage of synergism to create competitive advantages in global markets (Douglas and Wind 1987). Transferring messages and themes across cultures may be a key factor in setting the degree of adaptation (Tansey, Hyman and Zinkehman 1990; Tse, Belk and Zhou 1989). Messages aimed at satisfying universal needs (e.g., shaving creams) or use common values (e.g., being well respected) may be more transferable.

Previous research has mostly examined performance from the exporters’ perspective (e.g., Duncan and Ramaprasad’s 1995). However, assessing effectiveness of advertising at different levels of adaptation from target consumers’ perspective has been under-researched (see Shoham 1996 for an exception). Our study focuses on consumers’ perception of completely standardized, semi-adapted, and local television advertisements.

THEORETICAL DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The Impact of Values

Previous research has addressed the issue of standardization in the context of advertising (Aulakh and Kotable 1993; Elinder 1965; Fatt 1967). Standardized advertising helps to establish brand image (Duncan and Ramaprasad 1995; Kanso 1992), target common segments across nations (Levitt 1983), and reduce marketing costs (Johansson and Thorrelli 1985). Two factors affect the selection of global marketing strategies. First, cultural background that forms values, norms, lifestyles, and attitudes is taken into account (Douglas and Wind 1987; Kanso 1992; Roth 1995). Second, socioeconomic differences that shape consumption behavior (e.g., spending and buying power) is accounted for (Roth 1995; Tse et al. 1989).

Advertising should account for the cultures of target markets, as advertising messages have different meanings to consumers according to their values and beliefs (Kanso 1992; Tansey et al. 1990). Values and beliefs are related to the personal relevance of advertised products to consumers. Personal relevance is a key factor for involvement and motivation to process advertising information. The linkage between needs, goals, and values and product knowledge (Celsi and Olson 1988) represents the personal relevance of an advertised product. Thus, personal relevance is based on the relationship between personal needs and values and product characteristics.

According to Celsi and Olson (1988), two factors determine personal relevance. The first is a situational factor—consumers’ immediate environment—which activates self-relevant consequences, goals, and values. The second is an intrinsic factor—enduring structures of relevant knowledge—which is representative of “perceived associations between objects and/or actions and important self-relevant consequences such as the attainment of goals and/or maintenance of values” (Celsi and Olson 1988, p. 212). Both are related to values in generating personal relevance. These values must be identified for each culture before planning global advertising strategy that emphasizes product attributes. Values are centrally held, enduring beliefs that guide behavior (Rokeach 1968; Lascu et al. 1996). Proponents of standardization believe that consumers share common needs and values across countries (Levitt 1983; Roostal 1963). Proponents of adaptation believe that consumers’ culture-based values influence their advertisement interpretation (Tansey et al. 1990). Thus, the greater the cultural gap between the source and the target market the more essential the adaptation of advertising campaign is. Advertising that is more sensitive to cultural values is more effective than advertising that ignores them (Marquez 1975; Hong, Muderrisioglu, and Zinkhan 1987).

Kahle (1996) identified nine values—self-respect, security, warm relationship with others, sense of accomplishment, self-fulfillment, sense of belonging, being well respected, fun and enjoyment in life, and excitement—abstract social cognitions that guide people in responding to different stimuli. Value-based advertising themes guide consumers’ interpretation of these advertisements. Value differences may reflect cultural differences that determine cross-cultural advertising strategy (Tansey et al. 1990). Successful advertising strategies address salient values of target cultures (Belk et al. 1985).

Cultures do not differ in preferred values but in the preferred order of values (Kahle 1996; Razzazque 1995; Tai and Tam 1996). Additionally, reported differences in preferred values’ order tend to be minimal (Shoham, Rose, Kropp, and Florenthal 1997). These values are important to consumers across cultures, but importance differs because of cultural background (Shoham et al. 1997; Shoham, Florenthal, Rose, and Kropp 1997). However, some values have been reported to be universal. For example, Alden, Hoyer, and Lee (1993) argue that whereas contents of humorous advertisements vary across cultures, the basic structure of humorous appeals can be standardized because certain aspects of consumers’ cognition are universal. Thus, the need for humor is basic and is associated with the value “fun and enjoyment in life”. Since values are universally important to consumers across nations, and since their structure
exhibits universality as well, advertisements that address these values should be more transferable (Figure 1). Thus, the first hypothesis is:

\[ H_1: \text{The larger the number of universal values used in advertisements the more transferable and effective they are in the target market.} \]

The Impact of Need Universality

Human needs tend to be universal (Kanso 1992). Appealing to these needs and wants through advertising differs on the basis of the level of standardization used. Managers who use a standardized approach argue that universal needs can be addressed by universal appeals (Kanso 1992); managers who use an adapted approach believe that markets are heterogeneous in nature (Roth 1995). Thus, adjusting themes, symbols, and contents can improve the effectiveness of advertisements (Kanso 1992; Tansey et al. 1990). Tansey et al. (1990) compared advertisements themes in the US and Brazil. Wilderness and work settings were used equally in the US and in Brazil. Thus, although Brazil’s culture differs from the US, common themes exist and can be used in both countries. A study of print advertisements in Hong Kong, People’s Republic of China, and Taiwan revealed that although there are differences in advertisements across these nations—advertisements in Taiwan resemble Hong Kong’s in consumption appeals (Tse et al. 1989). Thus, mutual themes can be established for countries that are culturally different, as there are common needs and wants. Sriram and Gopalkrishna (1991) examined cultural, economic, and media availability in 40 countries. They found that standardization is not a strategy that makes the whole campaign transferable. Rather, it makes unified themes and images possible. Thus:

\[ H_3: \text{Advertisements that use a standardized language are less transferable and effective than ones that use the local language are.} \]

MEASURING TRANSFERABILITY AND THE IMPACT OF ADVERTISEMENTS

Operationalization of Transferability

Different approaches have been used to measure advertising transferability. In some cases, researchers have assumed that the use of standardized advertising implies a higher level of message and theme transferability and, consequently, higher levels of effectiveness. Kanso (1992) reported that 75% of U.S. consumer durable manufacturers localize their international advertising campaigns whereas the other 25% standardized them. The implication is that many U.S. manufacturers believe that advertisements are not transferable. Advertising execution is also used to operationalize transferability. Duncan and Ramaprasad (1995) reported that advertising agencies use a standardized approach for 68% of multinational brands and use a standardized execution for 54%. Thus, transferability of advertisement execution is more difficult than the transferability of advertising strategy.

Comparison of advertising themes is a third form of operationalizing the concept of transferability. Tse et al. (1989) and Tansey et al. (1990) used this approach and argued that theme similarity could be used to infer cross-country theme transferability.

Operationalization of Transferability Effectiveness

These former approaches are macro-oriented—they examine trends in different countries with different products. Little previous
research has examined the transferability concept on a micro-level. Such an approach would necessitate an examination of transferability by varying the level of adaptation (local, semi-adapted, and standardized) and its effectiveness from the consumers’ perspective. This is important, as advertising is a stimulus that is encoded and stored in consumers’ long-term memory through learning. Thus, advertising information retrieval is an important measure of advertisements’ effectiveness. Recall and recognition are commonly used methods to assess retrieval of information that is available and accessible in long-term memory (Lynch and Srull 1982). Recall is a two-step process (Anderson and Bower 1972; Lynch and Srull 1982)—the consumer must have the information from memory and perform a recognition check to be sure that the information pertains to the specific issue (Lynch and Srull 1982). Recognition, on the other hand, is viewed as a simpler process, as it bypasses the retrieval step. It involves only a discrimination step in which the familiarity of the item is compared to some criterion (Lynch and Srull 1982). As recognition is a step in the recall process, recognition is almost always higher than recall (Lynch and Srull 1982). Additionally, in recall tests consumers “must describe the stimulus that is not present” and in recognition tests consumers must only identify the stimulus “as having been previously seen or heard” (Singh and Rothschild 1983, p. 235). As recognition is a less complex cognitive process than recall, it can be used for low involvement products and for incidental learning of advertising (Singh and Rothschild 1983). The two major limitations of recognition tests are high indiscriminate scores and sensitivity to response bias (Singh and Rothschild 1983). The main limitation of recall tests is that consumers may fail to retrieve the relevant information although it is available in memory, as the retrieval process is situation-conditioned (Lynch and Srull 1982). As both tests can be complimentary in measuring effectiveness, we used both.

A second measure of the effectiveness of adapted versus standardized advertising is the perceived believability of the advertised information. Following the cognitive structural and cognitive response models, consumers’ ability to recall or recognize advertised information does not necessarily mean that they will accept the information. Recall cannot measure consumers’ belief in the recalled information (Chattopadhyay and Alba 1988). Consumers’ ability to accept the information may differ according to their initial beliefs (Olson, Toy, and Dover 1982; Toy 1982) and the perceived believability of the messages (Chattopadhyay and Alba 1988).

The advertised information forms a cognitive structure of beliefs, which has to blend into initial beliefs to form a new cognitive structure toward the advertised brand (Olson et al. 1982). Belief discrepancy, which occurs when the persuasive messages differ from initial beliefs, will affect the acceptance of communicated information (Toy 1982). Messages that match the initial beliefs better have a higher probability of acceptance (Toy 1982). Values are defined as the most basic and abstract beliefs that influence attitudes and behavior. Thus, advertisements that address values may avoid belief discrepancy and be more accepted. Based on the cognitive response model, four different spontaneous responses to advertised messages were identified in the literature. These include counter-arguments—responses of disagreement with the advertised information, support arguments—responses of agreement with the advertisement’s information, source derogation—responses that disregard the source credibility, and curiosity statements (Hoyer and McInnis 1997; Olson et al. 1982). Toy (1982) found more counter-arguments for high levels of belief discrepancies, and more support argument for low levels of belief discrepancies. In applying the cognitive response method, researchers usually ask participants to write down spontaneous statements after being exposed to advertisements. These statements are classified into the four categories. The amount of statements in each category provides a measure of the effectiveness of these advertisements. As discussed below, our research is a field study and not an experimental study. Therefore, this method could not be used. We used the perceived believability scale, developed and validated by Beltramini and associates, to measure the cognitive process of belief formation (Beltramini and Evans 1985; Beltramini 1988; Beltramini and Stafford 1993). This scale focuses on consumers’ perceived believability of advertised performance claims.

To assess the impact of transferability of global messages in Israel, three television commercials with different levels of standardization aired at the time of the study were used. The three commercials were suggested by advertising executives. These executives were asked to provide possible commercials for similar products, while reducing the potential impact of confounding factors. Thus, creative executions and target markets were similar. Additionally, the three brands involved were well known to the local market prior to the beginning of the advertising campaign. In short, we are fairly confident that differences in effectiveness, if observed, are due to the level of standardization/adaptation, rather than confounding elements. The first commercial was standardized, virtually unchanged from the one used in other countries. The second was a semi-adopted commercial of a global brand, in which language modifications were applied. The third was a local commercial of a local brand.

The three commercials addressed common basic needs and desires of western cultures, as they advertised low calorie sweet snacks. They also addressed implicitly three values from the LOV. First, sweet snacks such as candy and gum can be viewed as addressing the value of fun and enjoyment in life. People generally enjoy eating sweets, which are usually viewed as indulgence products (e.g., chocolates). Second, low-calorie foods are important mostly in western cultures, as appearance and slenderness are highly appreciated (Hawkins, Best, and Coney 1992). Thus, values which are more “social” or “external”, such as being well respected and warm relationships with others, are addressed (Homer and Kahle 1988; Rose et al. 1994).

As the two foreign commercials apply to the same basic needs and values as the local one they should be transferable and be as effective as the local one (H1-H2). However, the language barrier is not attended to in one of the foreign commercials. On the basis of the third hypothesis, the commercial that uses the foreign language is less transferable and should be less effective (H3). In sum, the semi-adopted commercial is transferable and should perform similarly to the local, fully adopted commercial. The standardized commercial should be less effective than the others are due to the language barrier.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Sample**

Data were collected in a survey from 109 undergraduate students in a medium-sized Israeli University. Most students were 21-25 (76.2%), averaging 23.4 (s.d.=2.4). There are more males (61.1%) than female (38.9%) due to the engineering orientation of the University. The homogeneity in age and education of this convenience sample reduces the possibility that differences in responses are due to varying demographics.

Our questionnaire included items on TV commercials aired on Israel’s Channel 2. Notably, our study was not an experiment. In other words, we did not intend to expose the sample to each commercial randomly. Rather, we used the opportunity that Channel 2 just began commercials’ broadcasting to test the effectiveness...
of the commercials discussed below. Since responding to the questionnaire required prior exposure to Channel 2, we included a measure of students’ daily hours of exposure to Channel 2. This item was necessary to control for commercials’ exposure. On average, students watched Channel 2 for 1.9 hours a day. The commercials were aired during all broadcast hours of the day for two weeks before data collection. Channel 2 is the only channel that airs commercials in Israel, and it was introduced to the Israeli public as a new channel at that time. We believe that students who were exposed to this channel for approximately 1.9 hours a day (on average) had a fair chance to have been exposed to the chosen commercials. The exposure item was also useful for an examination of the potential impact of differences in the number of exposures on effectiveness.

Commercials’ Characteristics

Three advertising agency executives helped us to select commercials. They were asked to choose commercials for products from the same industry that vary in adaptation. The products had to be relevant to students. Based on their advice, three commercials for food products were chosen to represent differing levels of adaptation. Table 1 provides a comparison of the level of adaptation for major execution elements of the three commercials. Most of the adjustments in the semi-localized commercial were language-oriented: written translation, voice-over, graphical elements, brand name, and package and product logos. These elements are all related to the use of language (verbally and visually). The theme and creative executions were unchanged (background, actors).

The three commercials promote low-involvement sweet snacks. Thus, the differences in effectiveness should not be due to product type. The first commercial is for a low-calorie, sugar-free candy (Mutar). This commercial was produced locally for a local product. It represents a completely adapted advertising strategy. The second commercial was a semi-adopted advertisement of a sugar-free chewing gum (Orbit). Changes from the original included a Hebrew brand name, local packaging, and a Hebrew logo. Additionally, the graph representing decreasing Hp level during chewing was in Hebrew. Finally, voice-over and written translation were used. Importantly, these changes were made by the advertising agency independently of our study. The third commercial is a completely standardized advertisement of a mini-flavored candy (Mentos). This commercial was transferred to Israel unchanged, except for the small letters of written translation at the bottom of the screen.

Measures

Aided recognition was measured by a dichotomous item: “Do you remember the recent advertisement for [brand x]? (yes=1; no=0)”. Aided recall was measured by an open-ended item: “If you recognized the commercial for [brand x], please note what you remember about it (please note anything about the commercial you remember even if it appears to be unimportant)”. Two referees counted the number of different elements recalled. Differences in counts were resolved by consultation of the referees. A ten-item scale measured believability. The items were anchored by believable/unbelievable, trustworthy/untrustworthy, convincing/not convincing, credible/not credible, reasonable/unreasonable, honest/dishonest, unquestionable/questionable, conclusive/inconclusive, authentic/not authentic, and likely/unlikely. The scale’s reliability and validity was established by Beltramini and Evans (1985).

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Findings

A three-step analysis was used. First, recognition of the three brands was analyzed. We used t-test to identify significant differences between the means for each of the three brands. Second, recall levels for the three brands were analyzed based on pair-wise comparisons. According to McGuire’s model (1976), this analysis included only respondents who recognized the brands earlier. For example, if respondents did not recognize Mutar, they were removed from the recall-based analysis. Third, believability of the three brands was analyzed based on pair-wise comparisons. We averaged the ten believability items to arrive at an averaged measure of perceived believability for each brand. Alpha values ranged between 0.92 and 0.95, establishing the scale’s reliability. The believability scale corresponds inversely to perceived believabil-

<table>
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<th>Elements</th>
<th>Mutar</th>
<th>Orbit</th>
<th>Mentos</th>
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<tr>
<td>Written Translation</td>
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<td>local</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voice-Over Language</td>
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<td>Graphical Elements</td>
<td>–</td>
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<td>standard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>local</td>
<td>standard</td>
<td>standard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>local</td>
<td>standard</td>
<td>standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Name</td>
<td>local</td>
<td>localized (Hebrew letters of the American name)</td>
<td>standard</td>
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<td>Package Logo</td>
<td>local</td>
<td>local</td>
<td>standard</td>
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<td>Product Logo</td>
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<td>Music</td>
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ity—high believability is represented with low scale values; low believability is represented with high scale values. Pair-wise comparisons included only respondents that recalled at least one element for both brands. For example, if Mentos and Orbit were compared, only respondents that could recall at least one element from each were included in the analysis. As a result, sample sizes for each comparison varied according to recognition and recall responses for every pair (Table 2).

Mutar (Local) Versus Orbit (Semi-Adapted). Aided recognition was similar for both brands: 83 out of 109 (0.86; s.d.=0.43) recognized Mutar and 87 (0.80; s.d.=0.40) recognized Orbit. Aided recall was analyzed for 68 respondents, who recognized both brands. Average aided recall was significantly higher (p<0.05) for the local brand (3.54; s.d.=2.69) than for the semi-adapted brand (3.04; s.d.=1.86). Perceived believability was analyzed for 59 respondents, who recalled at least one element from both advertisements. On average, the local brand’s perceived believability was lower than for the semi-localized Orbit’s. Mentos scored significantly higher (4.28; s.d.=1.38) than Orbit (3.22; s.d.=1.32; p<0.01).

Mutar (Local) Versus Mentos (Standardized). Aided recognition was significantly higher for the local Mutar (0.76; s.d.=0.43) than for the standardized Mentos (0.58; s.d.=0.50; p<0.01). For the recall and believability analyses 49 and 41 respondents, respectively, were included. No differences between the brands were observed for these two measures (p>0.05).

Orbit (Semi-localized) Versus Mentos (Standardized). Aided recognition was significantly higher for the semi-adapted Orbit (0.80; s.d.=0.40) than for the standardized Mentos (0.58; s.d.=0.50; p<0.01). For the recall analysis 51 pairs were used. No significant difference (p>0.05) between the two brands was identified. For the believability analysis 41 pairs were compared. Perceived believability for the semi-adapted Orbit was higher than for the standardized Mentos—Orbit scored significantly lower (3.36; s.d.=1.51) than Mentos did (4.49; s.d.=1.47; p<0.01).

Analysis

These results suggest several conclusions. First, the semi-adapted commercial (Orbit) was as effective as the local one (Mutar) on two measures (recognition and believability). Only for recall, the fully adapted Mutar scored, on average, higher then the semi-adapted Orbit. Second, the semi-adapted commercial (Orbit) was more effective on the same two measures compared to the standardized commercial (Mentos). Thus, Orbit can be viewed as a successfully transferred, semi-adapted commercial. Thus, the semi-adapted commercial (Orbit) is more transferable then the standardized (Mentos).

