European Advances in Consumer Research
Volume 6

“All Changed, Changed Utterly?”

Editors
Darach Turley
Stephen Brown
Preface

“All Changed, Changed Utterly?”

This volume contains the papers presented at the sixth European Advances in Consumer Research conference held at the Conrad Hotel, Dublin on June 4-7, 2003. The variety and span of the papers in this volume mirror the international mix of consumer research colleagues who presented them. Change was clearly flagged in our conference theme, an interrogative line borrowed from Ireland’s bottom-line-orientated bard, W.B. Yeats. Looking back, we feel that our poetic appropriation was well vindicated and singularly apt. Apart from the papers themselves, seasoned readers of previous EACR proceedings will note that we introduced an element of change into the conference format itself. First, we excised the word “session” from our conference vocabulary and, in an admittedly precious homage to our titular inspiration, structured EACR 2003 as a ten-stanza poem, each one predicated upon a Yeats-sourced soundbite. While we would hesitate to describe our conference as poetry in motion, we believe that the programme did manage to scan, resonate and rhyme from time to time. Second, and rather more prosaically, was our eschewal of discussants, something that enabled us to include a greater number of four-paper sessions. A terrible beauty is born.

We’d like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have helped put the conference together. In addition to the delegates, who not only submitted and revised their papers on schedule, but also chose to attend the event at a time of geo-political uncertainty, we’re grateful to the staff at the Conrad Hotel for making us so welcome. We’re equally grateful to Colm Troy, who designed and maintained the conference website. Special thanks too to the Dublin team, Naoimh, Colm and Martin for their time and support. Jim Muncy was a tower of strength. A particular word of appreciation to Andrea Gröeppel-Klein for giving us the benefit of her valuable experience in organising the previous EACR. Finally thanks more than 140 manuscript reviewers who gave of their scholarly expertise and responded magnificently to necessarily tight turnaround times.

Thank you all.

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Stephen Brown
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Dublin, Ireland

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THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 2003

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**Chairs:**  
Sarah Todd, University of Otago, New Zealand  
Margaret Hogg, UMIST, UK

**SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY**

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Sarah Todd, University of Otago, New Zealand  
Margaret K. Hogg, UMIST, UK

*Consumer Socialisation and the Formation of Children’s Likes and Dislikes*  
Emma N. Banister, Lancaster University, UK  
Gayle J. Booth, UMIST, UK

*Children and Money*  
Sarah Todd, University of Otago, New Zealand

*Understanding Social Influences on Children’s Food Choices*  
Maria Piacentini, University of Lancaster, UK  
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*Linking Gift Exchange Emotional Experiences and Interpersonal Relationships*  
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**Chair:** Jonathan E. Schroeder, Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden

**SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY**

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Jonathan E. Schroeder, Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden
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Maurice Patterson, University of Limerick, Ireland
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Acts, Images and Meaning of Tattooing
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Skin Signs: The Epidermal Schema in Contemporary Marketing Communications
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Roy Langer, Roskilde University, Denmark

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Maja Makovec Brenčič, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

High Risk Leisure Discourse: Influence and/or Use by Adventure Companies
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Byzantine at the Edge of History: Consumption of the Past at a Heritage Exhibition
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The Effects of Survey Timing Upon Visitor Perceptions of Destination Service Quality
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Gorm Gabrielsen, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
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Judith Lynne Zaichkowsky, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

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Chairs: Stephen Gould, Baruch College, The City University of New York, USA
Pauline Maclaran, De Montfort University, UK

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Am I What I Think I Am? Epistemological and Ontological Introspections on the Self
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Emergent Advertising Appeals in the Weeks after September 11, 2001
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Chair: Cindy M.Y. Chung, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

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The Cult of Macintosh (video)
Russell Belk, University of Utah, USA
Gülñur Tumbat, University of Utah, USA

ABSTRACT
In the beginning (of the Information Age) was the void. And the void was digital. But lo, there came upon the land, the shadow of Steven Jobs (and Stephen Wozniak), And Steven (Stephen) said, “Let there be Apple.” And there was Apple. And Steven (Stephen) beheld Apple. And it was good. And Apple begat Macintosh. And it was good. And soon upon the land there began to appear, The Cult of Macintosh. For they had tasted of Apple. And it was good.

Although Apple Computer Corporation currently has less than 4 percent of the personal computer market, their customers are distinguished by their fierce loyalty to the brand and their personal identification with Apple’s Macintosh computers. Apple has nourished the corporate mythology that sustains this cult of loyal followers. There are several cultic myths involved here, as we show through historical corporate footage of Apple’s stockholders’ meetings, advertising, newspaper coverage, and corporate promotions. The myths involved include these:

- Creation Myth—The personal computer industry was started by Steven Jobs and Stephen Wozniak in Jobs’ parents’ garage. The sale of Jobs’ VW van and Woz’s two HP calculators are portrayed as sacrificial acts in this creation myth.
- Hero Myth—Steve Jobs rise and fall within Apple Computers is a classic example of the Heroic Adventure myth as formulated by Joseph Campbell.
- Satanic Myth—Apple has faced two major Satans in its history, first the threat of IBM and currently the threat of Microsoft and Bill Gates. To the Cult of Mac, these opponents are evil incarnate.
- Resurrection Myth—As suggested by the title of Alan Deutschman’s book, The Second Coming of Steve Jobs, the founder’s forced departure from the corporation and his triumphant return as CEO on the eve of the company’s widely rumored demise, makes him a savior in multiple senses.

The video goes on to examine the feelings and beliefs of Mac owners, a local Mac Users Group (MUG), and the activities at several local Macintosh retailers. In addition to the mythological aspects referenced above, Mac believers engage in proselytizing and converting non-believers. They also espouse a belief that salvation can be achieved by transcending corporate capitalism. Ironically, this is something they pursue through their purchases of hardware, software, and peripheral equipment from a large corporation: Apple computers. Unlike arch-rival Microsoft, members of the Cult of Macintosh believe that Apple is not so much motivated by the desire to make money as it is by the desire to bring about the hierophany of offering the world truly “neat stuff.” This neat stuff is seen as both the boon that restored the corporation to solvency and as the font of true beauty and wisdom in a world otherwise dominated by shallow corporate capitalism and hollow temptations meant to deceive and seduce. All this ties in nicely to a corporate name and logo that are redolent of the Garden of Eden story.

It is also significant that both founders of Apple, Steven Jobs and Stephen Wozniak, are regarded as trickster figures, like the young Krishna of Hinduism. This renegade rebellious image is also inscribed in corporate mythology through such legendary incidents as flying a skull and crossbones pirate flag over the corporate headquarters in Cupertino, California, Jobs parking his motorcycle inside the corporate building, and Wozniak’s once making “blue boxes” in order to make long distance phone calls without being billed. This spirit is continued in the surprise “Easter eggs” that Apple codewriters often embed in Mac software. Such legends, in addition to prominently remembered corporate advertising campaigns like the 1984 “Big Brother” campaign, the “Lemmings” commercial, and the more recent “Think Different” campaign, provide a counter-cultural image which members of the Cult relish. They share a sense of irreverence and derive identity from the parallel image of the company.

A part of the sense of righteousness among Cult members is achieved in opposing the “evil empire” of Microsoft and the “antichrist” of Bill Gates. Numerous humorous demeaning depictions of Microsoft were found in the homes and offices of these true believers (e.g., “Pendulum Processors: Satan Inside;” “Think Difficult;” “Windows—a virus that you pay for”), Asked in projective questions what kind of vehicle Mac and PC/Microsoft would drive, the Mac was commonly seen as a driving a fun VW bug or van, while Microsoft and PC were most often seen driving old Chevrolets designed to fall apart.

As the fervent loyalty of members of the Cult of Mac testifies, they have ennobled and sacralized the “cause” of Apple and vilified and profaned opposing brands in the marketplace. While there is some similarity to the brand communities identified by Muniz and Guinn, the subcultures of consumption researched by Schouten and McAlexander, Boorstin’s consumption communities, and Fine’s idiocultures, the concept of the brand cult developed in this video offers a richer and more complete metaphor for understanding the phenomenon of extreme belief in a brand and for appreciating the potentially all-encompassing role that consumer brands can play in our lives.
Sign Language: Branded Messages and the Tourist Experience
Shay Sayre, California State University, USA

ABSTRACT
This paper presents an investigation of the ways in which brand relationships impact the tourist experience. By combining global branding with tourism, the author and her companion explore the various ways brands speak to tourists to discover how brand relationships, fostered within a tourist space, construct social reality and affect personal identity. We use introspective reflection to explore the nature of branded communication for its impact upon tourist’s experience of metropolitan and residential areas in three European cities. The study contributes to the research streams of consumer-brand relationships and consumptionscapes by suggesting the presence of a global brand language.

Come Fly With Me
Entering a strange city can be likened to a first encounter in a shopping center—brands act as guides through the maze of commercial space. Particularly in the multi-lingual cities of Western Europe, tourists are greeted by a plethora of branded signage or “fast capitalism” (Agger 1989) that beckons them to lodging, restaurants, attractions and retail locations. These signs produce a visual and rhetorical narrative directed at travelers within a tourist space, which becomes a language of brands. Here, individuals must create their own order out of the signage chaos in a particular form of detraditionalization (Heelas et. al. 1996).

Various human senses contribute to how people confront environments, and tourists have a particular fascination with the sense of sight. Rodaway’s (1994) notion of “sensual geography” suggests that people approach encounters with new places through an analysis of body, sense and place, each contributing to their orientation in space. Today’s tourists function in an “image economy” where objects and images are potential “mental souvenirs” or “camera material” (Sharratt 1989) stored for future reflection.

A special type of destination-oriented travel, tourism is often executed with a primary concern for the meanings that are created and communicated by tourists who move through geographical space (Dobb 1998). Tourism is one form of “worldmaking” (Goodman 1978) and self-fashioning. Integral to self-fashioning and personal identity, brands play a key role for tourists entering new spaces and places. Situated within global consumptionscapes (Ger and Belk 1996), the branded signage regularly encountered by travelers who cross-national boundaries speaks to them in various ways.

It is the contention of this study that brands have become socially and personally significant for experiencing place. By converging the literature of brand-consumer relationships with the notion of tourist consumption space, this study seeks to understand how the meanings associated with brands are used to construct experiences. As residential territories reflect the grammar of the inhabitants (Cancini 1990), touristic areas provide a propitious space for understanding the de-territorialization of culture, or meaning-making independent of a particular place (Thompson & Tambahy 1999). By ‘walking the city’ (deCerteau 1988), this researcher-as-tourist conducted a personal reading of branded messages directed to tourists in metropolitan areas as well as brand messages directed to residents of nearby residential neighborhoods.

Three European cities provide the text for this analytical narrative of the touristic experience. Using a modified form of ethnographic participant observation, the author’s experience is inscribed in the context rather than in the reports of others. Here, my companion and I frame our travel experiences with two dominant forces in the global economy—transnational brands and tourism—to investigate ways in which brands shape that experience in modern society. To better understand the tourist experience, we explore the relationship between brands and self as they develop within the ‘sacred text of public space’ (MacCannell 1999). We assume a cultural awareness of the world as a tourist attraction through a “tourist’s gaze” (Urry 1990) to address the question, How do tourists use the textual discourse of brand signage to construct a social reality of place?