Third, surprisingly, the local, fully adapted Mutar commercial and the standardized Mentos commercial do not differ significantly on recall and believability. According to the recognition measure, the local Mutar is more effective then the standardized Mentos. These findings imply that Mentos, which is a standardized commercial, is as effective as Mutar, which is a local commercial. Thus, the standardized commercial was transferable and effective.

In sum, based on these findings, Orbit, which is a semi-adapted commercial, and Mentos, which is a completely standardized commercial, are both as effective as Mutar, which is a local commercial. Thus, both foreign commercials can be viewed as transferable to Israel. This conclusion supports H1-H2, which suggested that commercials could be transferred if they address basic needs and emphasize universal values.

H3 suggested that language is a cultural barrier that affects the transferability of an advertisement and was partially supported. The standardized Mentos commercial included minimal language adjustments (compared to semi-localized Orbit). Thus, it was hypothesized that the standardized Mentos commercial will be less effective than the semi-adapted Orbit and the local Mutar commercials. Although the Mentos commercial was less effective than the Orbit commercial, it was not less effective than Mutar’s. Thus, use of English may be a less important cultural barrier in Israel.

A possible explanation for the partial support to H3 is that Israeli consumers are used to read translations of foreign films. Having formed the habit, Israeli consumers should not be affected by the need to read translation at the bottom of the television screen. Notably, the local Mutar was more effective than the standardized Mentos on recognition. As recognition is a simpler cognitive process (Singh and Rothschild 1983), language may have a stronger
impression on recognition as it increases the familiarity of the text. The other two measures, recall and believability, are more complex cognitive processes. Thus, consumers that encoded the information and stored it in their memory overcame the language barrier of the commercial.

The recall data was the least consistent with our hypotheses. Recall depends on three factors. First, it is situation-dependent—different items can be recalled in different situations (Lynch and Srull 1982). Second, it depends on competing information that the consumer was exposed to during the encoding process (Lynch and Srull 1982). Third, it depends on the passage of time between the stimulus and the response, making it unstable across time (Chattopadhyay and Alba 1988). These factors can explain the findings in our study.

Our findings could be criticized for not controlling for the number of exposures. Therefore, an additional analysis assessed the impact of the number of exposures. The sample was split into two sub-samples, based on individuals’ self-reported number of exposures to each commercial. The two sub-samples represented high versus low commercial exposure with a cut-off value of three exposures. This cut-off value is based on prior research that established three exposures as the optimum level for advertising effectiveness (Britt, Adams, and Miller 1972; Krugman 1972). The results of this analysis were identical to the results for the complete sample. Thus, our results seem to be substantive and not a method artifact.

IMPLICATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Our study has limitations, which suggest that the findings should be viewed with caution. First, the generalizability of the results to non-student samples may be questioned. Using products that are relevant to students should have helped in reducing the impact of this threat to generalizability. Additionally, we used students to increase sample homogeneity and reduce the impact of other potential explanatory factors. However, future studies may use other age- and social-background-based samples. Such research should examine how demographics influence people’s ability to process different levels of adapted advertisements.

Second, the generalizability of our findings to other products (beyond sweet snacks) may be questioned. While these products were chosen for their relevancy to the sample, future studies might use a broader range of products. Finally, we conducted a field study and not an experiment. Thus, control over factors such as the number of exposures was limited, as our assessment was based on a self-reported measure. Further research might use an experimental design to control for variables such as the numbers of exposures to the commercials.

Implications

Previous research concluded that adjusted advertisements are more effective than standardized ones (Shoham 1996). However, we have identified mechanisms that can be used to reduce or eliminate the negative impact of a standardized approach. These mechanisms can be used fruitfully by managers. First, the existence of universal needs and values make it possible to transfer advertisements across cultures. Thus, managers should strive to identify cross-cultural similarities and differences on profiles of needs and values. To the extent that similarities dominate, transferred advertisements and commercials can be used. Conversely, when differences dominate, adaptation of the advertising mix may be necessary. In the former case, the explicit or implicit use of and reference to universal personal needs and values can help in mitigating the negative consequences of less accurate standardized commercials.

Second, in countries in which translated media is used regularly, adding a translation at the bottom of the screen may be helpful in eliminating the negative impact of standardized messages. Television programming in some countries is “localized” in that American programs are dubbed in the local language. This is the case for larger markets such as France and Germany. Consumers in such countries may be less used to written translations, resulting in a higher level of required adaptations. In smaller markets, such as Israel, Holland, and Sweden, there is relatively little dubbing and consumers are used to written translations making standardized advertisements more effective than otherwise.

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SESSION OVERVIEW

The influence of culture on consumption, although examined in consumer research as pervasive, has been under-specified in terms of its complexity. This session offers a unique perspective of identity—as an arena where consumption and culture relate. The session papers examine the generality of culture’s influence on consumption and the specificity of consumer actions to achieve individual identity.

The session papers present contrasting yet complementing accounts based on different cultural and everyday practices. The studies by renowned scholars from anthropology and consumer research examine the cultural determinacy of the relationship between identity and consumption in five cultures (American, British, Danish, Greenlandic, and Turkish). The papers also contrast consumption and identity creation in everyday life situations of transition (rural to urban migration in Turkey, Greenlanders moving to Denmark) versus situations of relative cultural stasis (Great Britain and the United States). The session presents diverse views on the relationship between consumption and identity: as a cultural process of mutual determination or as a process of social determination where the self loses its importance for explaining consumption. Therefore, besides the multi-cultural perspective, the session offers a challenging view of a concept widely used in consumer research, the concept of the self/identity.

Daniel Miller’s paper provokes this debate by contesting the self as a relevant concept for understanding contemporary consumption. His one-year ethnographic study of household shopping in North London discovers that social relations, rather than self expression, motivate shopping decisions. His informants regard shopping as a way of connecting with others and achieving a freedom from “the burden of oppressive individualism”. The individual choices of the interviewed North Londoners is replaced by the desire to stay within the social norm. Therefore, the paper argues that consumption is not a venue for self-fulfillment since the self is no longer guiding individual consumption. Rather, consumption is an arena of resolving social tensions between individuals and the normative.

The idea that the social is enacted in everyday consumption decisions also guides the paper by Apostolova-Blossom. The focus of this paper is on social structures that underlie individual actions such as consumer resistance. It examines the ideological nature of consumption practices in an advanced market economy. The ideological within consumption is found in the symbolic meanings of consumption that maintain social relationships of domination and subordination. The interpretation of depth interviews with American consumers reveals diverse consumption practices which delineate two power hierarchies. The first one, between the consumer and the market, is reflected in consumer resistance actions. The second one emanates from the everyday consumption decisions of these individuals: It is a powerful symbolic recreation of a hierarchy of social domination. Together the two hierarchies unveil a spectacle of the individual expression within the constraints of the contemporary market. Thus the ideological in consumption creates new social relationships and perpetuates old ones. The process of consumer resistance translates everyday individual consumption into social exchange structures characterized by their inequalities.

The focus of the above two papers on the determinant power of the social in consumption is contrasted by the emphasis in the papers by Askegaard and Arnould, and Ger and Balim on the role of the self in modern consumption. These papers examine the active power of the self in consumption by studying acculturation as a modern process that challenges the construction and maintenance of identity.

The paper by Askegaard and Arnould discovers the duality of migrant identity. The authors find that Greenlanders living in Denmark construct double identities influenced by their transition from a culture that lacks modern consumerism (Greenland) to an intensely marketized culture (Denmark). The paper underlines the potency of acculturation within a consumer market for identity formation. The duality of the migrant Greenlandic identity is reflected in consumption of the natural, the wild, and the magic versus consumption of free choice within the modern Danish market. The influence of the dual culture on identity also carries social implications discussed by the authors.

Ger and Balim’s paper mirrors the acculturation theme of the paper by Askegaard and Arnould in a different cultural transition: from the rural village to the modern city. The aspirations of Turkish villagers to fit into the modern world translate into identity contradictions. Consumption of domestic artifacts is the arena of negotiating these cultural polarities, the arena of constructing a modern identity. The authors find that this negotiation is reflected in the usage patterns and meanings of domestic artifacts. The process is not a simple adoption of the modern but a creative transformation of domestic artifacts using traditional sources in an aspiration to create a unified identity. Thus in these transitions of the individual’s self the interplay between consumption and identity enacts a generative social process.

The papers in this session take up an existing stream of consumer research, the cultural influences on consumption, and reveal its new complexities in modern society. The session questions the relevance of the established concept of the self/identity, a concept connected with the rise of modernity, to explain some modern consumer practices. At the same time, the session connects the self/identity concept with consumption and culture through investigating acculturation, ideology, and the social normative. The papers in this session contribute to consumer research with their discussion of provocative issues and their insights into the world of the consumer.

PAPERS PRESENTED IN THE SESSION

Consumer Acculturation of Greenlandic People in Denmark
Søren Askegaard, Odense University, Denmark
Eric Arnould, University of Nebraska, U.S.A.

Globalization processes (Appadurai 1990) have led to an increase in a peculiar kind of socialization process in marketizing economies—socialization into a consumer identity as an adult in marketing economies (a.o. Belk & Paun, 1995; Ger, Belk & Lascu, 1993; Lofman, 1993; Schultz & Pecotich 1995). A related process affects the waves of people moving between the world’s cultures. Much of what we call migration concerns people moving from societies with fewer overall consumption opportunities to societies with more consumption opportunities. Ironically when they move the other way, we call it tourism. Despite the relevance of migration for understanding identity formation, not to mention public policy issues related to discrimination, assimilation, integra-
tion and segregation, research in consumer acculturation has rarely been carried out on immigrants to industrialized countries.

A few notable exceptions of research on consumer acculturation processes in industrialized countries are Mehta and Belk (1991) on Indian immigrants to the US, Joy and Dholakia (1991) on Indian immigrants to Canada, Peñalosa (1994) on Mexican immigrants in the US and by Ger and Østergaard (1998) on second generation Turkish immigrants in Denmark. The latter is typical of the predominant focus on the relatively large group of immigrants from the Middle East in several European research environments. Paradoxically, this research shows that consumption provides a domain through which immigrants may seek to hold on to certain patterns of culture and identity perceived to link them to their culture of origin. But they also find themselves in a different cultural system that encourages new consumption possibilities and restraints, and where identity is subject to different norms and taboos.

The Greenlandic citizens of Denmark represent an interesting but hitherto unexplored opportunity to discuss consumer identity and acculturation in industrial contexts. Unlike other populations studied Greenlanders consist of internal migrants whose comings and goings do not transgress geo-political boundaries. Nevertheless they migrate to the Danish mainland from a distinctive cultural, linguistic and geographical setting historically characterized by limited consumption opportunities relative to the mainland. Many Greenlanders live in mainland Denmark temporarily, especially to get an education. Some settle because of new life opportunities, spouses, or career possibilities. Consumer acculturation is fundamental to their life experiences.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate identity and consumer acculturation processes among Greenlandic people living in Denmark, and thereby pursue the discussion of the role of consumption both in creating new, hybrid consumer profiles but also in changing Greenlandic culture. Twenty depth interviews have been conducted with Greenlandic immigrants in various Danish cities, focusing on border crossings between the two cultures, consumption patterns in the two cultures, special meanings linking certain types of consumer behaviour in one culture or the other, and expectations for the future development of a “Greenlandic consumer society”. A trained member of the Greenlandic community conducted the interviews in order to ensure maximum empathy between interviewer and informant.

Through the use of a model for analysing imagery as narratives (Askegaard & Ger 1998), the “stories” of the Greenlandic informants concerning consumer acculturation processes are extracted and analyzed. Hence, the study contributes to understanding specific consumer acculturation processes between the two investigated cultures, but also to the understanding of consumer acculturation processes in general, of the influence of consumer society on “newcomers,” of images of consumption and “the good life” and the cultural impacts of such images (Arnauld 1989; Ger 1992). Consistent with previous work (Appadurai 1990; Bouchet 1995), we find that Greenlanders often exhibit a relatively self-conscious attitude towards the consumption of alternative cultural identities. We also find that border crossings produce persistent identity constructions that may nonetheless alternate in Danish and Greenlandic social contexts. Border crossings also reinforce selective, evolving images of Greenlandic and mainland Danish culture.

Cultural differences in identity construction are recurrent themes in the interviews. Greenlanders consciously invoke nature and generalized familial social ties in accounting for identity construction. Greenlandic migrants come to view consumption of wild foods, experiences in nature, and sometimes magical artifacts as anchors for Greenlandic identity. By contrast, informants root Danish patterns of identity and behavior in cultural forms regulated by consumer freedom, the opportunity to choose and be judged in terms of consumption standards and norms. Consumer freedom is a bond that Greenlandic migrants feel ties people together in mainland Danish society. Some feel that while desirable, consumer freedom is a costly freedom; it is one available only for purchase. Concomitantly, social ties are experienced as closer (yet more constraining) in the Greenlandic context than looser (yet more voluntaristic) in the Danish context. Additional themes include the planning orientation typical of Denmark versus the perceived temporal spontaneity of Greenlandic culture. Temporal orientation is linked to the differing ways of scheduling daily life: clock time schedules in Denmark as against nature time schedules in Greenland. Finally differences in the tempo of life in Greenland and mainland Denmark is considered another major difference between the two that affects identity. Greenlanders sometimes feel that identity is threatened by the rapid tempo of mainland Danish life. All of these factors have major impacts on how the Greenlandic people relate to their consumption patterns.

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The endeavor to fashion modern, warm, and beautiful homes shapes the transformations and hybridizations in the types, arrangements, usage patterns, and meanings of domestic things. For example, new/modern appliances and trinkets are domesticated, made warm, beautified, and personalized by hand-made traditional laces and displayed in show-cabinets. In the voyage the material domestic scene takes over time and across generations and space (rural and urban), not only the domestic things, but also the meanings of things consumed and desired, and the timing of purchases are transformed. This transforming voyage of the Turkish home involves a creative creolization, which goes well beyond a mere adoption of Western things and arrangements.

The Irrelevance of Self as a Concept in Consumer Research

Daniel Miller, University College London, U.K.

This paper seeks to challenge the assumptions behind much conventional consumer research by suggesting that the self is almost an irrelevance in understanding contemporary consumption within economies such as that of Britain, notwithstanding that the concept dominates the literature on this topic. Consumer research has tended to develop using perspectives derived ultimately from Economics or Psychology, which both rely strongly upon the ideology of individualism and choice as most extreme. This may reflect a distinction from European informants brought up in social-democratic societies, or more likely it may be that disciplinary ideology has precluded alternative insights into American households also.

The evidence to support my contentions will be based on a year’s ethnography of shopping by households in and around a street in North London. The dominant forms of shopping were for food, clothing and household goods. The individual is found to be not particularly important as a factor in shopping decisions as compared to social relations. Furthermore choice itself is much less important in shopping compared to the desire to develop conformity and normativity. Most shoppers feel oppressed by the current stress in the market on the individual and on free choice and prefer to delegate choice to institutions in order to concentrate upon their primary concerns which are with relationships rather than individuals, and within which the self is of limited interest or importance. The idea or ideal of self-fulfillment is generally experienced as a contradiction in terms, since the self is not of itself usually regarded as capable of being fulfilled.

In contrast to some arguments in anthropology that kinship has declined as a focus of concern as against increasing orientation to the self and self-creation, I will argue that it is the self that has declined to become merely an example of kinship. A primary use of shopping is precisely to deflect signs of individuality and bring people back within canons of normative discourse. These discourses are not themselves created by some ‘system’ which imposes them upon individuals, rather shoppers seek to generate and develop normative discourses through their labour as shoppers in order to be released from the burden of oppressive individualism.

Consumer Resistance and Ideology

Evgenia Apostolova-Blossom, University of Arizona, U.S.A.

One of the most ‘celebrated’ characteristics of modernity has been its commercialism. Another concept, tightly connected to modern life, is ideology which is actualized in the power of everyday actions to sustain a social power hierarchy amidst the divisive nature of modern life. The understanding of the modern self and its realization through everyday consumption would be incomplete without considering the social power of ideology.
Ideology is not a recent phenomenon but has been a peripheral topic for consumer researchers (e.g., Thompson and Hirschman 1995). Within consumer research, the concept of ideology has been the focus of interpretation in few studies. In those studies ideology has been defined as a system of beliefs and values that helps to legitimate the worldview of the dominant group in a society (Hirschman 1988; 1990) or as the worldview of a particular class of people (Hirschman 1993). Both views emanate from a Marxist tradition which emphasizes the social function of ideology. Ideology has also been implicitly present as a determinant of identity in two other studies (Thompson et al. 1994; Fournier 1998). Although not the focus of these latter papers, the authors’ conceptualizations of cultural views (Thompson et al. 1994) and value systems (Fournier 1998) can be interpreted as underlined by the concept of ideology.

This paper examines the relationships between consumption and ideology as symbolic social phenomena in an effort to reveal their modern complexity. The present research deviates from the conceptualization of ideology as a worldview or belief system. This paper, while acknowledging the above definitions and relationships between ideology and consumer behavior, adopts a different view, influenced mostly by the work of P. Bourdieu (1984), T. Eagleton (1991), and J. Thompson (1990). In order to highlight the significance of ideology in modern market relations, the focus of this work is on consumer resistance.

Among the symbolic meanings of consumption there are those that maintain social relationships of domination and subordination. These symbolic meanings constitute the ideological within consumption. Ideology is the silent background of everyday life translated into the symbolic use of commodities—consumption acts that sustain the hierarchical social structure of modernity.

Interpretation of fifteen depth interviews with American consumers reveals diverse consumption practices within a modern society. Two power hierarchies emerge from the everyday stories of the informants. The first one, between the consumer and the market, is reflected in their consumer resistance actions. The second one emanates from the everyday consumption decisions of these individuals: It is a powerful symbolic recreation of a hierarchy of social domination. Together the two hierarchies unveil a spectacle of the individual expression within the constraints of the contemporary market.

The meaning of the informants’ consumption practices manifests different symbolic valuation strategies dictated by their positions within a field of interaction (Thompson 1990). This interpretation is enriched by a tradition of examining consumption as a symbolic process of social interaction (e.g., Solomon 1983; Belk 1988; Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry 1989; Holt 1997). These studies illuminate the present understanding of the social function of consumption to establish social relations and simultaneously facilitate the maintenance and creation of the self.

Consumption, as interpreted here, is only one part of the process that reveals the presence of ideology in the market. The other two components that complete the multiplicity of this process are the production (creation, promotion and distribution) of the product and the product itself (the structural characteristics of goods, services, ideas, etc.). This paper emphasizes only consumption as an active process of re-production of asymmetric relationships of power by the consumer.

The theoretical argument of this paper also suggests a reinterpretation of past research of consumer resistance practices (Dobscha 1997; Schor 1998). These practices can be interpreted in light of their unifying ideological meaning and differentiated symbolic strategies. This new perspective reveals the ideological nature of consumer resistance within a field structured by unequal social positions.