Love Me, Love My Brand
Marketing literature purports that brands are intangible assets, and that brands will always tend to build a reflection or an image of the consumer (Kapferer 1999). Brand images are created by experiences consumers have with brands, which develop relationships over time. As such, brands are valid at the level of lived experience (Fournier 1998) and may be central to one’s concept of self. Consumers use brands to simplify choice, to facilitate the completion of daily tasks, and to activate social interactions. The relationship between brand and consumer is frequently distinguished by the nature of the benefits brands furnish, such as identity functions, security, guidance and social support among others (Weiss 1974). Brand relationships exist within the context of other relationships (Parks & Eggert 1991) in what McCracken (1998) calls ‘consumption constellations.’

When travelers visit a foreign city, they encounter multiple communications from spoken languages, architecture, open spaces, fashion and visuals in all forms of signage. According to Urry (1995), tourists possess a certain semiotic skill that enables them to interpret such signs. We may best understand how signs communicate meaning using Pierce’s model of semiosis where the traveler is the interpretant (Mick 1997). Brand names have become part of the language of the streets, and the streets have become “brandscapes” (Sherry 1998). The most tourist-friendly signage produces a narrative of brand names, icons and logos recognizable to those who enter the consumption space. According to Huang (1996), “…the trans-regional brand-names of large companies impose themselves on the public’s experience and virtually assume the status of natural phenomena.”

We suggest that branded signage is received not as a series of independent messages but as a collection of signs that become ‘sets of stimuli’ for visitors to tourist spaces. Brand signage has come to act as a culture of printed messages, which serve to connect people over time and space. Tourists, like shoppers, enter a new space with the brand images they have collected in a variety of contexts. Although no two visitors may see brands in the same light, they will share a tendency to make an emotional response based on a priori codes resulting from their previous experiences. We further suggest that tourists use their pre-established brand relationships to make sense of a foreign landscape.

How brand images are integrated in a socio-physical context and how tourists decode them is the focus of this study. By understanding the nature of tourist reception to signage and how they make meaning of those messages, we can learn how a brand narrative characterizes the place in which it appears for visitors. We use Bakhtin’s (1991) definition of tour as a person who “leaves a grounded region designated as ‘home’ to come into contact with a cultural other, and to return with some sign of gain (or loss) reflecting the experience.”
Within metropolitan areas we can identity certain places as tourist cultures (Shaw & Williams 1992), tourist districts (MacCannell 1999), or tourist spaces. As Featherstone (1995) maintains, a sense of place often gives way to the anonymity of ‘no place spaces,’ or simulated environments in which we are unable to feel an adequate sense of being at home. Tourists entering such ‘no place spaces’ look to signage to ground their identities during geographic transitions. Brands, perceived as familiar signage, may serve such a purpose.

For this study, tourist areas are characterized as places where the urban image is created by promotional factors (Mansfield 1990) in the forms of brand messages. Tourist encounters with brand signage usually invoke memories of past brand relationships through metaphors that appear as brand meanings constituted by the individual tourist’s knowledge. These context and symbolic renderings of places for popular consumption are enlivened here in a more active process whereby we researchers as tourists make our own sense of things and places (Crouch 2000).

Few academic studies in the behavioral sciences focus on tourist experiences. Sociological accounts are descriptive and a-theoretical; they address how the tourist industry affects local self-esteem and social change. Geographical studies use computations and spatial mapping to document images of tourist destinations (Pearce 1984). Marketers study the effects of tourism on material culture but ignore the impact of intercultural experiences on the tourist. To fill that gap, this study investigates the impact of branded signage on tourist experience. The effect of branded street vocabulary is yet unknown. If, as Foucault (1972) claims, streets are ecologies of knowledge to study place discourse, then textual discourse and the meanings they produce are of interest to marketing communicators worldwide for their implications on brand image.

**DOIN’ WHAT COMES NATURALLY**

Using introspective reflection that was pioneered by Morris Holbrook and Stephen Brown, my traveling companion Malcolm and I approached tourist spaces as participant observers, both independently and as a team. We used photography, audio field notes, and written field notes to collect impressions and data from each location.

We chose European cities for this study because they account for approximately 64% of all world international tourism arrivals and 60% of tourism spending according to the *Howarth Book of Tourism*. Because they were physically manageable, we selected three metropolitan tourist destinations: Zurich, a conduit for international travelers; Verona, a regional destination; and Rovinj, a getaway for Croatian locals. These cities were selected for their variety of appeal and difference in primary language. Tourist spaces were selected for their location near a point of entry—the waterfront in Rovinj, a train station in Zurich—or the presence of a major tourist attraction—the Arena in Verona. In each city, we traveled on foot around tourist spaces and residential neighborhoods.

During our 14-day journey through Zurich, Verona and Rovinj, we photographed brand signage on both sides of the street adjacent to each city block we explored. First impressions of each city were recorded on audiotape. At home, we transcribed our observations and then compared notes audibly into a recorder. Using photographs as elicitation tools in a manner similar to autodriving (Heisley & Levy 1991), we recorded descriptions of each brand’s role in characterizing the areas we visited. Malcolm had never visited Europe, whereas I had been a frequent, extended visitor. Our dissimilar perspectives were ideal for eliciting narratives reflecting differing tourist experiences. Data consists of brand stories and first impressions of each city collected as narrative and photographs as summarized here.

**Growing Up With General Motors**

Prior to departure, we undertook a self-disclosed analysis of our brand relationships for three reasons. First, to ground them within the framework of relationship theory. Second, to provide the reader with some historical insight into the investigators’ perspectives. And finally, because sharing stories allowed us to become familiar with each other’s understanding of brands as well as to articulate our own subconscious biases. What follows is a summary of narratives recorded during an exchange of brand stories between Malcolm and me, told in the spirit of the consumption stories gathered by Thompson (1977).

**Malcolm’s Stories**

Having formed many of his brand impressions in the 50s during his youth, Malcolm’s stories were composed of committed partnerships between himself and the brands his mother and brothers taught him to use. For instance, he purchased Tide detergent, used Crest toothpaste, and wore Bass shoes because he was raised with these products. His stories and feelings about brands reflected what Matthews (1986) labeled a “traditional” brand relationship style.

Malcolm also felt strongly about rejecting some of the brands tied to his youth to pursue an identity apart from the one he had while living with his parents. For instance, he refused to buy General Motors products because his father claimed they were “cars of the people.” His desire was to separate himself from the ‘people’ by using brands he perceived to be associated with a better social class. Stories surrounding his professional life as a commercial real estate broker in San Francisco reflected a strong motivation toward brand images that were socially definitive. His stories contained images of Mercedes Benz, Armani and Rolex. This behavior was indicative of a “transitional” brand relationship style.

**Author’s Stories**

My stories are consistently postmodern in nature, reflecting a fragmented consumer living in a world of contradictions of her own making as described by Firat & Venkatesh (1995, p. 260). Rejecting brand loyalty, I speak of having multi-brand and transient loyalties that accompany multiple senses of being and lifestyle. For me, lifestyle constructs were complemented with appropriate brand signifiers. When sailing, I recall being careful to wear Topside shoes to create an identity as veteran boat person. Other stories demonstrated rebellion, such as flaunting LL. Bean outerwear in a Vail ski resort where fashion dictated more stylish and pricey brand attire. I tell of preferring product brands that are based on style, such as a MontBlanc pen or a pair of Mephisto sandals, rather than the presence of an identifiable logo or obvious demarcations like Nike or Chanel. I admit to wearing Levis in spite of their visible orange tag because they are more comfortable than other brands of jeans. Brand stereotypes make their way into my stories in references to Smirnoff drinkers as “plebes,” Ford drivers as “workers,” and Prada wearers as “wannabes.” My brand-relationship style might be labeled “reactional.”

**Don’t Take My Kodachrome Away**

What follows are greatlyabbreviated slices of collective narrative taken from our recorded first impressions and photographs shot during our walks through tourist spaces and residential neighborhoods in each of the three cities. We use the present tense to reflect a stream-of-consciousness style indicative of our audiotaped monologues.
Zurich, Switzerland

Situated on both sides of the Limmat River, Zurich has a tradition of intellectualism and artistic innovation that spawned the Dadaist movement in the early 1900s. Goethe described Switzerland as a combination of the colossal and the well ordered, and we find the county’s largest city running on minute-perfect time. We enter the city by train from the airport, arriving on the west bank of the river at the Hauptbahnhof station.

Outside, directional signage in French and German leads us to a thoroughfare of commerce and dining; Bahnhofstrasse is a famous street built on the site of city walls torn down a century and a half ago. Zurich is characterized as a city of bankers in a country of banks, and we find the description accurate—hidden underground are bank vaults full of gold and silver. The adjacent Paradeplatz houses requisite banks as well as elegant shops and designer boutiques indicative of a high standard of living. Pedestrian-only areas line both sides of the river, adding testimony to Zurich’s grandeur.

Transit and taxi ads, poster kiosks and familiar watch brands dominate the landscape. In spite of the morning drizzle, smartly dressed men and women scurry in and out of banks as a group of Japanese tourists descend upon a Cartier shop. The street feels impersonal and cold, despite the colorful art exhibition posters and red Swiss Army crosses that punctuate gray shop windows. Looking casual and out of place, posters advertise the Camel Reggae Festival, Checkerboard Brass Band, and Paul Simon concerts. Colorful graphics contrast stark gray architecture. A leather rhino stares out at me from a Credit Suisse window that is tucked into an ornate marble building. A fountain sends arcs of water into its center, splashing onto a deserted brick pedestrian square. German signs positioned outside Burberrys urge us to vote Nein or Ja on various ballot measures. Eight and ten story buildings ring treelined squares that respect rather than tempt shoppers. Busses whiz past, Bank Neumunster logos emblazoned on their sides.

The absence of outdoor cafes and street activity suggests that the action must reside within the formidable structures that house retail and service businesses. In spite of the plethora of familiar logos and signage, the city’s nonverbal language of architectural style is unfriendly. Like its building, the city’s inhabitants don’t smile, and everyone is in a hurry. The scene brings to mind deCerteau’s assertion: “Working people bring a city to life—they write urban text without being able to read it” (1988 p.88). These folks may be able to read urban text, but they appear to have no time or interest in doing so. Streets have a freshly scrubbed look, glistening from recent showers and reflecting trench coat-clad pedestrians who cross beneath a glow of green traffic lights.

Our lodging, a fifteen-minute bus ride from downtown, puts us in the middle of a residential area. A Swiss-Deutsche sign for Visa Karte and mixed-language packaged good signs adhere to windows, adorn building walls and cling to smooth surfaces near the transit stop. Restaurants, cigar shops and supermarkets appear between apartment buildings that are six to ten stories high. No single-family housing exists in this block rimmed with wide streets and monotonous transportation vehicles.

Transit stops feature Flohmart and Radio Z posters. A brass plate announcing a Solarium and Bermuda Massage points to an upstairs landing. A shop window displays today’s specials: Ragout, Rindfleisch, Schnitzel. Displays of cosmetic products sit inside tinted windows as if to hide from an absent sun. Bingo signs flap in the wind on walls above shopping cards and abandoned paper packs. A life-size billboard featuring five young people give onlookers a thumbs-up sign; an employment agency’s advert, we’re told. German language prevails, urging us to purchase Der Wein des Monats at der frische Supermarkt around the corner from our hotel.

Colorful signage contrasts a gray day as we exit the neighborhood to catch a train for Milan.

Verona, Italy

Franzoni’s practical guide to the city stresses its tumultuous history that resulted in determining the urbanistic aspect of modern Verona. Developed within a circle of Veneto walls, the city’s military character is still visible in the ruins found throughout its expansion beyond the circle of walls. We enter the city through the best conserved of its Roman gates, Porta del Borsari, built between 41 and 54 A.D during the reign of emperor Claudius.

Parking is difficult in the narrow streets around the Arena, so we park our rental car on a side street and walk toward Europe’s only working structure of its age, hoping to get tickets for an opera performance that evening. Built outside the original city walls, the amphitheatre has four concentric rings, the outermost retaining only four archways. Stairways lead up to the second and third spectator levels. Each of three ambulatories has an underground conduit once traveled by gladiators and matadors. Used for administration of capital punishment in the Middle Ages, the Arena featured trial by combat. By the 17th century, the complex returned to more entertaining functions that have grown into a panorama of performing arts. We were delighted by a performance of Verdi’s Rigoletto in this open-air Arena.

Bounded by the Arena, the Piazza Bra provides a fabulous view of Verona’s neoclassical town hall. We are forced to transcend centuries as we cross the street into modern commerce. Streets radiating out in all directions from the Piazza are filled with retail shops and outdoor cafes. Brands surround us—all familiar, all global. Colorful and bronzed, charge and credit card banners and product displays urge shoppers to sample Italian fashions and footwear. Benetton, Fendi, Armani, Ferragamo, and Gucci brands blaze in the warm afternoon retail horizon.

The city blocks surrounding the Arena are lined with shiny motorcycles parked under white awnings that say Horsey in black and gold. Colorfully clothed café tables run the length of adjacent streets. Black and gold silk dresses adorn headless mannequins beneath Stefanel’s logo. Since my visit a few years prior, the stucco of old buildings has been camouflaged by fashioned marble and patina facades, and cobblestones have been replaced by patterned brickwork. Storefronts are emblazoned with gold and silver designer logos and multiple credit card window stickers. The clacking of high heels punctuates the muffled discourse of purposeful shoppers. No vehicles are allowed here.

Multicolored banners flutter above our heads to announce the festivity of commerce. We enjoy the mellifluous sound of Italian speaking waiters and engaged diners conversing in every language. Continuous commerce energized the afternoon’s activity in what we call “Piazza d’logo.” During our meal served outside in view of the Arena, we meet a local writer who invites us to his home about a mile away. Situated near the river along the Via Scarsellini is his neighborhood of four-story living spaces that sit above retail stores. A small grassy park faces our new friend’s home above a florist shop. We recognize a Kodak brand, but most signage is in Italian. In direct contrast to the bustle less than a mile away, this neighborhood mingles two worlds between one and three every day. Even the newsstand has its magazines locked up tight.

Electronics shops, florists and fruit stands begin to open as we turn a corner past a police station where rows of event posters are plastered unevenly on fences and walls. The same poster appears maybe fifty times in a checkerered pattern, like rows of postage stamps with identical visages. We see no cafés or eateries. Signage is directional or informational, with few products or logos visible in shop windows. Visuals of a pizza, flowers, and telephones are
affixed to glass shop doors. After several hours of walking the neighborhood and its park, we cross the river by the Castel Vecchio and return to our hotel.

**Rovinj, Croatia**

We learn from our Insight Pocket Guide that Rovinj’s historical center owes its survival to the contours of land and sea. Founded on an island, the town was fortified during the Middle Ages. In the 18th century, the narrow channel separating it from the mainland was filled, and urban development extended beyond the walls. As a result, the old town, confined to a small peninsula, is still unspoiled.

We’re told that locals come here to escape the crowds of Dubrovnik and trendy coastal resorts. Vacationers from the former Yugoslavia and UK tourists also on holiday are here this third week in June. We disembark the ferry at Riva Pino and are greeted by colorful umbrellas and news stands with publications from major European cities. At the Viecia Batana café, locals sip their morning coffee and read the papers purchased from small stands where orange Marlboro signs pop out from between full magazine racks. A hilltop cathedral towers above the old city, and a three-story clock tower hovers above the pigeon-dotted shoreline. We enter the heart of the old town through a 17th century baroque archway known as Balbijev Luk, and climb the cobbled streets stretching toward the hillside cathedral. Remains of this St. Euphemia cathedral lie within a 6th century sarcophagus on display inside.

As a warm breeze tugs at rows of tired flags, we enjoy a cool drink on the seafront that is dominated by ice-cream parlors and restaurants. Tinted café windows sport adhesive ice cream cones. Wrought iron decks of the residences above are rusty with age. The square glass “T” in a blue and white Atlas sign on the building’s edge is broken; two plastic deck chairs cozy up to a solitary table anticipating diners. An orange and yellow Kodak logo hovers above a doorway where several patrons are gathered.

Graffiti marks the stucco walls and cement signage in an unfamiliar language, typical of gang markings I’ve seen in LA and Budapest, “Private rooms” says the sign adjacent to ascending stairs that lead to a bolted doorway. Awnings stripes sit atop a pub and glasses of beer advertise German beverages. Shopkeepers speak Slovenian; signage is limited to services—mostly rental cars and banks. Unfamiliar brands in Cyrillic alphabet characters flutter from green awnings above shops and eateries that also advertise “hot dogs” and American burgers. Indicative of a city struggling to retain its traditions yet forced to integrate visitor services for economic solvency, Rovinj has a unique integration of Eastern and Western signage.

We stop for lunch at a delightful eatery to drink wine from traditional wooden mugs and share a plate of home-cured ham and goat cheese. After visiting the aquarium, we seek out a local version of desert. A silver, curved neon sign—BAR CAFÉ—adorns the pink stucco building, luring us through its screened door. Renderings of ice cream cones, sodas and sundaes fill panels paralleling the entrance. We point to what looks like chocolate and strawberry flavors and settle around a small bistro table to indulge. Miami Beach, especially Little Havana, comes to mind; art deco flavoring in an unlikely place.

Buildings are orange, yellow and shades of gray. Paper illustrations on large billboards are in fragments, exposing several layers of messages, now unintelligible to viewers. Two small Lada cars wait for invisible drivers outside a building labeled Hertz. An abandoned ladder leans against a broken Kompas sign that sprawls above a curved archway. A faded “Vogue-esque” poster suggests that a hair salon hides behind pleated lace curtains.

After experiencing the main square, we follow a woman shopper through a stone archway to the urban space adjacent the port. A scarf-covered middle-aged female leads us down narrow streets and past winding alleys that disappear into darkness. Two and three-story neglected structures mingle with ragged posters, announcing dates for unknown performers. Here, wooden shutters are closed tight around a small sign saying “hot dog” and an orange awning promising Fast Food, unfranchised. Our nostrils quiver at the smell of burning fat.

Paper cutouts hang inside a shop window next to a mauve church adjacent to Frizerski’s Salon. Red, green, blue and yellow letters list drogherra in four languages on shiny plate glass. Varnish on doors and windows of a tabacci shop peels cashierly beneath loosely hung electrical wires. On the block’s south face, only graffiti attests to human inhabitants. Few signs are visible and we don’t recognize any brands here; the text of neighborhood discourse is sparse. Feeling somewhat intrusive among the unfamiliar surroundings, we wind our way back to the harbor and dine among other hungry travelers until it’s time to board a water taxi to one of many islands that make up the Rovinj archipelago.

**VISIONS AND VISITORS**

Text analysis was completed in two stages. First we inventoried photographs of street visuals and image sets, which yielded five categories of signage: 1) informational/directional—traffic messages and subway arrows; 2) naming—stores, streets and generic products (ice cream); 3) announcing—events and activities; 4) advertising—commercial and political brands on outdoor boards, transit, etc.; and 5) miscellaneous signs—poster art and graffiti. By assembling the photographs chronologically, we were able to reconstruct our trip and elicit detailed recall of the tourist experience.

The second phase of our analysis focused on transcribed data we recorded in designated areas of tourist spaces and geographically separate neighborhoods. This analysis was made to explore the ways in which brand signage contributed to our experience of place. Our intention was to understand how the presence or absence of brands in each physical location affected us, and to compare our experiences in each location. As travelers, we used our movements through space and time to digest brands that became baseline elements of urban communication (Adler 1987). Although the cities themselves are brands, and although we acknowledge that all five types of messages contribute to a tourist’s overall impression of a space, our interest here is restricted to advertising and branded street messages. This study supports the notion that tourists’ experiences are individualized by the meanings they bring to the brands they encounter. We understand that brands are interpreted independently by each traveler who encounters them; they are simultaneously universal and individual, a paradox rarely explored in consumer or travel research. We use Sherry’s (1998) notion of brandscapes to frame our findings.

**Now You See It, Now You Don’t**

Both Malcolm and I found brand signification to be part of the image sets that gave each place its own meaning. Context dependent, brands sometimes yielded multiple meanings. To Malcolm, Gucci symbolized style in Italy, denoted status in Zurich, and was a sign of decadence in Croatia. For him, this universal brand (Gucci) changed according to his image of the country where it was displayed; when separated from its country of origin, the brand took on new meaning. Malcolm believed that wearing Gucci brand in an economically thriving city was expected; seeing the brand being worn in an economically challenged city was in poor taste. This is just one example of how, for Malcolm, brands simultaneously infused meaning into environments and extracted meaning from them.
For both of us, the very presence of brands clearly signified commerce, the language of exchange. Malcolm found the reality of ‘our money for their brand’ comforting. Having not previously visited any European cities, he felt relaxed in the presence of American brands and billboard signage in English. Familiar brand narratives relieved his travel anxiety by providing a visual welcome. He delighted at purchasing tickets for Herman’s Hermits and finding Coca-Cola at every café in Zurich. As Baudrillard (1988) suggested, disoriented tourists like Malcolm may secure a comfortable framework from familiar brands.

Only a few days later, Malcolm was disturbed by the ostentatious branding of every building in Verona that seemed to camouflage social status and confound his sense of identity. His characterization was akin to Zukin’s (1992) ‘landscapes of power’ where signage visualizes the material and symbolic aspirations of the affluent. At the other end of the spectrum, the absence of familiar brands in tourist areas of Rovinj left Malcolm a state of amazement, as if he had discovered something sacred and authentic. The Marlboro sign seemed out of place in a space where American brands were unsuitable to his perception of what was authentic Croatian.

The author found that brands often dissolved national character in areas where tourists congregate (Clark 1990). Areas adjacent to the train station in Zurich, around Verona’s Arena, and to a minor extent along the port of entry in Rovinj, featured international brands, language and signage. Tourists were urged to smoke Marlboro and Camels, wear Burberry, Stefanel, Bruno Magli, Gucci, Fendi and Benetton, drive Mercedes, enjoy Sony and Hitachi technology, check the time on a Patek Philippe and charge everything on Visa or MasterCard. Brand signage proliferated on transportation, buildings, shops, banners, kiosks, walls and clothing. Graffiti artists scrawled ‘I love you’ across commercial spaces, constructing a true gallery of street narrative. Dense collages of brand messages welcomed, enticed, teased, surrounded, engulfed, and delighted the author. I read the language of international brands and enjoyed sharing this space with familiar logos, symbols and signs.