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Fun, Fashion or Just Plain Sailing?
The Consumption of Clothing in the Sailing Community
Gillian Hogg, University of Strathclyde, Scotland
Suzanne Horne, University of Stirling, Scotland
David Carmichael, University of Stirling, Scotland

ABSTRACT
The sport of sailing is one of the classic sub cultures of sport with its own codes of dress, speech, values and behaviour. Participants in sailing range from professionals to the casual amateur who enjoys nothing more than ‘messing about in boats’. Whatever the degree of commitment to the sport, sailors view themselves as part of a unified community which is manifested in the wearing of specific clothing, the use technical language and certain ritualistic behaviours. This paper explores the adoption behaviour by sailors of specific clothing and the relevance of that clothing to members of sailing community. Most of the sailors participating in this study exhibit adherence to scripts that are governed by the community. Deviation from the norm is not acceptable. Communitas is observed to be a powerful influence over the buyer behaviour of individuals, as the feelings of belonging and linkage are very important to maintaining a social relationship with the community. Clothing is one of the most important areas of cultural development and this research has established that the clothing adopted can identify each stage of the sailor’s career.

INTRODUCTION
The sport of sailing is one of the classic sub cultures of sport with its own codes of dress, speech, values and behaviour. Participants in sailing range from professionals to the casual amateur who enjoys nothing more than ‘messing about in boats’. Whatever the degree of commitment to the sport, sailors view themselves as part of a unified community which is manifested in the wearing of specific clothing, the use technical language and certain ritualistic behaviours. Through this sense of belonging to a group, a communal linkage is created (Turner 1974). Turner (1969) and Van Gennep (1960) have shown that this linkage typically begins with the ‘casting off of goods’ that differentiate members of a group in favour of items of shared meaning, such as clothing. This type of ritualistic behaviour involves the individual replacing everyday clothing with specific ‘uniforms’ and shared common possessions that create identification and group identity.

The purpose of this paper is to explore how sailors within a particular community view the adoption of specific clothing and the relevance of that clothing within the group. Specifically, it investigates the way in which membership of such a group influences purchase behaviour.

COMMUNITIES AND SUBCULTURES
A subculture is an identifiable segment within a larger society, distinguishable in shape and structure to its parent culture, focused around certain attributes, values and material artefacts and with its own territorial spaces (Hebdige 1974). This is no longer geographical space, as Etzioni (1993) points out. In post modern community non-territorial mutual interest groups based on an assortment of factors such as shared activities or tastes have replaced geographical medieval notions of community and subculture (Muniz and O’Guinn 1999). Donnelly (1981, 1985) identifies a number of characteristics that define a subculture: an identifiable group within the wider culture, with common characteristics and unique cultural components such as values, speech, beliefs, behaviour, dress and its own means of communication, which is unique to the group. The sport of sailing fits into this definition with its own clothing, communications and its own space, the water, with the parent culture operating on land.

The creation of a subculture arises when a group wishes to break away from the ‘normal’ or dominant culture. Arnould (1970) concludes that three main reasons for the development of subcultures are: the response to a problem, the result of interaction that creates a social distance in lifestyle, or a shared form of reference. Communication is the mainstay in the social world (Shibutani 1955), with symbols meaning different things to different parties. The communications produced by a subculture can have the effect of increasing social distance from outsiders as only those within the community can understand the way of life (Hall & Jefferson 1980). For example, McPherson et al (1989) demonstrate the differences in speech used, when a sailor says, “we were blasting along at 25 knots on a broad reach with the kite up, when suddenly the stick broke and went over the bows”. The translation for those not in the group is that, “the boat was moving very fast under full sail when the mast broke and went over the front.”

Subcultures of consumption are distinctive subgroups that self-select on the basis of commitment to a particular product class, brand, or as in this case, consumption activity (see Schouten and Alexander 1995). Recent research in consumer behaviour has demonstrated that possessions are an integral part of self identity (see for example, Belk 1989; Schouten and Alexander 1995; Celsi et al 1993; Hill and Stamey 1990; Hogg and Michell 1996). Consumption, according to Dittmar (1992) is located at the individual society interface and represents one way in which the relationship between individual and society is realised. This interdependence of self and society is summed up by Berger (1966 p109)

“One identifies oneself, as one is identified by others, by being located in a common world”

Thus, as Hogg and Michell (1996) state, consumption is an activity which creates, confirms, maintains or transforms situated identities. Within specific subcultures or communities, certain products or brands become ideologies of consumption (Hebdige 1979, Schouten and Alexander 1995).

Donnelly & Young (1988) identify a four-stage model for entry into a sports subculture: pre-socialisation, selection and recruitment, socialisation and acceptance/ostracism. At each stage of this model the values, characteristics, dress and behaviour change due to the roles that they are expected to play. At the pre-socialisation stage the neophyte’s knowledge is often stereotypical of the subculture that they are trying to enter. The adornments that the participant hangs from their body, be it clothes or equipment, serve as visual cues to impress others (Goffman 1959; Schlenker 1980; Schouten 1991) or to reinforce perceptions of adequate performance (Solomon 1983). More often than not these symbols are incorrect, as they are stereotypical and can, in some subcultures, end the career of the neophyte.

Selection and recruitment of the neophyte is at this stage dependent on their motivation, interest and opportunity (Donnelly 1980). They are either selected by someone within the group or
Certain products, marketers can take on specific meaning within the subculture; by understanding the process of self-transformation and the meaning associated with reflection of the commitment of individuals to the ethos. Brands manufactured and branded toward this group.

**Community**

The concept of ‘communitas’ is derived from Latin, meaning ‘community’ thus much of the previous research in this area has been carried out under the guise of cultures and subcultures. The idea of communitas is based on von Gennep’s interpretation of the shared rites of passage by Turner (1969 and 1974) and Arnold et al (1993). Varley & Crowther (1997), suggest that communitas is brought about through the sharing of a ritual experience. One element of these rituals is ‘uniform’, which signifies shared values and involvement (Turner 1969). Arnould & Price (1993) show that communitas is developed through feelings of linkage, belonging and group devotion. The rafting trip described in their article ‘River Magic’ highlights this point when the group is issued a ‘uniform’ in the form of waterproofs and lifejackets. The participants also leave personal belongings behind such as bandannas and friendship rings in order to conform to the group to which they now belong, and create a unified community (Belk et al 1989).

Community, as a number of authors point out, has been largely over-looked in studies of consumption behaviour (see Muinz and O Guinn 1999; Cova 1997; Mc Grath Sherry and Heisley 1993). The idea of communal consumption, however, is not new. A subculture and friendship rings in order to conform to the group to which they now belong, and create a unified community (Belk et al 1989).

**CONTEST**

This research is based around the sailing community of the Firth of Clyde, on the West Coast of Scotland. This is one of the focal point of sea sailing within Scotland, with over a thousand boats of differing classes and size moored at four main marinas. As such it offers a broad base of those sailors who ‘cruise’ for their leisure and those who ‘race’. Due to the nature of sailing in Scotland, some form of foul-weather clothing is an essential requirement of the ‘uniform’. Although the range of sailing specific clothing is vast, the base line requirement is for waterproof trousers, jacket and boots. This type of clothing is common across a number of outdoor activities for example, hill walking, golf, fishing or even gardening. However, despite often substantial price differences between sailing clothing and other suitable foul-weather clothing, sailors almost invariably wear clothing that has been specifically manufactured and branded toward this group.

Donnelly (1981) suggests that new members to a sport often model themselves upon existing members by copying dress, speech, mannerisms and behaviour, in order to become accepted into the group. Similarly, existing members reaffirm their group identity with the purchase of specific clothing that corresponds with others within the group (Belk et al 1989). The study by Varley and Crowther (1997) into the climbing fraternity uses the expression ‘double lives’ to explain how climbers move from their day to day lives, into that of their climbing lives, or subculture. Sailors do much the same, as illustrated by Nixon (1997) a sailor who differentiates himself from the rest of society through the sport of sailing.

“That is what we are. We’re an identifiable community that is arguably a separate species. And although we aren’t particularly selfish, we’re most certainly self-absorbed, taken up with handling slowly on a daily basis those matters whose quick and easy solution your shore dweller takes for granted.”

(Nixon 1997)

**Research Method**

This is an explorative study that investigates the adoption of communitas in the sailing fraternity and its influence on the purchase of sailing garments. Two methods of qualitative research were employed to collect data, participant observation and in depth interviews. The participant observation research made use of field notes and audio recordings that were collected throughout the research. A researcher spent a total of 50 hours sailing on racing and pleasure craft on the Clyde in the Summer of 1998. In addition a total of sixteen interviews were conducted in May 1998, eight with male respondents and eight with female. The appropriateness of this type of data collection technique for this study can be defended in three ways. Firstly, what was sought was not fact, or some objective ‘truths’ (see Baker 1982), but access to what Garfinkle (1967) refers to as the respondent’s “cultural universe”. As such it was felt that answers to a survey type questionnaire would not provide this access. Qualitative data collection techniques allow the researcher to explore the participants understanding of their community and provides what Gummesson (1991) refers to as “access to reality”. Participant observation allowed the researcher to establish whether the thoughts expressed by the participants reflected their actual behaviour when sailing. As the purpose of qualitative data is to gain insight and understanding, there is no requirement for statistical rigour in the sample selection. However as Gill and Johnson (1991) point out, the positivist traditions die hard, and an attempt was made to ensure that the final interview selection reflected the profile of ability and experience the Clyde as perceived by the Royal Northern Yacht Club.

**Data Analysis**

The purpose of analysis is data reduction and interpretation, within a specific context (Marshall and Rossman 1989). As qualitative data arises as words and phrases, a vast amount of information is generated and the task of analysis can be “overwhelming”. Whilst there are statistical packages available to assist in this interpretation, they can restrict the analysis as a result of data reduction being carried out on the basis of artificial or at best forced relations between so-called ‘key words’. The nature and effect of the phenomena under investigation, however, is such that the key words used vary according to the experience and background of the sailor. For example, the fore sail can be referred to as the jib, jenny or number 1. All refer to the same type of sail and frequently all three terms may be used by the same person in one conversation. As a consequence, reliance simply on the basis of ‘key words’ as a
means of computerised analysis is liable to lead inaccurate codification and interpretation. In order to avoid this, the analysis adopted an eight stage procedure recommended by Tesch (1980). From this analysis we identified three key areas for discussion, the nature of group identity through the wearing of specific clothing, they use of clothing and certain brands to differentiate the community form ‘outsiders’ and finally the extent to which status within the community can be symbolised by clothing.

RESULTS

Group identity through the wearing of specific clothing

As Turner (1969) shows, communitas starts with casting off goods. It was clear that within the sailing community participants often had an entirely different wardrobe for sailing than for their day to day life. Two distinct types of sailing apparel were identified; foul-weather clothing for use whilst sailing and clothing worn for onshore socialising. Male respondents consistently talked of the ‘functional’ of the clothing, whilst female respondents were more likely to consider ‘wearing the right clothes’ and ‘fitting in’. Although the male respondents claimed to have no regard to the appearance of the garments or to group member’s opinion, observation of these respondents showed that they tended to buy the same colours and brands as each other. For example one respondent explained what happened when he bought a different colour suit from that of his crew-mates.

“I spent £650.00 odd on a new suit [foul-weather suit] and the only colour I could get it in was yellow. I liked the colour, but the rest of the crew wore red suits and I had to put up with a lot of grief about how I looked stupid! But now I find they’re out buying the same colour!”

It was found that female respondents were more likely to purchase the same brands that they observed being worn by others. They suggested that they were not ‘brave’ enough to break with the norms that were set, meaning that they would buy the ‘right brands’ in the ‘right colour’ to be part of the group. In addition, racing yacht crews are often provided with a ‘uniform’, that is, a jersey or jacket that shows the boat name. This ‘uniform’ is clearly giving the wearer an identity with their own crew or community and a feeling of shared participation. This strength of identification was much stronger amongst racing crew, where the team spirit and sense of relying on each other during a competition lead to a strong imperative to wear similar colours and brands. One racing respondent suggested that the professionalism of the crew during a race depended on a degree of ‘fellow feeling’ that manifested itself in one way through the clothing chosen by the crew.

Many of the same ideas were expressed concerning the purchase of those onshore clothes, worn before and after sailing. The shore wear is clearly a very important part of the ‘uniform’, which helps in the adoption of communitas. While observing behaviour in boat yards, marinas and clubs, other sailors would walk up to people that they did not know and start to talk about boats to them because they identified them as ‘one of their own’ through the clothes they wore.

Analysis of the response according to experience suggested that more established members of the group were more likely to describe the functional role of clothing whilst less experienced respondents described the more fashionable aspects. This area is, however, more contentious especially of late as social clothes that were unique to the group are now generally fashionable to the wider culture. Sailors see themselves as part of a unified community and within that community the ‘right’ clothing must be worn, as one respondent pointed out: “Be different, and be damned”

The pleasure value of products was generally seen to be low, with function and safety given as the main reasons for purchase. However, the functional prowess gave the wearer a form of pleasure and implied the owner’s ability as a sailor. For example, certain participants wore ‘ocean racing suits’, which have many added extras built into them such as; harnesses, buoyancy vests and locator beacons, yet they never went more than 10 miles offshore. Conversely, it was observed that a number of sailors wear baseball hats to conform:

“Yeah, baseball hats, why do people wear them? I’ve tried, they’re not warm, they restrict visibility cos you can’t see the sails without tilting you’re head back further than you would without it. And they fly off, you have to tie them on. They’re just a pest.”

Yet when looking at sailing communities, it is clear a lot of racers wear hats. Lurie (1992), identifies status with hats, thus the sign of status may also infer ability or show signs of knowledge and expertise. One experienced racing crew suggested that it was only the really good sailors who could ‘get away with’ wearing certain shabby or unsuitable garments.

“The helmsman, now he’s really good and he never wears waterproofs or boots, sails in jeans and old docksiders [type of shoe]. But then he never gets wet, not if he’s good, and he doesn’t have to do any of the scrambling around on the foredeck stuff, just stands there in his cap shouting at us…”

Despite the acknowledgement that some participants wore clothing to conform, there was still a belief that certain clothing infers ability. Clothes were used as signs of knowledge and expertise with very technical jackets being seen as signs of technical sailing abilities among the younger or less experienced participants. The older, more experienced sailors were more likely to rely on observed ability or knowledge of language and terminology.

“…there is no way that I will be buying Henri Lloyd kit again! The implication is that it devalues the brand and they’re not warm, they restrict visibility cos you can’t see the sails without tilting you’re head back further than you would without it. And they fly off, you have to tie then on. They’re just a pest.”

Clothing worn for differentiation from ‘outsiders’

One of the major factors in the establishment of a sport subculture is the differentiation in clothing. In 1997 a sailing clothing manufacturer, Henri Lloyd, was awarded the Fashion Designer of the Year Award with mixed enthusiasm from the sailing fraternity. It was felt that these clothes were for sailors and not for the ‘general public’, as they did not know how to use them. There was a general view that non-sailors wearing sailing kit are ‘funny’ and “stupid”. The implication is that it devalues the brand within the sub-culture. For example one respondent stated, “they shouldn’t wear it, they’re not part of our group” and another said,

"with them now wearing our kit it devalues the brand and there is no way that I will be buying Henri Lloyd kit again! The last thing I want is people to think I’m part of that group.”

Many respondents said that they would now restrict the wearing of sailing clothes to just the sailing scene, whereas in the
past they have worn these clothes out to go shopping or socialising. This viewpoint was held mainly by the younger respondents. However, participant observation revealed that the majority of respondents own and wear items of Henri Lloyd clothing. There is therefore a discrepancy in what the participants said in the interview and actually wore.

Group members clearly identified with the notion of ‘outsiders’ who have no business using their clothes, as they do not use them for the purpose that they were designed for. When asked why the public is now wearing ‘their’ clothing, the answer was not that it was superior quality or anything regarding the clothes, rather that the sailors believe that these non-members are trying to emulate their society. This may be true, as Henri Lloyd has been running an advertising campaign showing a yacht, deep in a Southern Ocean storm, with the caption, “The meek shall inherit the earth, the brave will inherit the oceans!”

Clothing and the nature of experience

Respondents had a range of sailing experience. Not surprisingly, the more proficient sailors use more technical equipment than those just entering the sport. It was apparent however, that neophytes often misjudge clothing requirements. It was suggested that they have a stereotype of what the sailor should look like, thus they try to emulate it. Neophytes were frequently seen to wear either entirely inappropriate clothing or unnecessary, top of the range specialist clothing. As the sailor moves through a sailing career, older and more worn clothing can identify them. For example it was observed that experienced yachtsmen/women had one thing in common, very few had matching trousers and jackets. Thus clothes showing signs of age and wear also identify skill and experience. Respondents suggested that, “can’t afford both new items”, “trousers get used more than jackets”, “matching kit looks to much like a punter!”

Identification of experience becomes important for the sailor. This is seen more often within the racing community. Sailors like to show badges of competence on their shirts, such as events they have been to, races they have won and boats that they have sailed. These signs are far more common in the upper echelons of the subculture and are viewed as signs of knowledge and expertise. As the neophyte moves through the process of joining the culture, his/her values will be shaped by contact with established sailors. This can be seen when a new member joins a yacht or club on a permanent basis and needs to purchase equipment and clothing, it is often the other crew or established members of the subculture that influence their decision. One respondent remembers being in this position and as a result she bought a ‘Gill’ offshore suit in red, because the rest of the crew wore that particular brand and colour.

Knowledge of what is currently available on the market is important. Opinion leaders make purchase decisions from past experience of products and happily relay them to the rest of the group. When asked what influenced their decisions, the male respondents frequently suggested the “Whitbread Round the World Race”, because they noted, “that if the kit could stand up to that kind of treatment, then it must be good”. There was an assumption that the Whitbread racers were experts and that by wearing Whitbread proven clothing this would suggest their own abilities. Ironically the two top Whitbread boats wear Henri Lloyd clothing.

CONCLUSIONS

The sport of sailing is very much a subculture, which operates as an identifiable segment within a larger society. The adoption of communalities within the sailing fraternity is brought about through the sharing of a ritual experience (sailing) with feelings of linkage and belonging, creating a unified community (Belk et al 1989). The subculture identifies with clothing as a means of conformation of identity to the culture, and the ‘uniform’ of a sailor aids in the adoption of communitas. These two overriding factors greatly influence the buyer behaviour of the individual when a purchase decision is to be made over what clothing is to be bought for sailing.

Most of the sailors participating in this study exhibit adherence to scripts that are governed by the community. Deviation from the norm is not acceptable. Community can be observed to be a powerful influence over the buyer behaviour of individuals, as the feelings of belonging and linkage are very important to maintaining a social relationship with the community. Clothing is one of the most important areas of cultural development and this research has established that the clothing adopted can identify each stage of the sailor’s career.

Sailing, as with many other outdoor sports, offers alternative avenues for differentiation from the wider society. The enactment of ‘double lives’ allows the individual to escape from the parent culture and act out his or her role in another culture. The ritualistic behaviours that are carried out through the sport of sailing, both on the water and socially on land strengthen the feeling of communitas and cohesion of the subculture, thus increasing cultural awareness.