In tourist spaces, Malcolm’s experiences were conditioned by the presence of familiar brands, while the author’s were defined by the ecstasy of all branded communication (Baudrillard 1987). As we walked from tourist spaces through adjoining neighborhoods where brands were either absent or alien to us, the nature of our experiences changed.

Local Vocals

In tourist spaces, the brand itself may lend familiarity. Conversely, the absence of brands may be alienating for tourists like Malcolm who wander into residential spaces. In an absence of familiar brands, native language words helped him to locate shops by their function—such as tabacchi, bier, lavanderia, drogheria, and vetreria. An iron dentist placa told him where to go with a toothache. And although Swiss, Italian and Croatian brands such as Komun, Schade, Duham, Heer, Waat, Blick and Saia were strangers, they signified a familiar presence of consumption and commerce for Malcolm. Neighborhood signs for “bingo,” a store boasting “fast food,” a pizzeria, and a poster for a flopmarkt were more prevalent than brand signs. Most neighborhood signage contained product prices, event dates, political candidate information or other messages difficult to decipher without language skills. Malcolm felt a bit estranged by unfamiliar brand messages on posters, store windows, outdoor boards and transit stop signs. At times, he was distressed by his lack of language proficiency. And when brands disappeared, such as in the back streets of a Rovinj neighborhood, Malcolm was reluctant to trespass where commerce was absent.

The author’s recollection of areas absent of branded communication was punctuated by territorial graffiti markings. Rather than feeling unwelcome as Malcolm had, I felt somehow liberated from the monotony of global signs. And although local brands had no meaning for me, they contributed an element of uniqueness to neighborhoods and differentiated them from their metropolitan counterparts. The collage of indecipherable branding was, for me, a street gallery of signs and symbols that could be enjoyed in a different way than the familiar signs and symbols that dominate a tourist space. As a stranger in a ‘no place space’ (Featherstone 1995), I experienced a welcome anonymity, appreciating an unbranded discourse in which I could embrace the color of sound as choruses of pale green dialog, and the noise of sight as the screaming reds and yellows of fluttering flags.

**WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT, ALFIE?**

In order to read and understand brandscapes, consumers incorporate our own verbal and visual impressions into a brand’s commercial referent. A brand may be global, but its signification is context-dependent. Brand meanings for us are derived from their perceived social status and perceptions about their country of origin. Theories from marketing and psychology further explain our tourist experiences.

Definitive characterizations of tourist space emerged from our narratives. We explain Malcolm’s brand experience as a first-time tourist in three ways. First as referential signals—Sony’s name above a local shop helped him identify an electronics store in Rovinj. Second as signs of American intrusion—Marlboro’s presence in Rovinj where most other brands are local. Third as verification of commercial activity where he could expect to encounter buying and selling, such as he found surrounding Zurich’s collection of banks and shops.

In residential areas, the absence of commercial language signified an absence of dialog. We were surprised to find that this absence challenged his identity and kept him alienated from the culture. Without familiar brands, he could not characterize the surroundings; the condition resulted in discomfort and anxiety. In such instances where he transgressed brand-free spaces, Malcolm’s gaze was challenged by the *mise-en-scene* of the street (Aitiken & Lukinbeal 1996).

Relationship theory (Fournier 1998) explains that Malcolm’s reaction to tourist spaces is based upon his personal brand encounters with products and preconceived images of cities. Patek Philippe worn in Zurich was understood as sophistication because it was congruent with his image of the city as brand. A Gucci brand was inappropriate when worn in Rovinj because it signified ostentation and was incongruent with his image of the city as brand; he wouldn’t flaunt a flashy watch to a city in economic transition.

In contrast to Malcolm, the author’s tourist experience is best explained in terms of postmodern theory. Embracing Bruno’s (1993) belief that women have acquired the traditionally male “peripatetic” gaze, I experienced signage as a *flaneur*. In the spirit of Benjamin (1999) who wandered through the arcades of Paris in the nineteenth century, I took in the street as *mise-en-scene* of the *s‘‘s Theories from marketing and psychology further explain our tourist experiences.
advertising was its narrative. Like Times Square, the ultimate work of public art, commercial signage in tourist space is a work crafted by multiple artists, with none of them knowing what the others were doing.

Advertising is the omnipresent visibility of corporations, trademarks, and social dialogue that invades everything with color and spectacle (Baudrillard 1987). I see the tourist space as a place where all street brands intertwine; forming a single collective that signifies human preoccupation with commerce. This bricolage, for me, is proof of hyperreal communication where all messages are equal. Brands are testimony to the condition of mingled past and present that pervades our postmodern existence.

Albeit our experiences were different, our past relationships with brands simultaneously influenced the way we interpreted the meanings of these brands within a new environment, further validating the theories of brand relationships. Identity theory, in the sense that we are what we embrace, also plays a significant role in explaining our individual readings of brand signage.

And the Beat Goes On

This study has used self-narrative to explore the relationship between brands and users and to understand how that relationship affects one’s experience in a tourist space. We presented the notion that a global brand narrative exists as a commercial language within tourist spaces. We also suggested that a local brand narrative exists as a private conversation among the residents of neighborhoods that are geographically separate from tourist spaces. We propose that once a destination is reached, tourists experience branded communication in four different ways: as extensions of their native language that produce a familiar, recognizable and comforting landscape; as characterizations of place projected by the presence of brands with negative connotations that produce anxiety and discomfort; as an absence of familiar brands that acts as a territorial boundary of estrangement; or as commodified sources of entertainment that produce enjoyment.

As travelers mesmerized by branded signs, we used that textual discourse to construct our social reality of place. In tourist spaces, the authentic sight is replaced by the simulacrum through mediated messages that secure a comfortable framework for disoriented tourists (Baudrillard 1988). The components of place image identified by Jenkle (1990) are recognizable in the author-mediated messages that secure a comfortable framework for disoriented travelers to focus on other aspects of touring. The author’s experience suggests that branded communication may also assume a role of background noise that frees a traveler from the commerce that brands promote.

This subjective narrative of two tourist’s experience is offered as just one method of understanding brand discourse as it relates to the tourist experience. Certainly other investigations are needed to confirm or challenge the notions presented here. To continue the dialog about the role of brands for a tourist’s understanding of a foreign land, we welcome new studies of tourist-brand relationships and tourist narratives that use brand language to construct a social reality of place. The notion that brand narrative may be the true language of global travel points toward a new direction for consumer and communication research.

REFERENCES


Building a Local Brand in a Foreign Product Category in India: The Role of Cultural Interpretations
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ABSTRACT
Ger (1999) suggests that local companies can compete against foreign companies successfully by capitalizing on their localness, and leveraging it to create unique value. However, most of the examples Ger gives (cheeses in France, Turkish baths in Turkey) are in product categories local to the market in which they originate. She does not discuss the case wherein a local company is trying to compete in a foreign product category. Many times it is a detriment to the local company to have their brand perceived as local in these product categories, or at the minimum it is a mixed blessing. This is because in many emerging markets there is a history of poor product quality from local brands in many product categories, in addition to the fact that foreign brands seem to have a glamour that local brands cannot compete with in many product categories (Alden, Steenkamp and Batra 1999).

To address this gap in the literature—how a local company competing in a foreign product category can shape its brand image—we embark upon an interpretive study of how consumers interpret local brands in a foreign category and also how local marketers are going about developing these brands.

Depth interviews from both consumer and manager key informants are reported as well as observational and photographic data. One month was spent immersed in the fieldsites—In Andhra Pradesh, a state in southern India—in late 2001. Depth interviews took place with 13 key consumer informants in their homes—7 in Hyderabad (the capital city) and 6 in the Bhimavaram region (a rural area). Interviews were also conducted with the Pizza Point management. The managers spoken to were general managers, who had responsibility for marketing activities.

The brand as freedom from culinary tradition. Three themes that emerge from the data surrounding Pizza Point brand meaning interpretation and development are discussed. First, the Pizza Point brand representing freedom from culinary tradition for many consumers, which is positive for most of the consumers interviewed, and a main driver of patronage. This is true for both the actual food and the nature of the space in the restaurant.

The Pizza Point brand represents freedom from culinary tradition in the following ways: through the sanctioning of social interaction that occur within the restaurant that can be contrasted against traditional eating norms—groups of friends eating together in addition to families, groups of opposite sexes eating together, and the consumer being able to sit for a long period of time not eating much but rather chatting. The food itself also contributes to this, in that the respondents feel as if they are “breaking the rules” and experiencing something non-Indian by eating there.

Freedom from tradition is an important cultural category used by consumers when they are making sense of the Pizza Point brand. This is enhanced to a certain degree by the activities of management, as the restaurant space is designed to be conducive to ‘hanging out’ and English is used in the signage, for example. The participant’s responses suggest, however, that this important cultural category of freedom from culinary tradition is linked to the product category of pizza in general, and that they have come to this interpretation of pizza independently of marketing efforts on the part of Pizza Point.

The brand as affordable and palatable. At the same time as it is driving patronage, the company is trying to push against the foreign and exotic image so as to appear affordable and palatable to its consumers. Many respondents who did not patronize Pizza Point had very developed unenthusiastic interpretations of the brand, primarily because of the idea that the food itself was too foreign and the price was out of their price range, although this was not the case on both counts. Additionally, management reported lower sales turnovers than they had anticipated when they first opened.

Again in this theme, both the nature of the social space and the actual food are contributing to consumer’s interpretation of the brand as not being affordable or palatable in terms of the food being able to be a meal and fill a person up. The restaurant is seen as a place where people go for celebrations, or to be seen by others as “posh,” but not where one would go for a casual meal.

Even as notions of culinary tourism are driving demand, Pizza Point management would like to play down some of these notions of pizza as a status giving product as the business cannot be sustained with a special occasion only positioning. Next we look at how management has tried to shape the brand in response to local realities in an attempt to tread the line between the above two tensions.

Product transformation does not equal brand transformation. Paradoxes such as the transformation of the actual product from something non-local to something local (the pizza would be unrecognizable as pizza outside India), consumers still see it as foreign in terms of how the food tastes (it is still thought of as tasting Western), its price (potentially unaffordable), and the purpose of the food (not a meal). Again, these interpretations are related to the product category of pizza and the nature of the social space surrounding the actual consumption of pizza, and there are scant ways for the Pizza Point management to localize their actual product any more than they already have and still call it pizza in an attempt to alter these perceptions.

We set out to discover how consumers interpret a local brand in a foreign product category and what the important cultural categories associated with brand interpretation of this local brand in a foreign product category are. It emerged that consumers make sense of the brand primarily with reference to the traits associated with the product category, even in light of localization efforts and the fact that the actual product is not much more expensive than local foods. We also sought to shed light on how local marketers establish their brand image in a foreign product category, and how this process interacts with the important cultural categories of the product category, as defined by consumers. In the case of Pizza Point, we saw that management would like the brand to be much more localized and not thought of in such a glamorous manner, but so far this pursuit had not been fruitful as consumers seem to have the idea of pizza as status giving deeply embedded in their brand interpretations.

All of this suggests a new model of how local marketers operating in foreign product categories can compete in terms of developing their branding and positioning strategies is needed in...
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the global marketing literature. This research has been a first step toward identifying the limitations in the existing literature and models and suggesting roads forward for exploring these complex issues further. The approach taken in this work was one of discovery, its intent to portray novel and rich ideas concerning an underconceptualized area of the global marketing literature. The results have important implications for many of the leading global branding theories espoused in the literature today. This work has identified some important factors in the constraints local marketers face related to brand perception and development, and hopefully researchers will investigate these further in future research to eventually develop a richer model of global and local brand theory.

References
Brand Obsessives in Online Communities and their Effects on Other Consumers: A Study of the Disney Experience
Angela Hausman, University of Texas–Pan American, USA

ABSTRACT
Consumption communities facilitate the development of brand community; thereby generating brand loyalty and affecting members of the triad (consumer-consumer-corporation) identified by McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig (2002). Virtual communities overcome limitations imposed by time and space that are inherent in other types of consumption communities. Such limitations act to inhibit long-term relationship formation and result in sporadic, potentially one-time, encounters. Virtual communities may also draw bands of consumers who are obsessed with the brand, consumers who are not only fiercely loyal to the brand, but incorporate the brand in their definition of self. Examination of Disney World postings demonstrates the effect of obsessives on other consumers participating in the virtual community.
Special Session Summary

Learning to Consume: Research Amongst Child Consumers

Sarah Todd, University of Otago, New Zealand
Margaret K. Hogg, UMIST, UK

SESSION OVERVIEW

This session examined the socialisation of child consumers by presenting the results from a series of recent studies about different aspects of children’s understanding of consumption and consumption behaviour. The papers offered a developmental perspective on children’s consumption behaviour and their socialisation as consumers. The first paper (Banister and Booth) examined children aged between 5 and 10; and how they acquire tastes and distastes. The second paper (Todd) examined the impact of money as a factor in children’s consumer socialization by exploring attitudes to money among children aged 5/6 and 9/11. The third paper (Piacentini and Tinson) examined the impact of social influences on pre-adolescent children (7-11) and their attitudes to food choice. The fourth paper (Goetze) was a cross cultural comparison of the development of brand knowledge and brand attitudes of very young pre-school children (aged 3-5). Each paper had a different methodological focus (in terms of data collection and data analysis). A range of methods used for eliciting information from children (and parents, see Goetze’s study) are discussed including self-directed photography, templates, collages, projective techniques, mapping exercises, picture association, interviews and focus groups.

Interest in the area of children’s consumption behaviour and their response to marketing mix variables was high in the 1970s, mainly as a reaction to calls for tightened regulations regarding television advertising. New concerns have since been raised regarding the possible exploitation of this relatively vulnerable sector of the market. In some areas of marketing, special codes have been developed to control the way in which marketers interact with children. However, there is ongoing debate regarding the extent to which children do in fact understand marketing messages and the market place itself. There is increasingly recognition that children need to be studied from a child’s perspective, using appropriate methods. By employing child-oriented methods, and looking at methods used by researchers from other disciplines (e.g. sociology; health sciences; education), there is the potential to enhance our understanding of how children develop as consumers.

ABSTRACTS

“Consumer Socialisation and the Formation of Children’s Likes and Dislikes”

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Introduction

This study explores children’s likes and dislikes and in particular attempts to identify influences on the development of tastes. The overall aim of the research is to help bridge the current gap in research in this area and to link this with children’s relational development (Klein 1987). A limited number of authors have begun to explore the negative aspects of consumption (e.g. Banister and Hogg 2001; Hogg and Banister 2001; Wilk 1995; 1997), the associated emotion of disgust (Rozin and Fallon 1987) and negative views of the self (Banister and Hogg 2001; Ogilvie 1987; Oyserman and Markus 1990), yet conceptualisation in this area has been fairly limited.

The paper reports on an initial exploration into how meanings are embodied and projected by means of reflexive engagement with the varying social, political, cultural and economic spheres of children (Giddens, 1991; Mason, 2000; Beck, 1982). The socialisation process is relational in context and thus the child creates an individual ‘patchwork quilt of identity’ (Griffiths 1995). The quilt associates the child with others yet also enables the avoidance of certain social groups (Englis and Solomon 1995) or behaviour. It could be argued that parents buy their children items because of an adult construction of reality within which they scrutinise and decide the needs and wants for their offspring (at least at an early age). Therefore children’s products and brands could be said to signify an adult culture organised in such a way that it is interpreted as suitable for childhood culture. However, also important is the interpretation of the adult world that children construct, making their own decisions and presumptions about what adults do (Steinberg and Kincheloe 1997).

The study

The paper reports on the findings of a qualitative study, which focused on pupils (aged between 5 and 10 years old) in an infants and junior school in Yorkshire, England. A three-stage qualitative study was conducted, integrating semi-ethnographic methods, interviews and projective techniques. The first stage focused on informal interaction with children during break and lunch times in the school playground, and was important in forging a bond with the children and observing their behaviour in a ‘natural setting’. Various projective techniques were used in the second stage of the study: children were given templates with the outlines of trees on them, entitled ‘tree of bad taste’ and ‘tree of tastes’ and ‘tree of disgust’ as well as t-shirts focusing on a similar idea. Children were asked to customise /design their templates, positioning objects, words and drawings on them. Twelve children were also selected to participate in a projective exercise involving self-directed photography. Each of these children was given a single-use camera and asked to take twelve photographs of what they considered distasteful, disgusting or disliked and twelve pictures of good taste, enjoyable or pleasurable objects, places or scenarios. The final stage of the research involved loosely structured interviews with the children who had participated in the projective exercises (the templates and the photographs). The discussion focused on the collages and photographs and these were used as visual prompts to further explore the wider area of likes and dislikes.

Toys and clothing functioned as social indicators with several important predictors of likes and dislikes identified: colour, gender, age and the context of consumption. The children were adamant about the types of products that were ‘suitable’ for them, and demonstrated within-group agreement about the meanings that were associated with items. The children ascribed certain meanings to the colours used by marketers to indicate suitability on the basis of age and gender, suggesting that children were familiar and comfortable with the methods used by marketers. Children also had very strong views about the suitability of products on the basis of age, rejecting those that were considered either too old or too young. The most striking observation was the way in which products’ suitability was clearly defined in gender terms. The association
with objects of an adult nature depicted a sense of not belonging to the correct age group; therefore such items were consciously negated. However, these ‘rules’ were ‘allowed’ to be broken if the context of consumption was private rather than public.

Findings and Discussion
The findings suggest that children become increasingly aware of self-identity and the manner in which it informs their participation within their relational world at a young age. Gender and age play particular roles in segregating and combining shared interests. However, it appears it is the nature of media, representations and other marketing activities and the carriage of values and norms, which depict what is acceptable to whom, where and at what point in life. Children become pre-destined to acceptance and rejection and are assumed to possess the same qualities and characteristics of the product or brand that they own and perhaps more importantly, not to possess the associated characteristics of those products that they do not own. The participants displayed a conscious effort not to own or be associated with contextually incorrect items (Banister and Hogg 2001; Wilk 1995 Englis. and Solomon 1995).

Acknowledgement:
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“Children and Money”
Sarah Todd, University of Otago, New Zealand

“To the small child observing a parent reaching into a pocket or purse time after time and continually extracting a handful of money which will purchase some desired object, the supply of money is likely to appear inexhaustible. The money seems to magically replenish itself. It is always there when the parent wishes to buy something.” (Goldberg and Lewis, 2000 p.160)

Introduction
While considerable research effort by marketing academics has been devoted to understanding children and their responses to advertising in terms of consumer socialization, relatively little attention has been paid to child consumers and their understanding of money, where it comes from and its value. This paper reports the initial findings from an exploratory study of primary school aged children’s understanding of different elements of the marketplace, with the focus of this paper being on money.

TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Age range(yrs)</th>
<th># Stages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strauss</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>4.8-11.6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danzinger</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutton</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Grades 1-6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jahoda</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burris</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>4-5, 7-8, 10-12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leiser</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>7-17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Gunter and Furnham 1998:69

Strauss (1952) was one of the first to investigate children’s understanding of money-related concepts, and his interviews with children between 4 yrs and 11 yrs confirmed Piagetian ideas of children’s development going through stages rather being a continuum. He classified the children’s answers into nine stages that signify not only intellectual maturity but also different levels of experience, perception and values. In a study undertaken at a similar time, of children aged five to eight years, Danziger (1958) suggested four stages of development in children’s understanding of economic concepts. He proposed that movement through the stages was related to first-hand experience. Subsequent work in the area, using methodological techniques such as role plays (Jahoda 1979) and interviews (e.g. Sutton 1962), has largely supported the idea of stage development in children’s understanding of financial and economic concepts. However, the number of stages has not been widely agreed upon, but such differences may well be due to the different age ranges of subjects, the number of subjects studied and the individual researcher’s level of precision in deciding when one stage ended and another started. Table 1 summarises key studies in this area and the number of stages indicated by each.

The study
Seven primary schools were contacted and asked to participate in exploratory research designed to investigate New Zealand children’s consumption beliefs, opinions and behaviours. Schools were initially selected in an attempt to study children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, and gain an understanding of any differences that may emerge related to whether the children lived in an urban or rural environment. All principals contacted agreed to participate, and information packs (including consent forms) were then distributed through the schools to parents of five to six year olds and nine to eleven year olds. Initial discussions were held with selected classes, and then focus groups were run with smaller groups of children (approximately six to eight children in each). In addition to the preliminary class discussions then, a total of fourteen focus groups were undertaken, with a ‘junior’ and ‘senior’ class at each primary school participating. The two age groups were kept separate, to ensure that younger children felt able to contribute and were not intimidated by having older children in their group. Researching children has obvious ethical implications, which in this case were covered by both the schools’ and the individual parents being given comprehensive information packs and being required to sign consent forms. The use of focus groups has also been queried due to concerns about children responding to peer pressure and adapting their answers accordingly but focus groups...
do have an advantage in that children are with friends and discussions can be conducted in familiar surroundings (in this case, classrooms). To ensure that children all felt able to participate, and that they understood what was being asked of them, physical props were used wherever possible, and pictures used both as a data collection technique and to help children respond to specific questions.

Findings and Discussion

With regards to pocket money, almost all children studied indicated that they received pocket money on a regular basis, and it was also common for children to receive money as a present for birthdays or Christmas. For the majority of children, parents were the source of most money, or close relatives (especially when the money was a present). Rather than just being handed pocket money, most children are required to work for it, although the amount received was not necessarily tied to specific jobs or the amount of work done. Work done mainly involved simple household chores, although pocket money was also linked to behaviour in that they had to be "good" to get pocket money, or "do everything that Mum says".

While there is not enough space here to report the full range of issues discussed, children’s knowledge of the relative value of products and what their money can buy them appears limited, as does their understanding of where money comes from. While some of the older children knew that their parents were paid for working, many of those studied still subscribed to the view noted by Goldberg and Lewis (2000), quoted at the beginning of this article. That is, there is a general expectation among children, regardless of their age, that their parents will always be able to access more money at the bank or, increasingly, from "the money machine". With regards to marketing variables, the assumption that shop owners were all well off because they “own everything in the shop” and that “people who work at the shop decide how much things cost” appears widespread. Further analysis will look particularly at the extent to which children’s understanding of money and related concepts develops with age, in line with the developmental theories described in the review of relevant literature. Additionally, data from the focus groups (which took children through a quasi decision-making process and ultimate purchase scenario) will be analysed to gain a more in-depth understanding of how child consumers conceptualise and deal with money-related issues in the marketplace.