The nature of sailing clothing has changed, for example the ‘uniform’ that Turner (1969) identifies, has changed from the dark blue, double breasted blazer and white cap of the yacht club but still functions as an identifier of the group. However, as Schouten and Alexander (1985) point out, marketers who strive to increase the size of their market by making the accessories of a subculture accessible to the wider community, run the risk of alienating core members and diluting the appeal within the original community. The role of social activities as the base of subcultures of consumption must recognise that part of the ritual is ‘the casting off’ of the everyday. Once the cultural symbols of the subculture become everyday, they cease to perform the role assigned to them.

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A Dialectical Approach to Consumer Research: Beyond Positivism and Postmodernism
David Marsden, Napier University, Scotland
Dale Littler, Manchester School of Management, England

ABSTRACT
This paper examines some of the theoretical and methodological implications for consumer research of four principle ‘dialectical’ concepts: (a) Materialism: which holds that the material environment shapes consumer behaviour; (b) Change: which maintains that consumer behaviour is in a process of continuous motion and transformation; (c) Totality: which suggests that consumption is interconnected with other forms of human behaviour; and (d) Contradiction: which views changes in consumer behaviour as arising from its internal contradictions. It is argued that these dialectical concepts offer a more useful framework for guiding consumer research than either the static or abstract concepts associated with the traditional positivist and emerging postmodernist approaches in the field respectively.

INTRODUCTION
A number of approaches have recently emerged in consumer research in response to the intellectual hegemony of the traditional “positivist” paradigm in the field. These include, for example, interpretivism, critical theory, feminism, semiotics, ethnography, post-structuralism and ethical theory (for a review, see Gabriel and "postmodernism.

Dialectics is based on the materialist tradition in philosophy which, as noted earlier, simply designates the fundamental primary conditions of everyday social existence in structuring human consciousness and behaviour: the physical natural and social-historical environments (Hetrick and Lozada, 1994). Human behaviour never arises in a void, but originates, forms, and develops within the boundaries of this ‘material reality’ (Williams, 1997). Consumer behaviour, therefore, is essentially a social activity which has to be understood in the context of given historical realities and specific social conditions (Murray and Ozanne, 1991). This view can be contrasted with the emerging postmodern relativist approach to consumer research which maintains that (reversing materialism) the material environment does not exist outside subjective experience and interpretation (Brown, 1995). It is not material existence that fashions consumption, but consumption that fashions material existence (Firat, 1992).

This is a very one-sided view, however, because it ignores the most elementary sociological evidence that shows how consumer behaviour is fragmented and channelled along racial, ethnic, gender and class lines (Robins, 1994). In this sense postmodernism is idealistic in that it fails to ‘recognize any material limits on the way in which people can interpret and reinterpet their environment’ (Burkitt, 1991, p. 23). Bauman (1990, p. 210), for instance, notes that within capitalist society material wealth tends to take on a class character which in turn shapes material consumption because: ‘The plain truth is that some people have more money than others, and thus more practical freedom of choice.’ And as Bocock (1993, p. 63) reminds us, the poor remain poor whatever their ideas, interpretations or dreams may be as: ‘They cannot wish this feature of their lives away, in the sense that the structure of material inequalities disappears.’ Thus, postmodernism reflects a very conservative and abstract view of consumer behaviour because by isolating consciousness from material existence it masks the ‘constraints of culture, the ties of history, and the material reality of the body’ (Thompson and Hirschman, 1995, p. 151). As Gottlieb (1987, p. xvi) also makes clear:

‘Postmodernism seems to be clearly at odds with the fundamental facts of our dependence on and interdependence with non human nature, and clearly blind to the non-discursive limits to human action and institutions by the degradation of

limitations of this overall approach are then discussed in the conclusion.

DIALECTICAL THEORY
Summarised in Figure 1, dialectics considers all forms of human behaviour, including consumption, as being: (a) shaped by the ‘material’ environment; (b) in a process of perpetual motion and ‘change;’ (c) ‘interconnected’ with other forms of human behaviour; and (d) transformed according to its internal ‘contradictions.’ As discussed below, the theoretical implications for consumer research of these four dialectical principles can be contrasted with those that underpin the traditional positivist and emerging postmodern approaches in the field.

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the environment. The endless discourse of interpretation and deconstruction will have an untimely end should we run out of breathable air and drinkable water’

Dialectics also differs from the mechanical positivist approach in consumer research in terms of its understanding of the interaction between human beings and the material environment.

CHANGE

The second principle of dialectics is that the material environment and human behaviour are in a constant process of reciprocal motion and change (Reese, 1998). Whilst the material environment is primary within dialectics, however, this does not mean that human behaviour is simply a reflection or photocopy of it (Miller, 1987). Humans are not viewed as mere spectators of their environment, but as doers and inquirers who react back upon it in ways that transform both it and themselves (Tolman, 1994). As Novack (1996, p. 78) points out, this process can be seen in the fact that: ‘The characteristics and capacities of the human species have varied according to the changing circumstances of its historical development.’ The material environment, therefore, is simultaneously a determinate and mutable condition of human behaviour; new meanings, values, and practices are continually emerging and being created in response to current environmental boundaries which, in turn, reflect back on and alter these boundaries thus opening up new possibilities for action (Giddens, 1986).

This conception of change is very different to the mechanical positivist approach to consumer research and the deterministic models of consumer behaviour that have evolved from it (Morgan, 1992). Traditional models of consumer behaviour typically portray consumers as passive organisms simply responding to environmental forces that operate largely beyond their control (Hirschman, 1993). This is most evident, for example, in the behavioural model which reduces all consumer behaviour to an elementary environmental response (e.g., Foxall, 1995). Likewise, although the dominant cognitive model suggests that consumers actively construct information they receive from the environment, this process is nevertheless a product of an ‘innate, determined structure–the cognitive system’ (Slife and Williams, 1995, p. 42). And as Phillips and Bradshaw (1994, p. 51) point out, the problem with all such deterministic theories is that they ‘condemn the customer to a role of semi-passive reaction in the purchasing situation.’

Conversely, although postmodern idealism celebrates the notion of change and fluidity in consumer behaviour it maintains that there is no material basis or rational explanation to it (Brown, 1995). Moreover, since it is ideas and images that constitute social existence, postmodernism argues that people can change themselves and the world around them through the symbolic and expressive elements of consumption (Heath, 1992). In this sense consumption is considered a ‘liberation, freedom from monotony, boredom, and the necessity to conform’ (Firat, 1992, p. 204). Once again, however, by ignoring the social and historical structures of consumption there is an improper ‘romanticism’ of consumer freedom (Robins, 1994). As Madigan and Munro (1996, p. 56) argue, consumption is ‘constrained and circumscribed by the dominant and conventional meanings attributed to different patterns of consumption and the material resources available to the consumer.’ Overall, therefore, both these approaches produce a very one sided view of consumer behaviour because as long as we consider things as being fragmented and randomly occurring as in postmodern relativism, or static and lifeless as in mechanical positivism, the complexities of change processes remain unknown (Sutton and Staw, 1995). We find certain qualities that are partly common to, partly diverse from, and even unrelated to each other; but the position is quite different when we consider consumer behaviour not only in its motion and change, but also in its unity.

TOTALITY

A third distinguishing feature of dialectics is its insistence that the seemingly separate elements of which the world is composed are in fact related to one another—every phenomena only derives it reality from its relation to other phenomena (Hetrick and Lozada, 1994). That is, there is an ongoing complex interaction between external material conditions, physical and psychological needs,
human language, personal thoughts and emotions (Tolman, 1994). Such a view abolishes the antitheses of mechanical positivism and postmodern idealism, of a world in stasis or chaos whose components interact in either fixed or random ways, as Willmott (1989, p. 340) explains:

‘The critical and practical significance of dialectics is that it challenges the view that the social world comprises of an assemblage of clearly bounded, objective entities which exist independently of each other and whose interrelations can be grasped in these dualistic terms’

Consumer behaviour, therefore, has to be understood in relation to other basic forms of activity in which people engage, namely economic, political, religious, and so on. For example, Reese (1998, p. 5) argues that: ‘Poverty and crime, unemployment and suicide, art and business, language and history, engineering and sociology cannot be understood in isolation, but only as part of a totality.’ More specifically, Williams (1997, p. 185) contends that we can only understand the social status of advertising, for example, with any adequacy ‘if we can develop a kind of total analysis in which the economic, social and cultural factors are visibly related.’ And Hetrick and Lozada (1994, p. 551) maintain that understanding the interrelationship between consumption and production is crucial in approaching consumer research because whilst mass production determines the object, mode, and manner of consumption, ‘mass consumption is required to absorb the vast outputs achieved by mass production.’ Thus, Madigan and Munro (1996, p. 42) argue that the ‘focus on fashion, style and symbols of consumption, without reference to the production process, creates a false image of classlessness.’

Dialectics not only teaches us to look at things in their totality, however, but also to see totalities as possessing qualities that are not merely the sum of their constituent parts (Novack, 1996). This is because dialectical explanations do not abstract properties of parts in isolation from their associations in wholes, but rather it views the properties of parts and wholes as codetermining each other (Rose et al., 1990). Cause and effect relationships, for instance, are inseparable parts of the whole; each interpenetrate one another and constantly change places so that what is now or here an effect becomes there and then a cause (Gottlieb, 1987). This notion of totality can be contrasted with the kind of explanations that characterise both mechanical positivism and postmodern relativism. In terms of postmodernism, because it views every single thing or event in the world as being unrelated and independent of each other it fails to see the way in which the social takes precedence over the individual, the material over the subjective, and the whole over the part (Robins, 1994). The self is set adrift, so to speak, in a sea of different, irreconcilable and non-reducible language games and interpretations whilst the broader historical-material influences on consumption are ignored (Heath, 1992).

On the other hand, mechanical positivism views consumer behaviour phenomena in isolation from the material world, detached from the general context of things (Arndt, 1985). It considers consumer behaviour to be purely and simply the sum of its component parts: whilst the parts of the whole are said to possess fewer properties than the whole (Alvesson, 1994). This can be seen in the habit of splitting consumer ‘attitudes’ into cognitive, affective and conative parts (Buttle, 1994). By artificially isolating one or another of these elements at any one time, their interconnections have been oversimplified and the qualitative nature of their sum lost. Of course, splitting up consumer behaviour phenomena into its individual parts, the grouping of these parts into different classes, and these classes into various cause and effect processes did lead to the early developments in marketing knowledge. However, this kind of reasoning has also left as a great legacy the habit of observing consumer processes in their isolation, detached from the whole vast interconnection of things, thus producing a specific narrow-mindedness. We are consequently left with a less than integrated body of theoretical and empirical knowledge; mere description, not explanation (Wells, 1993). According to Sutton and Staw (1995, p. 375), however, the advancement of social science disciplines such as consumer research is dependent on the development of holistic theories of human behaviour that not only describe what happens, but also how and why they happen:

‘A theory must explain why variables or constructs come about or why they are connected...Listing the demographic characteristics of people associated with a given behavior is not theory. Dividing the world into personality versus situational determinants does not, by itself, constitute a theory of behavior’

Nevertheless, totality alone is not in itself sufficient to understand the dynamics of consumer behaviour because as we shall see next the dialectic not only combines a critique of isolated and abstract categories, but also of the view that society is characterised by harmonious and integrative social relations that evolve and change through continuous and gradual reforms and modifications.

**CONTRADICTION**

From a dialectical perspective change is a product of the internal contradictions that exist within any totality (Gottlieb, 1987). This notion starts with two assumptions, first, that all totalities are composed of a dynamic set of forces or poles and that it is the struggle between these opposites which constantly upsets the temporary equilibrium, stability and unity of the totality. And second, that change follows a leap-like, rather than straight line or circular, process that unfolds in a spiral with occasional qualitative breaks in continuity (Reese, 1998). That is to say, gradual change is going on all the time, most of it repetitive, but from time to time slow, accumulative changes lead to more fundamental changes which eventually culminate in a watershed. These changes are not just changes in quantity or degree, however, but qualitative changes of a kind (Murray and Ozanne, 1991). It is a tanscendence rather than a mere negation of the previous status quo because there is an element of continuity and development as well as destruction within the new framework and its set of contradictions (Plant, 1997).

The focus on the contradictions within totalities as the engine of change can be contrasted with mechanical positivism and its assumption of ‘homeostasis,’ the view that changes occur primarily or exclusively to reduce tensions and return to an existing state of social consensus and equilibrium (Slife and Williams, 1995). Thus, rather than society being held together by a harmonious consensus that is stabilised through gradual reforms dialectics views changes in society as arising from the social contradictions and conflicts of interests that exist within it (Giddens, 1986; Morgan, 1992). This also means that consumer behaviour is never free from conflict and friction, and that over time these conflicts will gradually grow and harden to the point at which decisive changes occur (Gabriel and Lang, 1995). And as noted earlier, within class societies most of the changes in consumer behaviour stem from the basic socio-economic contradictions: the conflicts between profit maximisation and human need, over-production and under-consumption, technological progress and human control, monopoly capital and individual choice, and industrial expansion and environmental degradation (Hetrick and Lozada, 1994). For instance, Bauman (1990, p. 201)
notes some of the contradictions between technological progress and human control:

'The use of technology constrains our freedom, they make certain choices less profitable or downright impossible. They increase the hold of whoever has access to them over our freedom of movement. In extreme cases, they may even make us helpless victims of someone else’s arbitrary decisions. Yet much technology is meant for our personal use; it promises to enhance, not to limit our range of choices, to make us more free, more in control of our lives. In such cases while embracing new technology we also become dependent on it, this is much less straight forward'

Such contradictions manifest themselves in arguments, organised disagreements and struggles between the components of the whole and are resolved on the basis of the practical experience and the creative endeavours of people, through criticism and planned action. In terms of the resolution of the contradiction between industrial expansion and environmental degradation, for instance, Alvesson and Willmott (1996, p. 122) note that: 'In countering the fetish of consumerism it is relevant to recall the existence of groups (e.g. environmentalists) that more or less explicitly question the rationality of continuously increasing consumption.' Hirschman’s (1993) critical analysis of the correspondence between mechanical positivism and masculine ideology in consumer research provides a good illustration of how socio-economic contradictions can also be resolved through the development of new categories of thought and practice that recognise and include ‘previously muted voices and invisible constituencies, especially those of groups currently excluded from achieving social and economic equality’ (p.537). And the establishment of pressure groups against business practices such as animal testing, rain forest destruction, child labour, and industrial pollution are further examples of how basic socio-economic contradictions are played out in consumption (for a review, see Gabriel and Lang, 1995). This dialectical view of change also differs from postmodern relativism which, whilst recognising the fragmentations and discontinuities in social life, actually celebrate and reinforce them rather than trying to challenge and transform them. That is, by inducing a scepticism and passivity towards any rational analysis or transformation of real social contradictions postmodern relativism effectively favours a conservative outlook which masks real social forces and ultimately bolsters the status quo as Plant (1997, p. 23) explains:

‘In this view there is and can be no philosophical metanarrative which will provide an interpretation of all the forms of human experience and locate them in their appropriate place in the development of human powers. In this sense, the approach of postmodern thinkers who emphasize, and indeed celebrate, the fragmentation of human life and thought and profoundly anti-dialectic’

Now that the conceptual implications of the four principle dialectical concepts for consumer research have been outlined, the next section considers some of their methodological implications.

**DIALECTICAL METHOD**

The development of consumer behaviour theory, dialectically speaking, entails a negative critical analysis of old assumptions and theories on the one hand and, at crucial points and times, their transformation into new conceptual frameworks of understanding on the other. The full transcendence of new over old knowledge not only necessitates a critique at the conceptual level, however, but also a positive, practical plan of action. This is because knowledge generation from a dialectical perspective is not just based either on all-embracing theorising (i.e., postmodernism) or abstract empiricism (i.e., positivism), but on the recognition of the importance of both the theoretical generalisations in any framework and the necessary empirical basis on which any theoretical generalisations must stand. And crucially, the test of dialectical knowledge is how useful it is in practice, that is, in transforming both the world and ourselves. Thus, knowledge is made and exists only in and through practice, i.e., those forms of knowledge that interface the objective environment and human subjectivity and agency (political, technological, sociological). From a dialectical perspective, therefore, knowledge cannot be proved right or wrong by either an appeal to objective facts or reduced simply to the product of subjective interpretation.

In contrast, mechanical positivism takes an objective account of knowledge in which there is an assumed correspondence between truth and observed reality–facts about consumer behaviour can be discovered through the application of 'objective' scientific methods (i.e., quantitative) like those employed in the natural sciences (e.g., Foxall, 1995). Knowledge is not based on action and practice, therefore, but on passive observation (Giddens, 1986). Postmodern relativism, on the other hand, replaces the search for truth with the ‘deconstruction’ of different truth claims by exposing their ‘inconsistencies, contradictions, unrecognised assumptions and implicit conceptual hierarchies’ (Brown, 1995, p. 303). Since all our knowledge about the world has no material or objective basis outside subjectivity, therefore, from this perspective any conceptual perspective is considered as good as any other (Firat et al., 1994). As summarised in Figure 1, however, dialectics calls for a many-sided investigation of consumer behaviour that transcends the objective/subjective dualism of positivism and postmodernism.

**Materialism:** it is the comprehension of the regularities and tendencies in the formation and development of the specific historical conditions of the natural and social environment that provides the foundation of a material analysis of consumer behaviour (Williams, 1997). This means that consumer behaviour has to be understood, at least in part, in relation to peoples’ social existence and real-world consumption experiences (Wells, 1993). In particular, dialectical materialism requires a commitment directly and openly to the standpoint of socially differentiated groups, particularly those oppressed and marginalised in society on the grounds of class, gender, race, ethnicity, and so on (Hirschman, 1993). As a result, this necessitates a methodological commitment to concrete socio-historiographic research that combines both the subjective (human behaviour) and in the first instance particularly the objective (material environment) dimensions of consumption. In terms of the subjective dimension, for example, Alvesson and Willmott (1996, p. 120) call for more interpretive research approaches because: ‘These less objectivist (e.g., ethnographic) methods generate forms of knowledge that...take more account of the practical reasoning of consumers as they decide which products and services they will buy.’ Likewise, Novack (1996) calls for the immersion within different social groups so that their existence becomes familiar and known. And in terms of the objective dimension of analysis, Murray and Ozanne (1991) argue that such subjective analyses should always arise from an objective material analysis and return to it. To meet this end, they suggest an ‘historical-empirical’ approach which entails identifying ‘the development of any relevant social structures and processes that have determined or constrained intersubjective understandings’ (p. 137).