"Understanding Social Influences on Children’s Food Choices"

Maria Piacentini, University of Lancaster, UK
Julie Tinson, University of the West of England (Bristol), UK

Background to study

Childhood is a critical period in the development of food preferences and eating patterns that often persist into later life. Given the major emphasis in European and US health policy in recent years to improve health through dietary change (e.g. Department of Health, 1994; Healthy People, 2010), understanding how eating habits are formed is particularly important. Studies looking at children’s food choice behaviour have mainly drawn on food science (e.g. Baxter et al., 1997), nutritional science (e.g. Birch et al., 1982) and health psychology (e.g. Horne et al., 1998). While these perspectives provide important information about food choice behaviour, they do not focus on the social context of consumption, thus offering limited insights into this aspect of consumption behaviour. Within the consumer behaviour literature, there has been some research into the consumption activities of children in recent years (e.g. Gregan-Paxton & Roedder-John, 1995; Moschis & Smith, 1985; Hite & Hite, 1995; Gunter & Furnham, 1998), but few studies that have looked at the social significance of consumption activities for young children in any product category (Roedder-John, 1999; see Hogg, Bruce & Hill, 1999 for recent work in this area).

Theoretical framework

Symbolic interactionism stresses that relationships with other people play a large part in forming the self, and offers a theoretical basis for conceptualising this socially oriented self and its relationship with product conspicuousness (Charon, 2001). The concept of symbolic interactionism is based on the premise that individuals interact with society and important reference groups to determine how behaviour should be structured. Central to this theory are a number of assumptions about the role of symbols in social communications. Firstly, consumption symbols are an important means by which consumer communicate with others in the world (Bhat & Reddy, 1998). Shared knowledge and attitudes are critical to effective communication of symbols. Secondly, symbolic consumption of goods is an important means by which consumers define themselves; they use goods as materials with which to create, foster and develop their identity (Elliott & Wattanasuwon, 1998). The third assumption is that the explanation of self-concept offered within symbolic interactionism also acknowledges the multiplicity of self-concept (Hogg & Savolainen, 1998). The facet of self to emerge within a given situation is dependent upon an evaluation of how social others might respond to a particular course of behaviour (or, more specifically, a choice of self) (Schenk & Holman, 1980). Finally, socially consumed products are most notably used in instances of symbolic consumption since consumers are more likely to use the visibility of consumption to communicate their identity message (Hyatt, 1992).

Aims and objectives

The purpose of this study is to explore the assumptions of symbolic interactionism in the area of children’s consumer behaviour, specifically focusing on food choice behaviour. This will involve an exploration of situational self-concept and the social nature of food meanings. Specifically, the research seeks to understand the variability of children’s self-concepts across different social contexts and to investigate the role of food-consumption in the expression of self-identity. The research also encompasses an investigation of the role of reference groups in guiding children’s food choice behaviour and will explore evidence of consumption stereotyping in this area of consumer behaviour.

Methodology

There were a number of methodological issues that we aimed to address through this research, including the development of an appropriate methodology for exploring situational self-concept with a sample of young children. Methodological guidance came from studies with children more generally (e.g. Hogg, Bruce & Hill, 1999; Ells, 2001; Owen, Schickler & Davies, 1997). Our interview procedure was developed and refined through extensive piloting.

We used a variety of projective techniques including mapping exercises with pictures, ‘lunchbox’ word allocation tasks, and celebrity picture associations.

Our sample consists of pre-adolescent children in the ‘analytical’ stage of children’s socialisation (in the 7-11 age group). The sample was drawn from two schools in selected areas within each of two major UK cities (one in the West of Scotland, and one in the
West of England), where we sought to interview children from similar social class profiles. Our target sample is 80, with 8 children interviewed in each age category in each area. Consent of the relevant Education Boards, the schools and the parents has been established, and a random selection has been drawn from the classes. We are currently in the process of conducting the interviews, with 70 completed so far. Some analysis has been completed already; the approach for data analysis was that of a systematic coding via content analysis (Morgan, 1988). A coding scheme was created based on our understanding of the literature review and relevant theoretical frameworks. As new concepts emerged they were appropriately coded and included. For reliability of the data, both researchers independently coded the transcripts and then we compared coding schemes and patterns emergent.

Findings

Our findings so far suggest that food consumption is a highly social issue for children in this age group, and that variations in choice across social contexts were closely tied to actual vs. aspirational choices for different contexts. Parents and friends were found to affect the children’s food choices, but in different ways. Parents adopted a more informative role, often encouraging children to pursue healthier choices. Friends were also important witnesses to the children’s food choices but were more likely to positively evaluate unhealthy choices (e.g. sweets, fatty foods, etc.). While friends have the power to influence acceptance or rejection of a group through individual food choices, it was interesting to see that this was more about acceptance into a group rather than rejection by the group.

Branding appears to be an important aspect of the children’s consumption decisions, mainly influencing the older children. Younger children felt consumption of own-label foods was socially acceptable. There was also a social class aspect to this; for those children in the lower social class groups there was a strong desire / aspiration to choose heavily branded food products. The findings will be presented at greater length at the conference.

“Perspectives on Intercultural Differences of Pre-school Children’s Brand Knowledge and Brand Attitudes”
Elisabeth Götze, University of Vienna, Austria

Introduction and background

Nowadays, children are one of the most important target groups: They have money of their own and are ready to spend it (“primary market”); they are also the future customers (“future market”); and they influence buying decisions of many grown ups (see McNeal 1992). One issue in this context is children’s brand knowledge. It is an essential aspect of their socialization as consumers (see Ward, Wackman et al. 1977).

Multinational companies target children not only in their home country but also in other countries in a similar way. Nevertheless, so far there exists no research on this issue. Therefore, it is unclear whether children in different countries acquire their knowledge about brands in the same way.

This paper focuses on pre-school children as the acquisition of brand knowledge starts at a very early stage (see Pecora 1998). It is the aim of this study to enhance knowledge about children’s acquisition of brand knowledge. In particular, cultural differences in this regard should be detected, and if they exist explanations for them should be found.

Methodology

Based on the literature, a structural equation model was developed. It is proposed that factors such as age of the child; television viewing behaviour; existence of older siblings; and attendance at kindergarten (peer influence) influence children’s brand knowledge.

Moreover, Hofstede’s “dimensions” (see Hofstede 1980) were used to formulate hypotheses about differences which we expected to find. Hofstede identified aspects such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism and masculinity versus femininity when researching companies in 67 countries.

To test the hypotheses, as well as the model, 360 children aged 3 to 5 years and one parent per child were personally interviewed in three countries. In all 720 interviews were undertaken. The countries chosen were Austria, Serbia and Australia, because they all differed significantly with regards to Hofstede’s dimensions.

Results and Discussion

The model was tested using Amos 4.0. The model fit was very good with the Austrian and with the Australian sub-sample, whereas it did not explain the situation in Serbia perfectly (as the fairly poor fit indices indicate). One explanation is that some information is missing, which is essential for understanding children’s acquisition of brand knowledge. This seems plausible, since the factors of influence incorporated in the model were identified from literature. Most of this literature stems from studies undertaken in the US and Western Europe, and therefore it does not necessarily take into account factors which might be relevant in other cultures.

Concerning the concrete outcomes, in all countries children’s brand knowledge significantly correlated with their age and with household income. Whereas the correlation with age is positive in all three data sets, the relation with household income is not so clear: It is positive in Australia and Serbia, but it is negative in Austria, indicating that Austrian children living in relatively higher income households have less brand knowledge than others. The parents’ comments in this regard indicated that upper class families would rather try to protect their children from market influences such as advertising.

Furthermore, the hypotheses concerning the cultural differences were tested. As expected, there is a negative correlation between the level of uncertainty avoidance in a country and children’s brand knowledge. The countries’ level of power distance correlates with the average amount parents talk with their children about aspects of shopping. This means that in countries with less power distance parents talk more about shopping with their children. And the more collectivistic a country is, the more children like to have the same brands as their friends. Finally, in a country with a relatively high index concerning masculinity children ask for brands more than in rather feministic cultures.

On the other hand, some hypotheses had to be rejected: e.g., children’s brand knowledge was not correlated either with the level of power distance in a country or with the level of masculinity. The first was expected because brands could help people to enhance their status which ought to be important in countries with higher power distance (see Houston and Eckhardt 2000). And in countries with a low level of power distance the children do not have more influence upon their parents’ brand decisions, which also contradicts our expectations.

1We used the DEPCAT system to allocate social class to the postcode and ward areas in both cities (as developed by McLoone, 1994). The Carstairs-Morris DEPCAT score (McLoone, 1994) is a scheme that categorises areas based on a range of measures of material deprivation including male unemployment, overcrowding, low social class, car ownership and home ownership.
The results indicate which factors might be of interest in understanding children’s consumer socialisation, in addition to the ones discussed in literature so far. For the first time, possible differences between cultures were taken into account in the context of brand knowledge.

On the other hand it has to be mentioned that the sample was fairly limited in scope. The research must be extended to some more countries to verify the results presented. Moreover, also other concepts of culture could be taken into account, eg. Hall’s concept of high and low context (see Hall 1989).

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How Well Do You Know Me? Consumer Calibration of Others’ Knowledge
Andrew D. Gershoff, Columbia University, USA
Gita V. Johar, Columbia University, USA

ABSTRACT
Pairs of friends were assigned to either a target or perceiver condition. Each target provided ratings on six consumer related preference and attitude scales, willingness to rely on the perceiver as an agent, and confidence estimates for the perceiver’s ability to predict the target’s responses. Each perceiver provided estimates of the target’s responses. Results indicate that a target’s willingness to rely on a friend is correlated with beliefs that the friend knows them. However, confidence in a friend’s knowledge about them is not predicted by objective accuracy of the friend’s knowledge, indicating poor calibration. Instead, confidence is predicted by the involvement in the relationship.
How the Opinions of Others Affect Our Memory for Product Experiences
Elizabeth Cowley, University of New South Wales, Australia

ABSTRACT
Consumers use previous evaluations of products and services as an input in choice, as advice to other consumers when they are searching for information to make their own choices, and as a factor when developing expectations for future experiences. Given that memory is so critical to current and future behaviour, it is essential to understand when it accurately reflects the past. Recent evidence suggests that memory for an experience can change after exposure to misleading advertising (Braun 1999) or critical reviews (Cowley & Caldwell 2001). In addition to advertising and reviews, consumers are also exposed to word-of-mouth (WOM). This research investigates when and how post-experience WOM comments can alter consumers’ memory of their evaluation of an experience, and whether an alteration in memory will affect purchase intention.

MEMORY FOR EXPERIENCES
When recalling a past experience, all of the knowledge and information that is activated in memory, including information encountered both before and after the event, can be used. Instead of accessing an independently stored ‘file’ of an event, retrieval is a process of reconstructing the past by combining information from many sources (for reviews see Koriat, Goldsmith, & Pansky, 2000; Schacter 1995; 1996) including post-experience information. In the Constructive Memory Framework (CMF; Schacter, Norman, & Koutstaal 1998) features, representing different aspects of the event, are distributed throughout memory. Two different types of information are necessary to ensure the accurate retrieval; feature binding and pattern separation. Feature binding ensures that all of the features can be brought together as a coherent trace. Source confusions, misremembering where or from whom information was heard, occur because of feature misbinding: the consumer remembers the details of the past-experience information, but misattributes the source. Pattern separation facilitates the selection of details of one situation from any other similar, yet different situation. Pattern separation failure occurs when similar, but different information is retrieved. Hearing words to describe an event can make it difficult to remember an experience (Melcher & Schooler 1996) by interfering with the separation of another consumer’s words from ‘own’ thoughts or evaluations. In summary, the feature binding information provides a context for the sought-after information, pattern separation provides the focus to ensure retrieval of details matching the episode.

Word-of-mouth as Post-experience Information
WOM is defined here as any comment about a product or service made by a non-marketing source. Two pieces of information that are critical for a consumer to effectively manage the use of a WOM comment are the source and the details of the comment itself (Gilly, Graham, Wolfinbarger, & Yale, 1998). Between hearing a WOM comment and retrieving ‘own’ evaluation for use in future decisions, the accessibility of these pieces of information may vary. Four possible situations for memory of the WOM comment are considered in the research presented here: explicit memory for the source or context of the comment (yes, no) and explicit memory for the details of the comment (yes, no).

PURCHASE INTENTION
When will altered memories affect future behaviour? In a memory-based choice setting, an important determinant of the attitude-purchase intention correlation is the how confident the consumer is in their memory for their evaluation. It has been shown that memories retrieved with more confidence are more likely to be used in choice (Cowley 2003). Therefore, it is expected that the evaluation-purchase intent correlation will be higher for those consumers indicating more confidence in a retrieved memory.

EMPIRICAL WORK
One hundred twenty six subjects were randomly assigned to one of two WOM conditions (immediate or delay), or to a control condition. Participants evaluated a film by marking an X on a 100mm scale anchored with ‘liked the film very much’ to ‘disliked the film very much’ after viewing a 10-minute excerpt. Subjects heard a confederate make a positive comment about the film immediately after (immediate condition) or 15 minutes later (delay condition). Subjects in the control condition heard a comment unrelated to the film. Later, subjects were asked to remember how much they said they liked the film earlier, and provided a confidence estimate. Recall, recognition of the comment and purchase intention measures were collected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
WOM effect: The results reveal that WOM can affect memory for a consumption experience. Memory for the evaluation shifted positively in the treatment conditions ($M_{immed}$=+11.18, $M_{delay}$=+7.76), but not in the control condition ($M_{control}$=-1.66mm). There was no difference in the degree of memory distortion for the participants in the immediate and delay conditions ($t=1.20, p=.24$).

Memory for the WOM comment: Almost half of the participants in the WOM conditions did not explicitly recall that a comment about the movie had been made, yet their memory was still distorted after exposure to the comment. Even when cued with the statement, 19% of the participants did not remember the comment, yet memory distortion still occurred. There is preliminary evidence that feature binding errors and pattern separation failure explain much of the memory distortion found in this study, however memory distortion still occurred in the no recall, no recognition situation. This may be a result of fluency effects, but further research is necessary to test this explanation.

Forty four percent of the participants recalled hearing a comment and correctly recognised exactly what was said, and as Loftus, Feldman, and Dashiel (1995) found, the post-experience information still affected memory. Future research could include a measure asking the subjects if they believe the comment was consistent with their own thoughts.

Purchase Intention: Consumers that were more confident in their memory, yet no more accurate, reported a higher evaluation-behavioural intention correlation. The importance of retrieval confidence has received relatively little attention. These results provide further evidence that retrieval confidence should be added to the list of variables affecting the attitude-behavioural intent relationship. Finally, memory for an evaluation mediates the relationship of initial evaluation and purchase intent. Memory for the evaluation is a more accurate gage of a consumer’s intention to return (purchase intention) which has implications for the timing of satisfaction judgements. The impact of WOM pervades the decision process, not only is it important during information search or as part of an updating mechanism, but also as an influence on consumer memory.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Linking Gift Exchange Emotional Experiences and Interpersonal Relationships
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ABSTRACT
Although emotions experienced by relationship partners pervade their exchange processes, the impact of emotions in contexts of consumption exchanges has not received much research attention. This study addresses this gap by focusing on five relationship outcomes associated with the experience of mixed emotions in a consumer-to-consumer setting. For this investigation, the context of gift receipt was used because it is highly relational and emotion-laden. The results showed that it is not the overall amount of one specific emotion or the combined amount of all experienced emotions that affect perceptions of relationship outcome. Instead, it is the relative combination of positive and negative emotions (e.g., more positive, balanced or more negative) that can be linked to the relationship outcomes (e.g., strengthening, negligible effect, weakening). Further, our results also suggest that even when the main emotional experience is negative (e.g., anger about getting the wrong gift), coping processes might be used by the recipient in order to avoid negative relationship consequences. Our findings are theoretically and practically relevant for marketing relationships of many types, including how individuals in commercial contexts experience their emotions and assess the state of their relationships.
The Role of Values, Collective Self-esteem and Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence in Predicting Attitudes Toward Drinking in Norwegians

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Joanna R. Gabler, BMC Software, Inc., USA
Anne M. Lavack, University of Regina, Canada
Fredric Kropp, Monterey Institute of International Studies, USA

ABSTRACT
Excessive alcohol consumption contributes to numerous health problems and substantial economic loss. Research indicates that alcohol consumption is closely linked to attitudes toward drinking, and this linkage has often been the basis for interventions and advertising campaigns designed to reduce alcohol consumption. In the present study, 186 Norwegian participants were given measures of attitudes toward drinking, values, collective self-esteem, and consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence. These data were used to develop a model in which interpersonal values, external values, and consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence predicted attitudes toward drinking, and collective self-esteem predicted both values and susceptibility to interpersonal influence.
This session brought together four papers focused on the role of skin in consumer communication. Branding, of course, derived from the practice of marking skin to claim ownership. We employ the branding construct in several ways—as communication, as commodification, and as inscription. Two papers look at tattooing, one studies the fetish culture, and the last investigates skin in contemporary marketing communication. Together, they advance the field of consumer research by taking consumer bodies and skin rituals seriously from diverse perspectives. Furthermore, the authors bring a rich tradition of interpretive research to bear on embodiment, including participant observation, ethnographic interviews, and philosophical analysis.

We think that skin is a novel, productive frame for consumer research—especially research on consumer identity—yet few studies have made skin a central focus. Our focus is on consumer communication, that is, how does skin serve consumers and marketers as signals of desire, markers of difference, and exemplars of brands? How does skin represent marketing concepts and consumer issues? These and other questions animate the research collected here in a vivid tour through contemporary body practices, presenting some fascinating glimpses into contemporary consumer communication through the skin.

**“Harsh Beauty: The Alternative Aesthetic of Tattooed Women”**

*Maurice Patterson, University of Limerick, Ireland
Richard Elliott, University of Warwick & University of Oxford, UK*

*From the idea that the self is not given to us, I think there is only one practical consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art.*

(Foucault 1997, p. 262)

Turner (1992) has coined the term ‘somatic society’ to signify the growing importance of embodiment as a locus for investigation in many disciplines, an importance driven by contemporary discourses particularly within the feminist movement and bio-politics (Shilling 1993; Williams and Bendelow 1998). After a slow start, consumer researchers have also taken up the notion of embodiment (Joy and Venkatesh 1994; Patterson and Elliott 2002; Thompson and Hirschman 1995), as a core issue in the study of consumption. The relative neglect of embodiment within consumer research prior to this owes much to the limited scrutiny of consumption activities beyond purchase, the dominance of the machine metaphor within consumer research and the Cartesian dualism on which it depends. In this way, the study of consumption activities has been centred on the consuming mind and divorced from corporeality.

The legacy of Cartesianism has been the equation of humanity with the rational mind (Burkitt 1999). The body, on the other hand, is nothing more than an automaton, a machine acting as a container for the non-spatial mind. The natural body is seen as corrupt and flawed, requiring the liberatory intervention of rationality acting through science and technology (Hirschman 1990; Slater 1997). These dualisms have been further mapped onto gender with men being associated with the positive attributes of reason, rationality, culture and production, while women are tied to embodiment, nature, emotionality and consumption (Williams and Bendelow 1998): “images of the dangerous, appetitive female body, ruled precariously by her emotions, stand in contrast to the masterful, masculine will, the locus of social power, rationality and self-control” (Davis, 1997, p. 5).

The association of femininity with embodiment has had the effect of making women extremely susceptible to the normalization of bodily ideals. Here, the institutions of consumer culture play a central role (Thompson and Hirschman 1995); promoting images of the body beautiful (Sturrock and Pioch 1998), instructing women in self-representation (Finkelstein 1997), and encouraging them to take responsibility for the way they look (Featherstone 1991). Furthermore, within particular social fields, bodily attributes, such as aesthetic qualities, are ascribed value and function as embodied capital (Crossley 2001). This embodied capital may, in turn, be converted to economic, cultural and social capital. The closer those bodies approximate a social field’s normalized ideals (Featherstone 1991) the more value they are seen to possess. In this way, women are persuaded to devote their energies to improving their bodies, passing as normal (Gilman 1999) and thereby maximizing their embodied capital (Wernick 1987). However, such activities serve to question the degree of agency exhibited by women in the face of a pervasive beauty culture (Grogan 1999).

Utilizing the results of phenomenological interviews, this paper both illuminates and complicates these issues by addressing the relationship between heavily tattooed women and beauty culture. It can be argued that tattoos enable women to re-appropriate their bodies, so often the target of objectification, and use them as the basis of subjectivity and agency (Waterhouse 1993). “Unlike plastic surgery and diets that speak, in simple and complex ways, about desires for normalcy, beauty, and control, tattoos…are not ‘normal’.,” (Braunberger 2000, p. 2).

Borrowing from Johnston (1996), the paper identifies how the ‘body work’ (Featherstone 1991) engaged in by heavily tattooed women sees them inhabit a space that is both within and beyond the confines of normal beauty culture. To this end, tattooed female bodies are positioned as simultaneously transgressive, docile and abject. They are transgressive in that they seek to establish alternative notions of what is aesthetically pleasing and what is beautiful. “Women are working to erase the oppressive marks of a patriarchal society and to replace them with marks of their own choosing which contest patriarchal power” (De Mello 1995, p. 74, cited in Goulding and Follett 2002). However, breaking free of the smothering inscriptions of patriarchy is a difficult exercise, and many tattooed women feel the need to balance their tattoos by creating looks that otherwise adhere to normalized ideals of feminine beauty. These women are caught in the contradiction identified by Jagger (2000) whereby, at the moment of self-production they are also self-monitoring and docile. Finally, tattooed female bodies may also be characterized as monstrous and abject. They are at once abhorrent and fascinating, attracting the gaze and challenging it. They are liminal, existing on the border but not respecting it (Johnston 1996), questioning the distinction between beauty and repulsiveness.

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seen in the New Age, women meanings associated with tattoos can be found in social changes as affiliation with a certain subculture. DeMello (2000) argues that the get tattoos these days are not necessarily doing so to symbolize over the past century (DeMello 2000). From being heavily associ- tion in Denmark, four practices emerged. To some informants, the tion in terms of the symbol itself as well as the actual practice.