**Change:** since consumers do not simply react to the environment, researchers need to take into account how consumers act back upon and in doing so recreate the environment (Hetrick and
Lozada, 1994). By emphasising the pro- rather than re-active view of human behaviour, therefore, the aim of dialectics is to explore the way in which consumers establish new institutions, new categories of understanding, practices and actions as Wells (1993, p. 500) points out: ‘Consumer behavior starts with antecedents of decisions and ends with ecological effects.’ This requires more dynamic and longitudinal methods of inquiry that can identify the changing features and patterns of consumer experience over time that traditional snap-shot methods miss. To meet this end, interpretive approaches to consumer research are particularly required. Giddens (1986, p. 20), for example, recommends an ethnographic approach ‘because it allows us to appreciate the diversity of modes of human existence which have been followed on this earth.’ And from this we could begin to understand the ‘dazzling’ variety of human societies and cultures so that we can become conscious of alternative futures that are in their formation or potentially open to us.

**Totality:** consumption has to be analysed from the standpoint of its mutual connection with everyday life activities in which people engage. Social life reveals highly diverse types of connections and relations, between economic, political and cultural processes. The aim of such holistic interpretations, therefore, is to try and re-establish the links between these elements, to show their internal connections, to see consumption as a totality, a unity. It is in this sense that Rose et al., (1990) call for an ‘epistemological plurality of explanation’—different explanations of totalities are not mutually exclusive, incompatible, or even equally valid—but are complementary. That is, human behaviour is amenable to different methods of analysis at different levels of abstraction:

‘All human phenomena are simultaneously social and biological, just as they are simultaneously chemical and physical. Holistic and reductionistic accounts of phenomena are not ‘causes’ of those phenomena but merely ‘descriptions’ of them at particular levels in particular scientific languages. The language to be used at any time is contingent on the purposes of description’ *(ibid., p. 282)*

This type of pluralistic analysis requires an interdisciplinary approach in order to identify the regularities, tendencies, and patterns in the nature and development of consumer behaviour. According to Wells (1993, p. 494), this can be achieved by reaching out to other fields of inquiry whose concepts, data and problem-solving strategies can ‘expand horizons, heighten creativity, and increase validity in consumer research.’ Of course it is impossible to take into account all the complex and diverse forms of interconnections, but such efforts will safeguard against stagnation, abstraction and one-sided forms of analysis that presently characterise the field.

**Contradiction:** in this respect dialectics opens up an analytical space for both an appreciation of the intersubjective character of consumer behaviour and, relatedly, a grasp of its structure as a medium and outcome of the contradictions between political, economic and ideological forces. The aim here, therefore, is to probe and reveal the complexities and contradictions of consumer behaviour, especially in relation to those socially marginalised groups in society. According to Morgan (1992, p. 148), this means that interpretive research must be placed in the context of understanding how particular ways of seeing represent certain material power and class interests: ‘In this view it is not sufficient to accept the meanings that people hold; it is also necessary to question why they hold them and to see that mass consumption as a way of life is open to critical analysis.’ To meet this end, McLellan (1995) suggests using discourse analysis and semiotics which, taking as their subject the language of everyday life such as newspapers and magazines, attempt to analyse the patterns and structures within both written and spoken texts in order to show how they reflect relations of power. Hirschman’s (1993) study into the dominance of masculine ideology in consumer research journals, for example, is an example of such an approach.

However, dialectics also entails an analysis of human agency, the way that people interpret, accommodate and transform social contradictions. In this sense, there is a positive, emancipatory element embodied within dialectics because it suggests that there is not a single phenomena or contradiction which, under certain conditions, cannot be transformed into its opposite (Novack, 1996). To elucidate such processes, Williams (1997) suggests an ethnographic analysis of individual and group solutions and strategies to social contradictions in the form of ‘emergent and oppositional cultures’ of consumption to those that dominate society. And again, Alvesson and Willmott (1996) argue that interpretive studies can also be used to examine the consumer boycotts against companies deemed to be operating unethically (e.g., polluting the environment).

Now that the theoretical and methodological implications for consumer research of dialectics have been outlined, the final section summarises some of the limitations of this approach.


ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to broaden understanding of the potential of focus group research and to look beyond the strict confines of a market research approach. It suggests that consumer researchers need to re-examine this research technique and recognise more clearly the benefits that ‘groupness’ can offer. In particular, the paper illustrates the interventionist and emancipatory possibilities of the focus group which are in keeping with the new macro perspectives being adopted by many consumer researchers.

INTRODUCTION

The focus group is not widely used in academic consumer research and few consumer research studies employ the focus group as the sole data collection technique. Whilst the focus group has been the subject of many papers and special sessions at ACR conferences over the years, these have focused on its use in commercial advertising and consumer market research. There is little academic research on the focus group technique, and where this is undertaken the target audience for the conclusions is the market and advertising research practitioner. Market research practitioners write most of the literature on the focus group in marketing. Thus our main, or only, model of focus group research approaches and practices is derived from applied commercial market research.

This focus group model is likely to be problematic for many consumer researchers, especially for those who are part of what Belk (1995) refers to as the ‘new consumer research’ with its emphasis on macro, social and cultural contexts. Focus groups in market research invariably adopt a micro, managerial perspective. After all, they are designed to meet the needs of marketing and advertising clients; consumers or participants are objectified as a resource to be mined for nuggets of commercial data that facilitate the development of a firm’s marketing strategy. In addition to this the moderator is the key player in focus group research, exerting tight control over recruitment specifications and the generation of data. Needless to say this model does not fit well with the more collaborative and participative research process now favoured in much qualitative consumer research.

The main argument in this paper is that the focus group holds considerable potential for consumer researchers, a potential that is currently recognised and unrealised because our main referent on this data collection technique is the market research model. We argue that the ‘groupness’ of the focus group is its main benefit and an under-utilised resource because we conceptualise groupness solely in terms of data generation. Basch (1987) and Graebner (1986) emphasise the importance of the small group in individual change and personal growth, in organisation change and in social change. The group as a forum for change draws from the work of Kurt Lewin on group dynamics (Lewin, 1947) and social scientists have long used the small group in projects where the aims are intervention and democratic social engineering (Graebner, 1986). The potential of the small group has also been recognised by those who seek to achieve more radical change and transformation. Examples include the consciousness raising groups associated with radical feminism (Farley, 1978) and radical pedagogy (Frier, 1972).

The aim of this paper is to consider some new possibilities for the focus group in consumer research. First we examine the focus group model that is presented in the market research literature, commenting on the assumptions underlying current focus group research approaches and practices. This is contrasted with the models of focus group research in the social science literature and we place particular emphasis on the challenges these present to the market research model. We follow this with a review of the theoretical frameworks that inform the use of the focus group for linking research and social change, illustrating the discussion with examples of our own projects.

THE FOCUS GROUP IN MARKET RESEARCH

The focus group is the most widely used technique in qualitative market research practice. Arguably, it is also the most controversial market research technique, attracting proponents and critics in equal measure. There is much more to this unease than the long running argument that the focus group, and qualitative market research generally, is subjective and unscientific (Achenbaum, 1995). Many focus group practitioners have deep-seated concerns about this technique (Reuter, 1995). Often their reservations stem from a paradox at the core of focus group research as it is currently conceptualised and practised in market research: the paradox of group dynamics.

Group dynamics are employed to stimulate interaction amongst focus group participants. This interaction, it is argued, results in the generation of data that is usually inaccessible when respondents are interviewed individually. For past and contemporary focus group researchers the individual consumer is the centre of theoretical and research attention, their aim being to better understand the consumer mind or psyche (Goodyear, 1996). However, when researchers seek to tap individual attitudes in a group setting, interaction will be perceived to have less positive effects. Specifically, participants may alter their opinions in groups, leaving the researcher in doubt as to which opinion to take as the ‘real’ one (Bristol and Fern, 1993). The discussion in the group may be dominated by one or two forceful individuals who suppress or unduly influence the views of other participants (Greenbaum, 1998). Participants may engage in various games and role playing during the course of the discussion (Langmaid and Ross, 1984). As a result many researchers agree with Bristol and Fern’s (1993) position that individual attitudes and opinions may be ‘contaminated’ by group interaction.

Under these assumptions the focus moderator is like a conductor, skilled in orchestrating the focus group to minimise the negative effects of interaction whilst, simultaneously, maximising the group’s positive data generation effects. The moderator is the key figure in the literature on focus group practice and is the centre of attention in the literature on focus group practice and is the key figure in focus group research, deciding who speaks, about what and when (Greenbaum, 1998). Recruitment practices ensure that group participants are uninformed about the subject matter of the research, have no previous experience of focus groups and are strangers, not acquaintances. Each of these practices has the effect of keeping the moderator firmly in control of the focus group. Moderator control might be eroded in a situation where respondents know each other, are given information in advance and have experience of this type of research. As a result, the market research
model of focus group research is predicated on the control and manipulation of respondents to such an extent that it is clearly at odds with the more collaborative and participative research favoured by consumer researchers (Catterall et al., 1996).

**THE FOCUS GROUP IN SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH**

The focus group, for so long the preserve of the market research practitioner, is used widely in academic and applied social science research, particularly in education and health contexts (Kitzinger, 1994). The resulting new literature in this area reveals that focus group research can be understood and implemented in ways that vary considerably from market research practice (Johnson, 1996). Indeed the current variety in focus group research in social science applications, has thrown into sharp relief the approaches and practices employed in market research, which now appear to be distinctly lacking in variety. There are three themes in this literature that are particularly relevant to our argument and we discuss them briefly below.

**Group dynamics.**

It is certainly true that many social science researchers find the paradox of group dynamics as problematic as market researchers (Carey, 1995). Others, however, are much less concerned about this. Researchers, working from quite different epistemological perspectives, point out the importance of social interaction in relation to attitude formation and change. Some argue that the personal or individual is inextricably linked to wider social systems and processes and that the individual interview isolates individuals from their social context. On this assumption the groupness or interaction that occurs in focus groups is a major advantage, permitting the identification of meanings as they emerge in context (Kitzinger, 1994). Others point out that attitudes are socially constructed This means that the interaction in focus groups is not simply a medium through which ready-made attitudes are expressed. Rather, the interaction in focus groups is an inextricable part of the formation of attitudes (Waterton and Wynne, 1999).

Less emphasis on the need to control and manipulate group dynamics, for fear of polluting or contaminating individual attitudes, means that researchers do not need to adhere to market research recruitment practices. Groups can be composed of friends and colleagues; experienced respondents and reconvened groups may be valuable in evaluation research or projects where the aim is to investigate changes over time (Krueger and King, 1998). Groups can be convened in social settings other than market research viewing facilities such as the workplace, community centres, participants’ homes (Morgan and Scannell, 1998) or indeed any informal setting conducive to group discussion.

**Sensitive issues.**

Many consumer researchers tackle subjects that are sensitive. Market researchers consider that the individual depth interview is probably more appropriate when examining individual decision making processes, socially or personally sensitive topics, issues where strong social norms exist and private consumption behaviour (Sykes, 1990). By contrast, Kitzinger (1994) and Munodawafa et al. (1995) are amongst the many social science researchers who have examined sensitive issues including AIDS, drug taking, sexual behaviour and contraception in focus groups. Pickering (1988) compared the various techniques for collecting sensitive data on self-reported sexual behaviour and concluded that groups are just as useful as individual interviews and surveys.

The valorisation of the individual interview in market research is based on the assumption that group dynamics are problematic. By contrast, the dynamics in the individual interview are considered unproblematic, or that so long as the characteristics of interviewer and respondent are reasonably matched that problems are minimised (Morton-Williams, 1993). By contrast, researchers in other disciplines who have examined this issue reveal that individual interview dynamics are far more complex than is generally assumed. For example, feminist scholars have demonstrated how the power relations between the researcher and the researched can substantially alter the research outcomes (Opie, 1992; Riessman, 1987).

Studies by Fern (1982) and Bristol and Fern (1996) challenge the assumption that focus group research creates an open, relaxed and anonymous atmosphere that is conducive to generating data. However, these studies and most commercial market research studies draw their subjects from a narrowly defined population, namely relatively articulate and educated middle class respondents who might be expected to experience fewer difficulties in self-expression in one-to-one interviews. Other groups in the population including the less well educated or articulate and minority groups may find more comfort, confidence and security in the group interview (Madriz, 1988; Morgan, 1998). After all, focus groups do not discriminate against people who cannot read or write and they may encourage people who are reluctant to be interviewed on their own or who feel they have nothing to say (Kitzinger, 1994). ‘Safety in numbers’ becomes a pertinent phrase for the security and confidence some participants feel in meeting others in a similar situation to their own.

**Collaboration and participation.**

A distinctive feature of much new consumer research is collaborative and participative research strategies. Since the mid-1980s the focus group has been widely used in the evaluation of health and education programmes and this use of the focus group reflects a change in the ways that evaluation research is now conceptualised. During the 1960s evaluation studies involved primarily quantitative research strategies, and external research experts undertook the research. From the 1980s qualitative research studies gained prominence. These were accompanied by a more inclusive and participative view of evaluation, involving those who were the subjects of the studies and thus increasing their commitment to the research outcomes (Krueger and King, 1998). Other evaluators take a more radical approach, for example Fetterman’s (1994) empowerment evaluation and CARE’s (Walker, 1983) projects involve handing over responsibility for classroom evaluation to teachers.

The point here is that the market research model of focus groups has remained static for five decades. Participants in market research focus groups continue to be constructed as passive subjects in the research process, have little or no control over the subject matter discussed or over the data they generate. They are assumed and expected to remain untouched by their participation in the research process, which is terminated when the focus group session ends.

Consumer researchers need to challenge the underlying assumptions in the market research literature which have shown the focus group to be a flawed and rather second rate technique, certainly when compared to the individual interview (Bristol and Fern, 1993). These assumptions have already been challenged by a number of social science academics (Morgan, 1998). The focus group, conceptualised in market research as a tool for mining data from respondents, is repositioned in much applied and academic social science research as a democratic, participative and potentially empowering research technique. In the discussion that follows we examine the theoretical frameworks that have influenced this re-
conceptualisation of the focus group and describe two projects where we have used the technique.

FOCUS GROUPS AS INTERVENTION

Small groups have a long history of being employed to bring about increased knowledge and skills and in promoting planned change. Graeber (1986) provides the socio-historical context for these interventions when he reviewed the history of the small group in democratic social engineering. Democratic social engineering emerged as a response to the negative effects of modernisation, such as the declining influence of neighbourhood, community, and other traditional sources of social cohesion. Coyle (1930) argued that group discussion guided by a trained leader could help solve these problems and lead to more consensual ways of thinking and acting. Most researchers associate studies of the small group and group processes with Kurt Lewin (1947) and, in particular, his classic study on serving offal. Lewin found group discussion to be more effective than straight lecture in encouraging housewives to alter their views on serving “unappetising” cuts of meat such as brains and hearts. Groups of housewives were invited to discuss their objections to serving these cuts and an expert would then point out ways in which these objections might be overcome.

Basch (1987) pointed out that the collection of research data may be linked with intervention in health research and in the evaluation of health education and promotion programmes. There are a number of examples of focus groups as intervention in the social science literature including Plaut et al.’s (1993) use of focus group research to mobilise community action on health issues and services. Interestingly, Swenson et al. (1992) found that whilst the primary purpose of their focus group research study was to collect research data, follow-up interviews with group participants revealed changes in participants’ opinions and behaviour. This study brought rural news reporters together to discuss the challenges that faced them in the reporting of local issues. Through group interaction these reporters became more aware of their role and responsibility as part of the local community. This intervention occurred as an ‘unanticipated’ outcome of the focus groups, and challenges the model that people remain untouched by their participation.

We will now illustrate the more deliberate linking of research and intervention in focus groups with an example from our own work.

Example: Tourism Development in a Rural Community

This project employed focus groups in a key role in the development and implementation of a tourism marketing strategy in a rural community. The overall aim of the research was to obtain input and feedback on a proposed marketing strategy for the area from key local groups such as facilities operators, the accommodation sector, statutory organisations and community groups. The main reason for using focus groups rather than individual interviews, or a survey, was to encourage a sense of ‘us’ and not just ‘I’ amongst participants. It was hoped that this would be achieved as participants discussed their individual experiences of the tourism sector and potential benefits and drawbacks of the proposed marketing strategy. This is not to say that consensus or agreement was required; rather the opportunity to listen and interact with others permitted participants to identify and make explicit their views and feelings. It is also the case that views and feelings are often fluid and these can develop through discussion with others.

The focus groups also had an explicit intervention aim in that it was hoped that opportunities for networking amongst participants would emerge in what was a fragmented and haphazard tourism providers’ base. One of the outcomes of this programme of focus groups was the establishment of a networking forum to meet at regular intervals. In particular, this allowed local tourism suppliers to establish complementary links between their products and services and also to jointly market and promote their tourism offerings. In this way the tourism infrastructure of a small, inland, rural community was strengthened and enhanced. Whilst the focus groups facilitated a useful information gathering process, their key role was in intervention, assisting in the basic development of a range of inter-linked products, services and people.

Focus Groups as Emancipation

A number of consumer researchers subscribe to critical analyses of consumption and critical research strategies (Belk, 1995). The term critical is usually associated with Frankfurt School critical theory. However, academics in marketing who embrace critical perspectives draw inspiration from a number of sources including feminism, postmodernism, post-colonialism and radical ecology. In spite of their considerable theoretical differences, they have certain interests and approaches to research in common. Firstly, they argue that phenomena need to be studied within their wider socio-historical contexts. Secondly, they claim that all research is value-laden or value-committed and critical research(ers) will make these values explicit. Finally, critical research has emancipatory aims. In other words there is a commitment to praxis, the unification of theory and practice, and to counter oppression.

The potential of the small group has long been recognised by those with a radical agenda. It is hardly surprising then that critical researchers should have examined the focus group technique for its transformatory potential. Madriz (1988), Johnson (1996), Wilkinson (1999) and Padilla’s (1993) focus on finding groups an important technique where one of the aims of the research is to raise critical consciousness and promote critical reflection. Padilla’s (1993) dialogical research uses focus groups as a means to reveal the ways in which individuals experience and react to problematic aspects of everyday life. The concept of dialogical research is based largely on the work of Brazilian educator Freire (1972). Also known as education for democracy, it holds that education and the classroom have the potential to change society at large for the better. It starts with the learners who are encouraged to articulate their experiences, and then explores these experiences within and against the ideological frameworks of mass culture, institutional settings and discourses. Through critical reflection students can begin to understand the ideological sources of voicelessness, dehumanisation, alienation and disempowerment but, more importantly, will be able to identify possibilities for change.

Whilst Padilla (1993) draws on radical pedagogy for a conceptual framework, Johnson (1996) appeals directly to Habermas’ theory of communicative action in his attempts to fuse social research and social change using focus groups. Focus groups, he argues, can be practised as a form of communicative action and participatory democracy by linking participants’ tacit everyday expert knowledge secured in the groups with theoretical expert knowledge. This linkage, however, is not so easily achieved and focus groups can be employed to give the impression of placing value on lay knowledge (Cunningham-Burley et al, 1999).

We illustrate the potential of focus group research for emancipation by describing a project that drew inspiration from radical feminism’s consciousness raising groups.

Example: Is gender an issue for women marketing managers?

Mies (1983) stressed the importance of the ‘collectivization of women’s experience’ in helping women overcome structural isolation and to understand that ‘individual sufferings have social causes’. The employment of groups in preference to individual interviews is encouraged by a number of
feminist researchers. Farley (1978) identified and named experiences of ‘sexual harassment’ through group consciousness raising sessions. Orr (1992, p.32) used focus groups in her research to encourage women to identify that problems are not the result of personal inadequacy but are based in social structure.

The main aim of our research was to identify in what ways gender was an issue for women marketing managers. We employed focus groups because we were aware that if we interviewed women individually they might be reluctant to speak of their gender as an issue that concerned and affected them. It is well documented that many women in management roles consciously or unconsciously adapt to the ‘malestream’ culture in which they find themselves in preference to the often more difficult road of challenging the status quo and developing alternative ways of working, ways which might open up the possibilities of change for other women. We adopted this research approach, therefore, on the assumption that women might be reluctant to talk about any unease they felt as women marketing managers in organisations. They might view any confession of having a gender-related problem as an admission of failure, as an admission of not being up to the challenge of working in a man’s world.

Sometimes women are reluctant to reveal what they consider to be individual problems on the assumption that, ‘it’s just me’ or ‘my problem’. Discussion with other women can reveal that it is not ‘just me’: but other women too have similar experiences. In this way they can come to realise that problems are shared and in so doing they may ‘develop a clearer sense of social and political processes through which experiences are constructed’ (Wilkinson, 1999). Being part of a group of other women, who worked in similar marketing manager roles, would, we believed, encourage women to articulate their concerns in an environment of support, of community, confidentiality, and above all, of solidarity.

We encouraged participants to articulate and reflect on their experiences as women working in marketing. A good example of this was the participant who, on arrival at the focus group, announced, ‘gender is not an issue in my organisation’. As the discussion with other female marketing managers progressed she became more reflexive. Indeed, when the group discussion had officially finished she returned to explain how she now looked differently on certain aspects of her organisational life. New male recruits were immediately able to join a football team that enabled networking across hierarchical and departmental structures, a crucial advantage for anyone in a marketing role. Women who joined the organisation had no similar access. So what was initially a dismissive attitude to gender issues in her marketing role changed subtly to one of reflexive. Indeed, when the group discussion had officially finished she returned to explain how she now looked differently on certain aspects of her organisational life. New male recruits were immediately able to join a football team that enabled networking across hierarchical and departmental structures, a crucial advantage for anyone in a marketing role. Women who joined the organisation had no similar access. So what was initially a dismissive attitude to gender issues in her marketing role changed subtly to one of reflexive. Indeed, when the group discussion had officially finished she returned to explain how she now looked differently on certain aspects of her organisational life. New male recruits were immediately able to join a football team that enabled networking across hierarchical and departmental structures, a crucial advantage for anyone in a marketing role. Women who joined the organisation had no similar access.

The adoption of a more democratic and participative focus group model will enable us to view the ‘groupness’ or interaction in focus groups in terms of its possibilities rather than focusing on it as somehow having a dysfunctional impact on individual attitudes. After all, we none of us exist in a vacuum; our ideas, perceptions and value-systems are formed by our interactions with others and the wider social and cultural environment we find ourselves in. We believe that it is time for consumer researchers to reclaim the focus group as a valuable research technique and to embrace its democratic and emancipatory research potential.

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, then, this article is a plea to broaden our understanding of the potential of focus group research and to look beyond the strict confines of the market research model. It seems to us that many consumer researchers have already moved beyond the assumption that attitudes are individually formed and intrinsic to the individual, yet we persist in favouring one to one interviews that isolate the consumer from social context. Focus group research, by its groupness, can encourage the subjects of our research to feel solidarity as a community of ‘us’, and this enables a more balanced relationship to exist between researcher and researched. The focus group invites intimacy from all parties, including the researcher. For those of us who belong to the interpretivist school they offer us the opportunity to be reflexive, to involve ourselves in the research we are undertaking and to envisage our research as having a wider application and impact.

Most of us undertake research in the hope that it will have an impact on the community of scholars, on marketing practices or on the lives of the consumers that are the subjects of our studies. We have discussed the potential of the focus group technique for research where social change is explicitly on the researcher’s agenda, and this will only be achieved if we abandon the market research model of the focus group.

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Food Consumption and the Expatriation Experience: A Study of American Expatriates in France
Jean-Claude Usunier, Université Louis-Pasteur, France

ABSTRACT
The key tenet of this research is that consumption plays a central role in the adjustment of expatriates. In the host country, expatriates lose the familiar benchmarks related to their native foods and drinks as well as to their native language. It may negatively affect their overall satisfaction with the expatriation experience. This study assesses the negative relationship between the partial loss of familiar oral benchmarks and the expatriate’s personal and family satisfaction. On the other hand, ‘positive oral pleasure’, derived from liking the food, drinks, and language of the host country is shown to increase personal and family satisfaction with the expatriation experience as well as the anticipated duration of stay. This study combines (1) a qualitative approach based on in-depth interviews, and (2) a quantitative approach based on a survey of American expatriate managers living in France.

Difficulties in expatriate adjustment are related to a diffuse feeling of absence of the familiar home-country habits (‘homesickness’) and to culture shock experienced in the new environment (Oberg, 1972; Adler, 1975; Adler, 1986). Expatriates are deprived from the pleasure of consuming their native foods and drinks which often cannot be found in the host country. The pleasure experienced with native foods and drinks is not only related to physical satisfaction (e.g. taste) but also to the whole social context which surrounds them (e.g. socializing with others, in definite places at certain times) and to the psychological well-being tied to such consumption (e.g. reassuring the self through familiar habits). Consumers attribute meaning, especially cultural meaning to consumption in context (McCracken, 1986).

This paper aims to explore two aspects of the expatriation experience: (1) the absence of native food and drinks as well as the discovery of new consumption experiences, and (2) language in as much as eating and drinking are deeply associated with social experiences involving communication, interaction with people, and making friends. Non-directive interviews have been organized with American expatriates in France. This qualitative approach has been complemented by a mail survey of American expatriates in France. Items excerpted from the interview transcripts were used for drafting the questionnaire. This article starts by a review of the literature on expatriates’ adjustment to the host country culture and the role of ‘oral pleasure’ for adjustment. The second part presents study 1 based on in-depth interviews of American expatriates in France. The third part presents study 2, based on the mail survey, which explores the influence of the absence of their familiar foods on expatriates’ satisfaction. It shows also how ‘positive oral pleasure’, derived from a favourable attitude towards local food and drinking habits, and ability in speaking the host country language, favourably influences the expatriate’s satisfaction at personal and family levels.

FAVOURITE FOOD, DRINKS, AND LANGUAGE AND THE ADJUSTMENT PROCESS OF EXPATRIATES
Adjustment to the host country culture
Most of the studies on expatriation have emphasized adjustment difficulties of expatriates (See for instance Mendenhall et al., 1987). Many studies report a high rate of early return among expatriates, estimated between 25% and 40% (Tung, 1981, Tung, 1984) and 70% when the host country is a developing one (Copeland and Griggs, 1985). Those who have described culture shock (Oberg, 1972) from a psychoanalytic perspective, go as far as to mention a ‘disintegration of the personality’ (Adler, 1975), following deep-seated anguish caused by the necessary and problematic reorganisation of personal behavior as well as by the feeling of loss of the stable landmarks built within the native culture. Language barriers and communication problems play an important role in the difficulties of personal adjustment.

Constance Befus (1988) distinguishes four theoretical models for explaining expatriate adjustment. The first one is a psychoanalytical model which suggests that culture shock results from nostalgia and melancholia, and from a mourning of the lost native culture. The second model is behaviorist: culture shock is seen as the consequence of ‘punishments’ experienced in the host country because of the lack of knowledge of expatriates as to what is considered locally as appropriate behavior; local people manifest that expatriates’ behavior is inadequate without suggesting them ways and means for improving behavioral adequacy. In the third model, culture shock can be considered as a manifestation of adaptation to stress, expatriates being exposed to ‘cognitive overload’ because of the considerable amount of information they have to process and organize. The fourth model considers culture shock as a ‘transitional experience’ (Adler, 1975): a learning process starts with the rejection of the host country culture and ends with improved knowledge of and familiarity with the new culture; then the expatriate may integrate the values of home and host cultures.

Things play a central in the rebalancing of selfhood because they are part of the extended-self (Belk, 1988). We tend to regard possessions as part of ourselves, as outer projections of our inner being which belong to the self. By reviewing in particular the case of mourning after the loss or the theft of key objects, Belk highlights the role of possessions in creating and maintaining a sense of selfhood, that precisely which the expatriate must reconstruct in the host country environment. However, the role of pleasure and personal well-being, related to food, drinks, and language in the adjustment process of expatriates to host country culture is but incidentally evoked by the literature. Befus (1988, page 386) for example explains that ‘the sojourner’s body must not only adjust to new altitudes, foods, temperatures and pathogens, but also may experience symptoms associated with psychological distress.’

Food, in an American context is mainly viewed as ‘fuel’, a merely utilitarian resource. In Freudian terms, the principle of reality is strongly emphasized as a basic drive of human behavior.

1The phrase ‘oral pleasure’ is a direct translation of the German term used by Sigmund Freud, that is, orales Vergnügen. While it translates easily into French as ‘plaisir oral’, with no negative connotation, it seems that it has an ‘inappropriate and unnecessary sexual connotation’ in English (according to an American reviewer of this paper). In as many cases as possible, I have changed it into ‘eating and speech pleasure’ which is inadequate but politically correct. Obviously, Europeans and Americans do not share the same view of the relationship between science and sex.
over the principle of pleasure, when explaining the expatriate’s adjustment process. Pleasure appears in a limited manner, as in Feldman and Thompson (1993) who use in their questionnaire an item related to language (satisfaction with conversations with colleagues) among the measures of the expatriate’s satisfaction about the relationships with colleagues. Parker and McEvoy (1993) use Black’s expatriate adjustment scale, composed of 14 items (Black and Stephens, 1989). Only one item out of 7 relates to food in the factor describing the expatriate’s general adjustment. The third factor of this scale (‘interaction adjustment’) combines four items which describe speaking, interaction and social relationships with the host country nationals. These four items relate implicitly to pleasure related to easy communication and the sharing of a common native language.

The role of eating and speech pleasure in personal well-being

When arriving in a foreign country, expatriates first lose their familiar benchmarks; they are obliged to live in ‘chinks’ not in full. They may easily resent to be deprived from their favourite foods and drinks, and from the full ability to express what they mean, and yet have a vital need to enjoy life in an unknown culture. Staying in a foreign country requires functional adaptation to different behavior involving pleasure or displeasure linked to new and unknown experiences. The disorientation of expatriates is not uniquely explained by the need to cope with the principle of reality (doing one’s job, finding a home, settling in a new environment). It is also governed by the principle of pleasure, another important facet of psychological life, almost completely neglected by marketing and management theorists (see Hofstede, 1980, for a discussion of the neglect of Feudian theory in US management literature). When the deficiency is too important, expatriates cannot adapt to a context which remains basically foreign. Nostalgia is typically experienced because the missing items associated with childhood re-emerge in vivid memories.

According to Freud (1924, 1962), there are three main stages in the formation of the ego which correspond to the progressive passage from the principle of pleasure, which is based on a purely sensorial relation of the child to the outside world, to the principle of reality, the basis for modifying impulses and sublimating the pursuit of immediate satisfactions in order to adapt the self to the outside world. The oral stage, the first phase in child development, is based on vital needs (drinking, eating), the satisfaction of which provides the child with natural pleasure. However, it is progressively disconnected from the physiological function; ‘oral pleasure’ (orales Vergnügen in Freud’s terms) is the early stage of organization of the libido, which will make its mark on subjects for their entire life. Basic traits of the oral stage can be repressed. However, they will never be abolished. They will remain during the whole life as an enduring pattern, an unconscious framework which structures the individual’s search for various types of pleasure. Freud explains that the feeding function is, during early childhood, the center of the relationships with the entourage, in particular with the mother, with an intense affective load on each side.

If the baby is fairly passive when breastfed, it needs to adopt a more pro-active attitude when he starts coordinating his muscles. It is then required to do certain activities and not others. It has to eat properly, it should not throw away its spoon, etc. It is precisely through the steps of the feeding and digestive process, thus with food as an object, that the baby has its first experiences of taking, keeping or rejecting, while having to face the reactions of people around him, in particular those of its mother. Self-erotic, ‘oral pleasure’ is a central issue in the relationship with the near environment. Eating cannot be reduced to a purely physiological activity. It implies, apart from pleasure, a pattern of relationship to others.

Similarly, speaking cannot be reduced to communication, as pure functional exchange. It is a narcissistic pleasure as well, a deficiency of which is likely to question and possibly unbalance the ego.

An individual’s attitude towards food as well as language is constructed in the family, considered by the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1984) as a cultural structure: ‘Among all human groupings, family plays a fundamental role in the transmission of culture. Whereas other social groups challenge its influence on spiritual traditions, the preservation of rituals and customs, the conservation of techniques and patrimony, family prevails in basic education, the repression of instincts, the acquisition of language ability, rightly termed motherly.2 Doing this, family provides for the basic processes of psychic development, for the categorizing emotions according to types based on atmosphere, which is the base of feelings’ More generally, ‘it (the family) transmits patterns of behavior and representation, whose interplay goes beyond the limits of consciousness’ (Lacan, 1984, p. 14, our translation). As emphasized by Falk (1994, p. 13), food choices are shaped by cultural representations largely transmitted by the family: ‘A cultural order in which an alimentary code (food taboos, ritual rules) defines that which may be eaten, by whom, how and when, does leave much room for individual matters of taste. The sense of taste is surely there, but the ‘judgement’ is located primarily at the boundaries of culture, in the ‘mouth’ of the community, as it were.’

STUDY 1: THE ROLE OF FOOD AND DRINKS IN THE ADJUSTMENT PROCESS

In a first study, ten American expatriate managers in France were non-directively interviewed following an interview guide. Appendix 1 indicates the basic profile of the expatriates interviewed. A breadth of lived experiences was searched in terms of: (1) whether they had proficiency in the French language or not; (2) whether their expatriation experience was perceived as successful or not; and (3) length of expatriation. Interviews took place either in French or in English according to the preference and linguistic abilities of the interviewees.3 About 100 pages of interview transcripts have been analysed following a qualitative and exploratory content analysis, in order to generate insights, see how informants saw the research issues in context, and generate items for the next stage of the research. Two readers, the author and one of his colleagues, have analyzed the text and confronted their interpretations. Only interpretations shared by the two readers are reported below.

Pleasure related to food and drinks

Some statements were found in all interviews. They evidence first a dependence to eating pleasure by Americans (e.g. longing for peanut butter) as well as a relative lack of understanding of the high value put on eating pleasure by the French. This suggests that the way eating pleasure is accessed by individuals is socially constructed. Oral functions such as eating to maintain oneself, inges-

2Whereas English uses the expression “native language” for the language learned in early childhood, French uses the expression “langue maternelle” (motherly language), just as German with Muttersprache.

3The interviewees all belonged to the same multinational company, whose French subsidiary is located in Grenoble, France. The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Françoise Belle (ESA, Université Pierre-Mendes-France, Grenoble, France) for the interviews.
ing drugs to heal oneself, and drinking with friends and relatives obey to cultural codes. Even among those of our interviewees who claimed legitimately to be ‘world citizens’ or ‘global persons’, orality is implicitly recognized as a strong trait of cultural identification and thus of successful integration within the host country’s society. Interviewee J tells us that: ‘The first time I ate an artichoke, I had to look around me.’ She explains about her worries: ‘Artichokes are still in my mind . . . I truly did not know how to eat them properly.’ Raised in the United States, J explains about her general attitude towards food preparation: ‘Personally, I can cook for survival . . . My mother did not cook; thus, in the U.S., I have eaten a lot of sandwiches and hamburgers.’

Interviewee C, who has lived in Thailand, compares European (French), Asian and North American attitudes towards food. When recounting his travel back to the United States after two years spent in Asia, he explains: ‘There were people as big as this (gesture) in the airport at Chicago, eating an ice-cream; I had never noticed that previously. I came back from Asia where everybody is thin like that (gesture) . . . they eat healthily. They eat rice. There are no ice-creams.’ Interviewee C has had a rejection syndrome toward his native country when back in the U.S. He was sick during several days: ‘I believe it was due to the high (caloric) content of (American) food. It was fatty. And there (in Asia) you eat tiny bits of meat, you eat vegetables, you eat . . . delicious, absolutely delicious.’

Interviewee I, a Chinese American, states sharply that food is not an issue for her, as do some other interviewees (D and J). However, later in the interview process, she asserts her preference for Chinese food: ‘I prefer to eat Chinese. I do not like a lot of French food, I usually go to Chinese restaurants, or once in a while to a Mexican restaurant . . .’ Thus, even for people who self-report low interest as concerns food in general, cultural identification with food remains quite strong.

Since food is strongly identified with culture, it may be associated with partial rejection of the host country and increased feelings of homesickness. B, for instance, explains that: ‘There is a lot of things here that we don’t eat in the U.S. like duck, horse, rabbits. They are pets to us.’ That French people eat what is considered in the United States almost as family members is seen as rather barbarian. The same interviewee says: ‘When I first arrived, I felt homesick and (questioned myself) am I doing the right thing? It was culture shock I think.’ and B adds at the end of the interview: ‘We plan to go back with luck to Washington.’

Peanut butter and American ethnic products

Peanut butter is a central item in American food culture. The lack of genuine US peanut butter in France is a problem for almost all interviewees. H emphasizes: ‘At the beginning we had twenty pounds of peanut butter. Now we have stopped eating it’, thus highlighting progressive adaptation. However, H explains later that he has now been successful in establishing a procurement channel: ‘Now we have got our peanut butter. We are OK.’ On the other hand, G frankly recognizes his lack of adjustment, saying: ‘When I go to the U.S. I bring back peanut butter . . . I haven’t adjusted.’

Some other products appear as stars among the American cultural identifiers which are in great shortage in France: maple syrup and a number of spices. Interviewee A explains that she does not find dill in France. She does not know that dill is called in French aneth and can be found in all supermarkets in dried form; fresh dill (aneth frais) is quite rare. Even J who depicts herself as fairly uninterested in food describes with much emotion the baguettes she ate when she came back to the United States: ‘It is a round piece of bread with a hole in the middle (‘C’est un pain rond avec un trou au milieu’). . . it is cooked with water apparently (‘c’est cuit à l’eau apparemment’) . . . with smoked salmon and cream cheese . . . it is a great pleasure to have them again (‘ça fait plaisir de les retrouver’). In the United States I have eaten like a pig; I gained 4 kilos.’ The exception proves the rule: only one expatriate (F, very integrated) has reversed—in imagination—the relationship of the absence of the favourite food to the longed of the preferred culture: ‘On the other hand, there are more and more things that I would be in need of in the United States. Cheese for instance, something which before I could easily live without; and moreover, there was [in the United States] a very small number of cheeses which we ate and liked. Now it is no more the case, no.’

Words as food: The mix of foods and drinks with words in social interactions

American expatriates do not easily understand the argumentative style of the French and their liking for words and speech (goût de la parole). This is probably due to the Anglo-Saxon perception that the French speak for the pleasure of speaking, wallow in words (se repaire de mots), and enjoy discourse per se (‘goûter le verbe en soi’). The French style of debate, with loud voice and conversational overlap, may be wrongly interpreted as a sign of harsh conflict and experienced by expatriates as disquieting. Interviewee I explains that: ‘The French like to argue for nothing. At the beginning I took it personally. I thought it was because I was a foreigner, they didn’t like foreigners. I knew that some people were anti-Americans and I thought that was it. I noticed later that they argued a lot among themselves and I then said to myself it is their nature and its very frustrating for me.’ Interviewee I resents conflicting argumentation à la Française because of her combined Asian (conflict is a threat to interpersonal harmony) and American background (chatting is a waste of time).

Social occasions where people drink and talk together in a relaxed and friendly manner is also cited as a cultural identifier based on the combination of orality and sociability. C, well adjusted to France, recounts his discovery of the café-bar: ‘The first impression, for me, was the bar. It was, how to phrase it, le zinc (the bar counter). I was impressed . . . over there [in the United States] the bar was just for drinking alcohol, it was just for getting drunk, it was ugly . . . Here you enter in a bar for cigarettes, for a telephone call, for drinking a beer, or to have a meal. I don’t know why, but it was truly a first image of life.’

However, this encounter between drinks and social life also has its American version which may be preferred by the expatriate. D explains (my emphasis): ‘In the US, in my age group, say people like me from 20 to 30, 35, a lot of times after work, instead of going to people’s house, we go out to a bar, and there we have happy hours and specials and beer . . .’

Food versus Fuel: enjoyment versus nourishment

Interviewee B clearly highlights the different role of food in France and the United States: ‘I think Americans, in general, look at food as fuel and in France it is food.’ Expatriate A makes a similar statement when she says: ‘In France, you spend much time on things related to dining or situations where people eat. In the United States it is more that you eat because you need to.’ The complex combination of food, time, and pleasure is experienced in a different way in France and the United States. According to several interviewees, time spent preparing a meal (that is, consuming scarce time to prepare food) is considered as legitimate and pleasurable by the French, while the Americans have a liking for fast food. Preparing a meal may be perceived by Americans as a waste of time, a scarce resource in their perspective. Spending much time eating (one hour and a half is standard for lunch in the France) is perceived by Americans as wasted time causing anxiety because of the breach of deeply ingrained behavioral standards. F well phrases the American
view that eating is a ‘necessary evil’: ‘I like much more dinners because eating is no more simply a necessary evil . . . fairly often [in the United States] to eat is to nourish oneself improperly . . . people who gobble up sandwiches in their office, it is unbelievable how badly they eat [bouffent] . . . a dinner, it is almost a social occasion . . . people are there only for eating . . . Customarily, in the U.S., if people come to have dinner, they sit together, take their meal and leave the table to watch sports on television or go to a movie theatre . . . once eating is finished, the dinner is over . . . there is much less attention to presentation, to the rituals of the dinner [than in France].’

Mealltime: the rhythms of orality

Meals can be considered to a large extent as consumption rituals, occurring in a fixed sequence and periodically repeated (Solomon, 1994). Several interviewees maintain a rhythm based on American standards. As underlined by H: ‘we have kept our tradition’. However, the two ‘traditions’ partly conflict: if expatriates combine the substantial French lunch with the large American breakfast they risk gaining weight. Most of them, therefore, try to avoid having lunch at work. The French subsidiary has a very good canteen, offering a wide choice of foods. This high-quality canteen is considered by the local personnel as a standard benefit while the expatriates see it as somewhat oversized. Some expatriates (A, F) have adapted to the French pace inventing rather original mixes of the two eating rhythms: family F, for example, has a French dinner, but keeps the traditional American brunch on week-ends.

The French concept of ‘family meal’ (repas de famille), based on the pleasure of eating and talking together, is explicitly emphasized by C as a key difference between France and the United States: ‘There are other aspects which are engaging here. It is why I adjusted so well. I believe that one of the key reasons is the deep attachment for the family. The concept of family is utmosingly important here [in France]; it is much less so in the United States.’

Wine: the American oenologists and those on an alcohol-free diet

Several interviewees display a strong interest in wine and oenology (A,C,D,H). It seems to be a form of integrative adjustment (in the sense of Adler, 1975), which combines French (the dyonisiac pleasure of drinking) and Anglo-Saxon values (being an expert, a connoisseur, enjoying wine while remaining sober and self-controlled). D explains that he has spent many week-ends in Burgundy since the beginning of his sojourn in France, visiting wine cellars; he likes the Mercurey, but prefers the M...

Two of our interviewees (E and G) are on a strict alcohol-free diet, one for religious reasons, and the other for personal reasons explained later. They speak only English and do not speak even basic French. E, among the things he really missed, cited on top of the list a typical American soda drink, rootbeer. He admits that ‘people say it tastes like a crank from a doctor’ (from a French perspective, this beverage which has a distinctive taste of drug and artificial flavour, is undrinkable) but he adds: ‘Rootbeer is my favourite.’

Business meals (repas d’affaires): food and work in France

American expatriates find it difficult to adjust to the rhythm and the abundance of French meals. As noted earlier, the relatively heavy and long (‘time-consuming’) lunch, served in the canteen is ‘too much’ if still on an American breakfast diet. Many expatriates do not like the quasi-obligation to discuss business deals with partners in other companies in business lunches (repas d’affaires), most often with wine at noon, although this practice is decreasing due to the legislation on drinking and driving in France. This may be a problem for Americans because they are not generally used to mix business negotiations, dealing with hard facts and bottom line issues, with the enjoyment of a banquet. Additionally, they are not used to drinking wine at noon and the consequent afternoon sleepiness is perceived as an obstacle to efficient work.

One of our interviewees, G, is in a situation of early return. His return to the United States with his family is planned before the date previously assigned for the end of their stay. However, this is not due to his job performance since he has adequately fulfilled the assigned tasks. G, explains with much modesty and realism, the kind of problems he has been confronted with: ‘The first day I arrived, my (French) boss took me to dinner with the two other people I would be working with, as kind of a team. What I really do is negotiate (as a marketing manager) and get the best prices for the company and that is really my strength. We ordered dinner and he said ‘what would you like for wine ?’, and I said ‘no thanks’. And in the end I knew it was going to be a problem . . . he said ‘You’ll never be able to negotiate and never be able to work in France if you don’t drink wine ’. G is a sensitive person; he has really tough times having people accept the fact that his turning down any wine or aperitifs is not a refusal of the French lifestyle and culture. G whose refusal of wine may appear as a lack of sociability in the French context, very frankly avows why he is deeply involved in the decision not to drink alcoholic beverages: ‘Now, I don’t drink. It’s not religious, it’s personal. I’m an Irish catholic from Boston and we have a tendency to like our drink and I used to drink in excess. So I made a decision a few years ago not to drink, and it was the right thing for me.’

‘Medicine-food’: drugs and worries about health

Expatriates are fairly concerned with the absence of familiar drugs (ingested in a sort of oral ‘healing ritual’) which may cause adjustment problems. Several interviewees mention the difficulty to find Advil in France. D cites Advil as the drug which must absolutely be brought back from the United States: ‘Advil here is only on prescription and in the U.S. you can get it in any place; but it’s very good and very strong: it’s not even aspirin, but it’s like aspirin.’ The anguish related to this kind of missing ‘healing’ items is reinforced by the difficulty of talking in French to French medical doctors. On the other hand, American expatriates are generally
STUDY 2: AN EXPLORATORY EMPIRICAL APPROACH

Study 1 has illustrated the issue of ‘oral benchmarks’ related to the native eating and speaking habits. ‘Oral benchmarks’ make meaning in each of the four theoretical models of adaptation to culture shock cited above: as a way to reassure oneself deeply, in a revitalizing regression (in the psychoanalytic perspective), as a way to learn new behavioral norms, to start obeying to positive stimuli in the host culture and avoid the ‘punishments’ which follow inadequate behavior (behaviorist paradigm), as a way to face stress by relieving oneself of stressful pressures, and, finally, as a transitional experience, where the expatriate combines values and norms of the home country with those of the host country in a personal melting pot.

Study 2 aims to verify the existence of a link between eating and speech pleasure and satisfaction with the expatriation experience at personal and family levels. This is achieved by a mail survey. A positive attitude towards the host country’s oral culture appeared in our interviews as an essential element of integration, in the sense of Adler (1975). Individuals in transition between home and host country cultures, simultaneously experience (1) a frustration of eating and speech pleasure related to the partial loss of the home country’s oral ‘benchmarks’, a variable labelled hereafter ‘oral pleasure deficiency’; and (2) pleasure related to the discovery of new foods and drinks in the host culture, labelled ‘positive oral pleasure’. Based on the literature as well as the findings of study 1, we hypothesize that:

1. ‘oral pleasure deficiency’ has a negative influence on personal satisfaction with the expatriation experience (H1);
2. ‘positive oral pleasure’ related to host country food and drinking habits has a positive influence on personal satisfaction (H2) and family satisfaction (H3).

Data collection

The hypotheses are tested on a sample of American expatriate managers in France through a short questionnaire centered on the research issues. For reasons of cost and simplicity the mail survey technique was chosen (Houston and Ford, 1976). The questionnaire comprised a series of demographics: sex, age, marital status, American or foreign spouse, date of arrival in France, anticipated duration of stay, number of children and their ages. Then followed a list of 26 items relating to the expatriation experience with a seven-post Likert scale. 8 food and drinks-related items and 9 language-related items were mixed with 9 items related to the general expatriation experience. The questionnaire investigated four additional issues: expatriate’s personal satisfaction, family satisfaction (on a seven posts Likert scale), the self-assessment by the expatriate’s of his/her language abilities in French, a variable referred to later as ‘Language’ (on a scale comprising 7 levels of linguistic ability elicited by full sentences), and the fourth question related to how much they liked French food and drinking habits (with a seven posts semantic differential scale). American expatriates in France checked that the questionnaire was both formally correct and colloquially adequate.

The sampling frame representing the base population was drawn from two sources: (1) The directory of the ‘American Chamber of Commerce in France’, and (2) American expatriates belonging to the ‘American Club in Paris’. The questionnaire explicitly stated that: ‘To fill out this questionnaire you must be an American expatriate living in France.’

600 questionnaires were sent and 109 usable questionnaires were sent back. This convenience sample represents the basic traits of the surveyed population (American managers living as expatriates in France) and fits with the research objectives (Calder et al., 1981).

The sample was composed of 74 men and 35 women. The average age was 46, with a standard deviation of 11 years. 69 were expatriated with their family, and 74 were married (47 to an American spouse). The average duration of their expatriation at survey date was 81 months, with a standard deviation of 99 months.

Pleasure related to oral benchmarks and expatriate’s satisfaction: preliminary findings

Table 1 shows the correlation between the main demographic variables, the anticipated duration of stay (Stay)4 personal satisfaction (SatP), family satisfaction (SatF), the level of command of host country’s language (Language) and the preference for host country’s food and drinking habits (Food). Personal and family satisfactions, language abilities and preference for host country drinking and eating habits are not correlated with demographic variables, neither to age and sex, nor to marital status (Marfor: married to a non-American spouse) or family situation (Family: expatriated with family).

The German proverb ‘Glücklich wie Gott in Frankreich’ (‘Happy as God in France’) seems to be confirmed. On the 7-posts likert scale, where 7 is ‘excellent’, the average score of personal satisfaction is 6.114. The average score of family satisfaction (as self-reported by respondents and not by their families) is 5.744.

In order to summarize the attitudes of American expatriates we have factor analyzed items describing attitudes to language and food/drinks. Table 2 presents a three-dimension scale, obtained by removing items with low communality, then by a varimax rotation. Correlation coefficients below .4 are not presented.

The first factor features the level of oral frustration derived from poor ability in the host country language; its eigenvalue is 2.752; it explains 30.6% of the variance. The signs of items are consistent; positive coefficient for L1 and L4 indicate frustration, whereas L2 and L3 indicate how to avoid frustration with negative signs. Alpha reliability coefficient reaches .85 showing a high level of reliability in the measure of the construct (Peter and Churchill, 1986).

The second factorial dimension signals the level of attachment to home country food and drinking habits; its eigenvalue is 1.444; it explains 16 % of the variance; that is 46.6 % with the first factor. Item signs are consistent with the meaning covered by this dimension: they are all positive, evidencing the frustration not to find in France the expatriate’s favorite foods. Coefficient alpha is .582 indicating satisfactory reliability in an exploratory perspective (Nunnally, 1967).

4The “Stay” variable has been coded according to the number of months reported by the respondent. It was coded 399 (a little more than 30 years) when the respondent mentioned “indefinite”. This value is based on the approximate difference between the respondents’ mean age and an average life expectancy.
The third factor corresponds to belief that food is not only fuel and that eating habits matter; its eigenvalue is 1.121; it explains 12.5% of the variance and, in combination with the first two factors, 59.1%. The signs of correlation of items with the factor are consistent: respondents with a high score on this factor do not agree that food is only fuel and think that it is important to be an expert in French wines and cooking. Coefficient alpha is only .27, which shows a lack of reliability in measuring this construct. However, a factor with only two items generally has low Cronbach alphas. These three factors, (Plo1, Plo2, Plo3) describe in a meaningful way the attitudes of American expatriates towards eating and speech pleasure. However, in a further step it would be necessary to purify the scale and withdraw the third factor (Churchill, 1979).

**Oral pleasure deficiencies and personal/family satisfaction**

For testing H1, personal satisfaction and family satisfaction, as independent variables have been regressed against the three factors Plo1, Plo2 and Plo3, as dependent variables. In order to control for the effect of other dependent variables which may influence satisfaction they have been entered in the following regression equation:

\[ \text{SatP}=f(\text{Stay, Marfor, SatF, Language, Food, Plo1, Plo2, Plo3}) \]

The SPSS regression procedure leads to the progressive elimination of variables whose ‘t’ student ratio are below significance threshold, by the backwards selection method. Successive refining steps led to the estimates presented in Table 3.

These findings very clearly confirm hypothesis H1. The eating pleasure deficiency linked to language (Plo1) and to the loss of native food habits (Plo2) are negatively correlated, i.e. reduce personal satisfaction. To be married with a foreign spouse (generally French) has a negative influence on personal satisfaction: some American expatriates have probably been attracted by marriage to France, a country which they appreciate less than the spouse who brought them there.

**Positive eating pleasure and expatriate satisfaction**

Does enjoyment of the host country’s foods, drinks and language bear a favorable influence on expatriate satisfaction? In order to test this we have combined in a simultaneous equations model three dependent variables (Language, Food and Marfor) and three independent variables (SatF, SatP, Stay). The model (Figure
TABLE 3
Influence of eating pleasure and marital status on expatriate satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>coefficient</th>
<th>stand. deviation</th>
<th>t ratio</th>
<th>confidence level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLO1</td>
<td>-.525</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>-3.832</td>
<td>.0004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO2</td>
<td>-.411</td>
<td>.103</td>
<td>-4.006</td>
<td>.0003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marfor</td>
<td>-.591</td>
<td>.275</td>
<td>-2.151</td>
<td>.0375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>6.992</td>
<td>.408</td>
<td>17.121</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple correlation coefficient=.69739; F=12.94041 significant at .0000 level.

FIGURE 1
Significant relationships in the model

The Lisrel statistics indicate that the general adjustment of the model is satisfactory. The Chi-square with four degrees of freedom is 5.82 (with a probability level of .21). A low chi-square value corresponds to a good level of adjustment (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1989; the associated probability must be higher than .10 (Bagozzi, 1980) what is largely the case in the estimated model. The root mean square residual, a measure of the average of the fitted residuals, is .056, what is satisfactory, the target level being .05. The GFI (goodness of fit index) reaches .98, and the adjusted GFI reaches .91, values in excess of .9 being considered as showing a good fit between model and data (Bagozzi, 1980).

CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS
Consumption of food items typical of the home country plays a key role in the adjustment process of expatriates as eating habits
are closely associated with the native culture. Even those expatriates who define themselves as having ‘global shoes’ still experience some adjustment difficulties. As a consequence, there is a relative incompatibility of cultural codes even within a common cultural group that of Western cultures. Accepting the ‘oral consumption culture’ of the host country is a key factor of personal integration, especially when expatriated in a country like France, which highly values food and speech.

In a psychoanalytic perspective, consumption of native items plays a reassuring role, that of a reconstructing regression (as the little child who sucks his thumb). However, consumption of foreign foods is also a way to explore behavioural codes in the host culture, and the similarity of eating habits. In a psychoanalytic perspective, consumption of native items plays a reassuring role, that of a reconstructing regression (as the little child who sucks his thumb). However, consumption of foreign foods is also a way to explore behavioural codes in the host culture, and the similarity of eating habits.

APPENDIX 1

Basic data about the interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Int.</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Dur. of stay</th>
<th>Marital status (spouse nat.)</th>
<th>adjustment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>R &amp; D</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Married (US)– no children</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Marketing/Sales</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2.5 months</td>
<td>Married (US)– no children</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Gen. Management</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>Married (F)– 3 children</td>
<td>+ +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Procurement</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3.5 years</td>
<td>Married (F)– 1 child</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Market research</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>Married (US)– 2 children</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>R &amp; D</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Married (F)– 2 children</td>
<td>+ +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Marketing/Sales</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18 months</td>
<td>Married (US)– 2 children</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18 months</td>
<td>Married (US)– 3 children</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>Married– 2 children</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>Married (F)– 2 children</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjustment degrees from ++ to — are judgmental scores given by the two interviewers when rating the expatriates’ adjustment to the host country. They should not be viewed as indicating personal success with the expatriation experience or job performance.

REFERENCES


Conceptualising Private and Public National Identities: The Case of the Museum of Scotland

Steven Cooke, University of Stirling, United Kingdom
Fiona McLean, University of Stirling, United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the findings of primary research carried out by the authors on the relationship between the new Museum of Scotland and Scottish national identity. Based on in-depth interviews of potential visitors to the new museum undertaken before its opening in November 1998, the paper argues that the ways that consumers actively make and re-make their personal and national identities within museum spaces are related to the ways in which the museum engages them on these different imaginary levels. It concludes by suggesting that the differences in the way in which visitors conceptualise personal and public national identities can be used to begin to consider rethinking theories of identity formation.

INTRODUCTION

In the late twentieth century issues of identity have come to the fore in academic discourses. In societies where challenges to the social, economic and cultural jurisdiction of the nation state are common, and where ‘self’ has become fragmented and traditional structures destabilised, the concept of identity has become problematic and contentious. Central to this are debates about the global/local nexus. This paper looks at issues of national identity, focusing in particular on the nation of Scotland. National cultures construct identities by producing meanings about the nation with which we can identify, meanings which are contained in “legends and landscapes” (Daniels 1993, 5) the stories, memories and images which structure, and in turn are structured by, ideas of the nation. The new Museum of Scotland which opened in Edinburgh in November 1998, offers an opportunity to explore these complex and little understood issues.1

The Museum has opened at a crucial time in Scottish history. The Scottish cultural renaissance is manifested in the increase in cultural production and calls for Scottish cultural institutions. Parallel to this renaissance are political developments. A referendum held in 1997 showed an overwhelming consensus for political change; almost three-quarters of those who voted supported the idea of a devolved Scottish Parliament. Scotland has not had its own Parliament for almost 300 years, since the Union of the Scottish and English Parliaments in 1707 created a London-based Parliament of Great Britain. Despite this, Scotland retained a separate legal system and many other aspects of public life, such as the Scottish education system, have remained distinct. Elections for this recreated Parliament were held in early 1999 and convened for the first time in May 1999. When the idea of Scotland is itself in a state of flux, the stories of the nation told in the Museum, which give a sense of location, a connection between the individual and the nation as an “imagined community” (Anderson 1983) are especially important.

This paper reports on preliminary findings of research conducted with potential consumers of the new Museum of Scotland before its opening in November 1998. First, a review is conducted of issues of identity, which then informs the next section that examines the role of the museum in constructing identities. The third section considers the responses from the interviews with potential consumers of the Museum of Scotland and discusses how they illustrate the ways that consumers make and re-make their national identities.

IDENTITY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

The traditional ways in which we think about identity are being brought into question. Conventional wisdom suggests that identity is the expression of objective and measurable differences between social groups, whether based on class, gender, age or ethnicity. Identity, within this conceptualisation, is seen to reside in the individual. However, Brown et al. (1996) have argued that identity should be thought of as located in “the signs and meanings which are given off by the social institutions they inhabit, and crucially the social actor has a considerable amount of leeway in resonating those identities which they find useful in different social settings” (Brown et al. 1996: 194). In other words, identities are social and cultural accounts which participants use to make sense of their actions. Under the modernist perspective, the key social identities which were formed were political, social, occupational, class, and gender identities. Identity was created in the interactions between self and society. In the postmodern, social structures are rapidly changing, with the inevitable impact on all forms of social identity, including national identity.

It has been argued that the politics of consumption are central to social and cultural change in the postmodern (Tomlinson 1990). For example, cultural items readily relate ethnicity to the world of goods (Hannerz 1992), acting as expressions or symbols of ethnic identity. Consequently, cultural items that appeal to ethnic feelings are frequently possessed as commodities in the marketplace (Roosens 1995). Thus, national identity, although a political manifestation, is expressed through the cultural as well as the political.

The seminal work by Anderson on “Imagined Communities” (1983), describes the concept of “nation” as being imagined, since it has limited political boundaries. That is, the nation is a sovereign territory over which the state claims legitimacy, but which is a community involving comradeship with people one has never met.

It is imagined because members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lies the image of their communion. (Anderson 1983, 15)

This is important, because it shows we are dealing with something ephemeral, an abstraction. National identity, then, can only be an imagined communion. This imagining, for Anderson, replaces earlier forms of cultural belonging, being a phenomenon of modernity. Consequently, we can trace the roots of national identity as a phenomenon to the breakdown of existential certainties characterising modern social life (Tomlinson 1991). As these certainties break down even further in the postmodern era, so national identity grows in importance.

National identity, then, becomes “a particular kind of collective identity. In other words it is an identity constituted at a given

1The Museum of Scotland is one of six museums run by the umbrella organisation ‘National Museums of Scotland’ (NMS). The NMS was set up in 1985 after the amalgamation of the Royal Scottish Museum (now the Royal Museum of Scotland) and the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland on which the Museum of Scotland is based.
strategic level of society” (Schlesinger 1991, 173). Nationalists are often drawn to the dramatic and creative possibilities of the arts and media, through which they can celebrate or commemorate the nation, evoking emotional responses from the community (Smith 1991). Schlesinger (1991) however contends that national cultures are not simply the repositories of shared symbols to which the entire population stands in identical relation. Instead, there is competition over the defining of such symbols. National culture then is a discourse, a way of constructing meanings which influence not only our actions, but also our conceptions of ourselves since, “It follows that the nation is not only a political entity but something which produces meanings—a system of cultural representation” (Hall 1992, 292).

Hall and du Gay (1996) have suggested that the concepts of national and personal identity are “under erasure”. The self-sustaining Cartesian self is subject to critique—but it has not been replaced, it has “not been superseded dialectically” (Hall and du Gay 1996, 1). We are obliged to go on thinking with it, however problematic this may be, albeit not in the totalising way in which we have in the past. They suggest one of the ways in which the concept of identities can be reformulated is by thinking in terms of “routes” not “roots”.

Though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: ‘not who we are’ or ‘where we came from’, so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves (1996, 4).

These are produced (and consumed) within discursive sites and practices by the articulation of “specific enunciative strategies” (Hall and du Gay 1996, 4). Within this conceptualisation, museums can be seen as sites of discursive formation, a space where identities are made and re-made.

MUSEUMS AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Since their inception, museums have been used to house a national heritage, thereby fulfilling national ambitions by creating a national identity. Initially created as private collections amassed by elites through conquest and exploitation, museums have since developed their role to conserve cultural heritage and to educate the public.

Museums are social institutions, the products and agents of political and social change (Kaplan 1994). Thus, periods of significant growth in museums can be related to upsurges of nationalism and a sense of national identity. For example in the UK, the founding of the Victoria and Albert Museum, which was created from the 1851 Great Exhibition, represented the pride of the nation in its industries and in its colonisation of other nations (Billinge 1993). Such Imperial exhibitions were spaces for inculcating various sections of the population with certain values concerned with Empire, by constructing spectacles of the “other” (Coombes 1987). The second significant growth of museums has taken place in the late 20th century. The growth of Scottish museums has far outpaced the growth of museums throughout the rest of the UK (McCrone et al 1995), conceivably reflecting Scotland’s reassertion of its national identity, which has culminated in the devolution referendum and the re-creation of Scotland’s own Parliament.

Since museum visiting is a social activity, visitors connect the personal to the museum’s account through spun narratives (Silverstone 1988). The visitor gives the museum object a personal expression, one that is unique to that individual. Visitors bring their own preconceptions to the museum which shape the nature and perceptions of their visit (Macdonald 1992). The museum offers the visitor “a heritage with which we continually interact, one which fuses past with present” (Lowenthal 1985, 410). Visitors give a multiplex of meanings to museum objects, meanings which are representative of their identities.

Within the reconceptualisation of identity formation put forward by Hall, du Gay and others, the museum can be seen as a place where people go to actively make and re-make their identities, to selectively select and reject and manipulate the images and identities found within. This privileging of the consumer’s active role in identity formation needs to be held in tension, however, with the symbolic and institutional power of the museum. The consumption of the museum by the visitors needs to be understood within both the context of the producer’s construction of potential preferred readings of the displays and the Museum’s role as an authoritative institution with symbolic capital in the telling of stories about the nation (Bourdieu 1990, Hooper-Greenhill 1989).

METHODOLOGY

As part of a wider programme of research investigating the construction of national identity in the new Museum of Scotland, in-depth interviews were conducted with 89 members of the public before the opening of the new Museum who were identified by the NMS as target visitors. They fell in to the target segments of residents of Scotland; residents from the rest of the UK; the Scottish Diaspora; and foreign tourists. A number of topics were explored, the most significant for this paper being the notions of the potential visitor’s conception of their own representation in the new museum and of the ways in which the museum could influence meanings of Scottishness. The interviews were tape-recorded to allow extensive analysis at a later date. The key findings from this part of the research identified the micro and macro levels in which the potential visitors perceived themselves to be represented in the new Museum of Scotland. These will be looked at in turn in the next two sections.

PERSONAL IDENTITY AND THE MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND

One of our a priori themes was the theoretical focus on the continuous making and remaking of identities within museum spaces. Part of this identity work is located in the process of identification (Hall and du Gay 1996). Therefore one of the crucial issues dealt with in the empirical work was how people thought they themselves would be represented in the new museum.

For many respondents there was an explicit assumption that, as Scots, they would be represented in a Museum of Scotland.

Well, I think that if it is a Scottish museum obviously I’m going to be represented in it

I suppose just as a Scot. While you may not have direct links to many aspects of the heritage and the culture but still there is a connection there and so yes you are represented as much as any Scot is.

However, many Scots, regardless of specific target segment, suggested a lack of connection with the exhibitions they thought would be presented in the new museum. Some denied that they would be represented. For example, responses included “I have no idea” to “Me? I doubt it will be me, it will be something more important than me I should hope”, or “I think I am only a cog in the wheel. I don’t think I’m important enough to be represented anywhere”.

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The misunderstanding or rejection could be understood with reference to the potential variance between the authors’ understanding of ‘representation’ in terms of representative culture and history, with the respondents’ understanding of the concept who perhaps saw it as how will they as a recognisable self be represented in the Museum. However, other evidence suggests that this distinction between representation and non-representation is more problematic. The identification process should rather be viewed as mediated through the representation of history that the respondents thought would be seen in the new Museum. Thus to be represented, the Museum needed to have a connection with them and their lives.

Well actually I will feel represented as long as…enough about daily life in current Scotland is in there…and as long as the current bit is not completely overwhelmed by the history of the great and the good.

Hard to say, I would have to see and then I would be able to say. I think that I would have liked to have seen so and so as it applies to me and my former profession or that is an interesting concept, it shows how we worked but I don’t think I could pick something out of the air just now.

Further evidence to suggest that the identification process is built upon recognition of “our story” comes from overseas visitors, especially those from the United States of America with connections to Scotland. Although it must be recognised that the motivation for the visit to Scotland is often based on such a connection and a search for ‘roots’, this group was generally more happy to answer the question and had a clear indication of just how they would be, or would like to be represented in the new Museum. They envisaged an explicit connection to their ‘history’ and ancestors.

I think coming into a museum where you could identify with a certain aspect of that, I mean…it would be like anything that would have to do with the Blair Castle and Atholl and that part of it. I think it gives you a personal identification point, it makes you kind of feel this is mine, this is part of me.

Oh goodness, well since I actually know the name of the clan that my great grandfather came from anything to do with that would give me some kind of connection.

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND THE MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND

As we have already suggested, museums have historically been sites where ideas of the nation have been played out. As can be seen in Central and Eastern Europe, national museums seem to be intimately bound up with the idea of the nation-state as a space where a nation can represent its history to itself and others. As McCrone et al have argued,

Objects of heritage appear [to visitors] to have the power to confer identity, and act as vehicles for bringing the past into the present, in such a way that the histories of ancestors or mythological events become an intimate part of their national identity.
(McCrone et al 1996, 187)

The Museum of Scotland as a place to “represent Scotland to the World and the World to Scotland”,2 can therefore be seen as a crucial site of representation given Scottish Devolution and continuing debates over the relationship between Scotland, the UK and Europe.

To try to ascertain how people viewed the relationship between the Museum and the nation, they were asked whether they could see the museum changing what it meant to be Scottish. Again, the question generated a wide range of attitudes, including a complete rejection of the notion that what it meant to be Scottish could be influenced by the new Museum. However, unlike the issue of personal identity, other responses seemed to suggest that the museum’s relationship to defining the nation was more direct. Although the notion of ‘Scottishness’ seemed to be located in the ‘character of the people’, and that this was thought immune to change, it was also generally felt that the Museum would enhance or solidify what it meant to be ‘Scottish’.

I think it will enhance it, not necessarily change it.

No I think it will just add to your Scottishness as such rather than take away from it.

I think it has got a contribution to make to enhance the sense of identity.

This may well be linked with the perceived role of a national museum as concerned with the macro level, telling the story of Scotland as a nation rather than the story of the individual. Indeed, without prompting, a number of interviewees connected the role of the Museum in defining Scotland to changes at the macro level such as devolution.

I guess [the Museum] can help in communicating a sense of belonging and self-worth and contribute to a change of general feeling of what it means to be Scottish or whatever but it won’t do that on its own but particularly with the link up to devolution I guess it might play a role.

In order to examine further the potential for change at the macro level, the respondents were all also asked specifically whether they considered that their conceptions of Scottishness would be changed by devolution. The majority of both Scots and non-Scots suggested that Scottish identity would be affected by recent political developments. These responses generally fell into two categories, assigning devolution a similar role to that of the Museum: first in terms of enhancing ‘Scottishness’ and giving an increased sense of pride in Scotland:

Hopefully it will make people more aware that they are Scottish in themselves and make them proud of what they are.

Secondly, some attributed a definitional role to devolution.

I think it will give people a sense of identity which I think has been slightly blurred over the past years. I think it will give people a chance to say “I’m Scottish and we are actually separate, and we are a separate people.”

Yes it certainly will. I think it will make Scotland certainly far more the focus of Scottish life…a lot of Scots are not really...
orriented towards Scotland but they are orriented towards the UK economy and towards London… and I think that will change with the Scottish Parliament and… Scotland as a whole would be more the focus of Scottish life again and it will be more distinctive.

Well it will give us some more sense of identity you know and instead of being amalgamated with the rest of Britain because I think it is good to be individual because we have got our own needs, we are only a population of 5 million and we are very much different from the South East of England.

THE NEGOTIATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

As we have argued then, imaginings of the ‘nation’ seem less stable or fixed than what we could term the private sphere of identity. Further evidence of the mutability of conceptions of ‘Scottishness’ was gained by an examination of the interviewees thoughts on whether there were times when their ‘Scottishness’ mattered more than others. These were then contrasted with their answers to whether they thought the Museum of Scotland would change what it meant to be Scottish. Whilst some rejected out-right the notion that their national identity changed—“Oh no dear, I’m always a Scot”,—the majority of people did suggest that their national identity mattered more at certain times than at others—most notably when they were abroad, or confronted with the ‘other’. However, the role of the Museum in these conceptualisations prompted a more diverse range of opinions. Thus some who were conscious of the different priority given to their national identity at certain times and spaces, denied the Museum a role within this reformulation. One visitor suggested that:

[Are there times when your Scottishness matters more than others?]
Yes I think so when you are abroad for example, I think we have a great deal of respect abroad and I think we are well known for being accepted abroad in various roles whether it be business or just whether you are on holiday or what have you, yes I think it does matter. I think it’s a good label to have.

[Do you think that a Museum of Scotland could change what it means to be Scottish?]
I don’t think so. I think people will always be what they are born like. They think they are Scots or English or whatever.

Another:

[Are there times when your Scottishness matters more than others?]
No but it’s like being called… I don’t make an issue out of it but it is important that people know that I am Scottish as opposed to being British—I would rather say ‘Scotland’, I am from Scotland or I am Scottish if you asked that or if you put it down on your passport or whatever. I think people think quite highly of the Scottish people. We are quite a unique lot. There might be negative things but I just look at the positive side of that.

[Do you think that a Museum of Scotland could change what it means to be Scottish?]
No not really.

Others, who saw their national identity as more important at different times and in different places, did give the Museum a more proactive role in the shaping of national identity.

[Are there times when your Scottishness matters more than others?]
I think probably when you are abroad you are treated a lot better if you are Scottish than you are if you say you are English, I think the feeling against the English is quite strong within Europe.

[Do you think that a Museum of Scotland could change what it means to be Scottish?]
I think it can focus what it means to be Scottish, it can focus on the people.

[Are there times when your Scottishness matters more than others?]
Probably yes. I think that if you are meeting people from abroad they are always very interested if you are Scottish and you can tell them something about Scotland then yes I think it matters.

[Do you think that a Museum of Scotland could change what it means to be Scottish?]
I think it would help, I think anything that shows artefacts or can actually show the evolution of Scotland helps people then begin to understand. Unfortunately Scottish history was not taught in our schools for so many years that many generations of Scots knew nothing of their history which is a very sad situation.

So why the difference in the conceptualisation of the function of the Museum? The main differentiating factor between the attribution to the Museum of a place within the formation and reformation of Scottish national identity and a rejection of that role seemed to be the importance that the interviewees placed on heritage in general. The final two interviewees above were members of heritage organisations and visited heritage sites on a regular basis. One, responding to the question “Are you a member of any heritage organisations?” replied “Yes, everything you can think of we are members of”. The relationship between being a heritage organisation member and its seeming corresponding attitude towards their role in the formation of national identity is still unclear. Whether a pre-existing notion of the perceived importance of museums in the shaping of national identity motivated these people into becoming members of heritage organisations or whether the perception of such a role is learnt, inculcated or is used as a way of explaining their visiting habits awaits further study.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has investigated the ways in which personal and national identity are made and re-made in the Museum of Scotland. McCrone and colleagues have argued that “heritage has an identity-conferring status, not simply (or even) in collective or national terms, but in individual and personal ones” (McCrone et al 1996). This research has confirmed this, and further has suggested that the relationship between the museum, personal identity and national identity is far from clear. Within the Museum of Scotland as a site of representation there is a difference in the way that micro and macro levels of identity are expressed and potentially experienced by the visitors.

As Anderson (1983) and Schlesinger (1991) have highlighted, the nation is conceived of as an ‘imagined community’, constituted at the strategic, national level. This research has identified this ‘imagined community’ of Scotland, which was perceived by the interviewees as a changing concept, particularly in the light of
recent political developments. By contrast, the interviewees envisaged a personal representation of a Scottish national identity in the yet to be built Museum of Scotland as relatively stable and fixed. This anomaly in the contrasting conceptions at the public and personal realms awaits further investigation into the ways in which the visitor, as a site of multiple discursive frames (Hedge 1998), relates to the spaces of the museum in the negotiation of identity. The question therefore becomes how this dissonance between personal and national identity is played out within the Museum by the visitors. This can begin to be achieved by taking a more nuanced account of the possible multiple readings of the Museum. For example, do visitors react differently to the Twentieth Century gallery which is constructed of artefacts selected by members of the public and ‘personalities’, as representing Scotland and their lives in the Twentieth century? Do people react differently to the different museological techniques that have been used in the museum? 3

The Museum of Scotland is a fascinating case study through which to examine the construction and re-construction of national identities. As Hall and du Gay (1996) indicated, discursive sites, such as museums, offer the potential to examine and explain what are problematic and contentious issues. The research has identified two levels of “emotional realism” (Macdonald 1996), which visitors experience in different ways, and which suggests new ways of conceiving of identity formation.

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3The Museum is arranged so that each floor represents a certain pre-historical or historical stage. The Twentieth century gallery is located at the top of the museum. There are differences in the style of language used in the written texts describing the displays. Thus in ‘early peoples’, the display texts are written using a personalised ‘we’, whilst in other exhibitions a more conventional objective language is used.
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