The practices were in several cases linked to social relations, as is also noted by Velliquette (2000). However, unlike Velliquette we do not interpret the tattoo practices under the theoretical umbrel- la of subcultural consumption practices (see e.g., Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979) but rather as postmodern exemplars of neotribal practices (Bennett 1999; Maffesoli 1996). Some of the practices related to social relations (that were not related to tattoos per se) clearly demarcated in time and space and thus more ephemeral than traditional subcultural practices would imply. This does not mean that there does not exist subcultural practices that are bound up on tattooing and body modification more generally, but that this was not the case for our informants. There were references to a sense of belonging with other people with tattoos among some informants. However, these were accounted for as very fleeting social relations (e.g. a comment of commendation, a gaze of recognition) and thus indicate a neotribal form of consumption practice rather than a subcultural one, even when tattoos themselves are facilitators of the social relation. This brings to a point of criticism of previous work on tattoo consumption in consumer research, namely that the very notion of tattooing being a mass phenomenon inhibits it from being a subcultural practice per se. Tattooing may, for some, be part of a subcultural identity, but for most consumers, tattoo consumption is better understood as either neotribal or reflexive individualistic forms of expression.

References


“Skin Signs: The Epidermal Schema in Contemporary Marketing Communications”
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In many recent advertising images, human skin, photography, and branding combine to produce striking, sexually tinged images designed to promote a basic vision of the good life. This paper presents an in depth analysis of skin in contemporary advertising via an interdisciplinary reading that draws from visual studies, consumer behavior, and critical race theory. The discussion opens up broader considerations of skin’s role in branding and consumer culture, and closes by reflecting on the fetish as a conceptual tool to understand visual rhetoric in contemporary advertising.

We argue that skin—including representations of skin within marketing communications—is contextualized within a map of the human body, that is, skin comes from a particular place on the body—some more eroticized than others. For example, skin of the abdominal region is generally more sensitive, less open to other’s touch, than skin of the arm or hand (cf., Hall 1966). Furthermore, skin refers to cultural codes of gender, sexuality, racial identity, health, and age. Skin is almost always referred to in cosmetic brand marketing, for products such as make-up, moisturizer, and anti-aging remedies, for example. Skin is also the center of many plastic surgery pitches to make consumers look younger. Recent marketing images, particularly Benetton’s highly noticeable and notorious campaigns (Borgerson and Schroeder 2002), have invoked ethnic and racial identity through the use of models with varying racial appearance, but lately, skin itself—tone, color, sheen, complexion—has become a focus of ad campaigns for brands in several product categories, including watches, mobile telephones, and jewelry. These ads abstract and decontextualize human skin, avoiding reference to facial features, intellectual identity, and sometimes, gender identity. Furthermore, many ads juxtapose racially coded skin tones such as black and white in a way that emphasizes racial identity.

We move away from emergent models of relationships between consumers and ads in order to discuss how identities are constructed within ads themselves, much like brands have been conceptualized as having personality, character, or identity, in a process of ‘recombinant culture’ (Hirschman and Thompson 1997). Our contribution is to show how critical race theory, in conjunction with social attribution processes, illuminates the relationship between marketing communication and identity within the context of consumer culture. Critical race theorists have written extensively on the relation between representation and ontological status (see Borgerson and Schroeder 2002, for a review: Gordon, 1999; van Leeuwen 2000; Walker, 1998). These studies theorize the sort of beings that are capable of ethical action and responsibility and are linked by a concern with how visual markers such as skin color and gendered gestures—which are mapped in and onto the body—represent or determine the status of beings, particularly in the context of racism and sexism.

As a result of dichotomous thinking in patriarchal, racialized cultures, being has traditionally been divided into two parts. This binary or dialectic mode has given rise to well recognized, hierarchically ordered dualisms: self/other, white/black, heaven/earth, civilized/primitive, rational/irrational, finite/infinite in a “logic of colonialism” (Plumwood, 1993). Ontologically dualistic hierarchies carry semiotic relevance and express the interrelations of subordinated elements. For example, Gordon’s semiotic reading locates blackness at the subordinated pole in the hierarchical black/white dualism that operates as a sign of value within what he calls an antiblack world (Gordon, 1995).

The most basic dualism, self/not self, paves the way for an understanding of the self that is set against the not self. The self, as subject, defines the not-self as other. Knowledge of the self develops through a self-versus-other epistemology of difference (e.g., Desmond, McDonagh, and O’Donohoe 2000; Miller 1994). This ontological othering has perpetuated and reinforced the dualistic hierarchical orderings that historically have favored the male, the white, and the rational. In such a context, those associated with the privileged elements stand in the position to claim knowledge of all that is important to know about those associated with the subordinated elements. That is, the dualistic relation engages with the potential for epistemic closure (Borgerson 2001). We contend that representations, including marketing images, hold the potential for epistemic closure by repeatedly associating consumer identities with particular ontological status. A worldview informed by epistemic closure essentializes being and tends toward creation of a recognizable “authentic” identity while knowing next to nothing “about the typical Other beyond her or his typicality” (Gordon, 1997, p. 81).

Black, of course, is a racial category; blackness in semiotic terms connotes exoticized identity and a sexualized fascination with the other, via what has been called “the epidermal schema” (Fanon 1967; Gordon 1995). Blackness contributes to fetishization processes in part due to black skin’s exoticization by the Western world. Moreover, photographic techniques such as close cropping, lighting, and depth of field visually fetishize objects via isolation and decontextualization. Thus, advertising photography contributes to the fetishization of goods by reifying and eroticizing consumer products, and in this case, human skin. Moreover, black is often ontologically linked to nature, white to culture. Blackness, then, has ontological status:

blackness and whiteness take on certain meanings that apply to certain groups of people in such a way that makes it difficult not to think of those people without certain affectivity charged associations. Their blackness and their whiteness become regarded, by people who take their associations too seriously, as their essential features—as, in fact, material features of their being. (Gordon, 1995, p. 95).
Thus, blackness refers to racial identity in a semiotically charged way. Indeed, skin color has been called “the most visible of the fetishes” (Bhabha, 1983). However, most consumer research that invokes race has not employed critical race theory, and is often marked by a limited view of blackness as “authentic ‘hood culture” (e.g., Holt and Crockett 2002)—an important, but by no means exhaustive code of blackness. In this paper, we introduce concepts from an ontologically based critical race theory to illuminate how skin functions as a raced (and gendered) consumer code, and present several illustrative examples culled from the world of contemporary marketing communications.

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“SKIN TWO: (Un)-covering the Skin in Fetish Carnivals”
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This study presents research on one of the most radical and popular subcultures in the Western hemisphere, the fetish culture. Originally, fetishism referred to the idolized worship of transcendental and divine magic represented by Gods, ghosts, forces of nature or other fantasy constructs. From this perspective, a fetish can be viewed as a cultural object (e.g. visual symbols, certain materials) affecting its’ worshippers, because they believe in an occult and magic energy of this object. By the end of the 19th century Kraft-Ebbling and Freud re-defined the term. In the context of their psychoanalytical thinking, fetishism now referred to a sexual perversion and disease. Here, a fetish does not represent positive, magic energy and is almost exclusively related to males’ sexual desires. Taking departure in Lacan’s theories, in the 1970s feminist scholars applied the term in their writings. Again, fetishism was exclusively ascribed to males and seen as one of males’ instruments in order to oppress and surpass women. However, fetishism here again was seen as opposed to a realist perspective and re-acknowledged the opposition between realism and fantasy. Since the 1980s one more connotation was constructed due to the rising wave of fetish fashion, parties, clubs etc., which constituted an international fetish (sub-)culture. Emerging from the Punk- and Goth-subculture, fetish culture has during the 1990s been closely affiliated to the raves of the techno-culture (cf., de Kerckhove 1995), the body art- and the modern primitivism movement. As fetishism often (but not always) includes the expressive consumption of body modifications (such as tattooing, piercing, implants and so forth) and a sexual orientation towards ‘bdsm’ (bondage, domination, and sado-masochism), anthropological and cultural research (e.g. Lees and Shape 1992; Pitts 1998; Featherstone 2000) has offered relevant insights into closely related cultural practices.

There have been few published studies within consumer behavior research that focus on the fetish culture (cf., O’Donnell 1999; Schroeder 1998). This paper offers seeks to illuminate the Danish and international fetish culture. Founded in the early 1980s in London, this subculture has emerged to one of the most provocative and interesting consumptions scenes for younger—and increasingly also more adult—generations. It has given birth to a still growing industry of fetish fashion brands (e.g., Demask, SKIN TWO, Blackstyle), an industry of print magazines and videos (e.g., SKIN TWO, MARQUIS), event-making (e.g. Rubber Ball, Europerver, Wasteland), clubs (e.g., Torture Garden, Atomage), and a more and more ramified network of commercial, individual laymen and organizational websites on the Internet (e.g., http://ukfetish.info, www.manifestfetishclub.com, www.londonfetishscene.com). Members of this subculture consume print material, videos and DVDs, products from the music industry, (regular and Internet) sites and services as well as a large variety of fetish fashion products and attributes (from gas masks to rubber clothing, from shoes to corsets, etc.). Finally, the fetish culture also has its own stars: performance artists, body artists, photographers (e.g., Dita, Fakir Musafar, Midori).

As Schouten and McAlexander (1995) in their study of Harley Davidson enthusiasts state, subcultures of consumption provide opportunities for marketers to engage in symbiotic relationships by serving consumers’ needs, by assisting in the socialization of new members and by facilitating communications within the subculture. In the fetish culture, such symbiotic relationship indeed exists. The London based commercial fetish magazine SKIN TWO was one of the first organizers of fetish parties and main drivers of this culture. It organizes the annual Rubber Ball, one of the most famous and appraised fetish parties. As the name SKIN TWO indicates, one of the main elements of the fetish culture is the consumption of artefacts made of rubber, PVC and latex. Many fetishists regard and feel clothing made of these materials as a second skin (see Schroeder and Borgerson, 2003).

The analysis is based on empirical data from participant observation in clubs and at fetish parties, textual analysis of e-zines, magazines, flyers and WebPages and interviews with fetishists. A multiple interpretation perspective drawing on the so-called “pornofication” of society, on psychological theories about consumption and self-identity, and on Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin’s seminal writings (1984) about masks, the vulgarity of the
grotesque body and the carnivalesque (see Kates 2000). From this perspective, (un-)covering the skin in fetish culture is an expression of freedom from official norms and values, “a special type of communication impossible in everyday life”, with “special forms of marketplace speech and gesture, frank and free, permitting no distance between those who came in contact with each other and liberating from norms of etiquette and decency imposed at other times” (Bakhtin 1984, p. 10). Covering the body with SKIN TWO has then to be interpreted as a way of leaving the limitations of the natural skin. Masking the face with DEMASK is then a method to take off the masks, we all have to wear in order to follow social and cultural norms and expectations.

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Leisure Consumption: An Israeli Study
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ABSTRACT

Consumption of cultural events has become a large industry in many countries. Both the types of such events and their variety have increased. Entertainment is an important component of leisure activities. We define entertainment broadly as: “all forms of art and culture which is on show or performed for the public.” Thus, the focus of our study is on movies and musical, dance, theatre performances. Such entertainment can be ongoing or of the special event type and can be targeted toward local audiences or tourists.

Relatively little is known about cultural preferences of consumers in general and Israeli consumers specifically. The present study was designed to bridge three gaps in the literature. First, it is specific to entertainment, rather than to general vacation/travel behavior. Second, unlike previous research, it studies the consumption of entertainment in a newly developed country—Israel. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first such academic study in Israel. Third, as will be shown below, it assesses the predictive role of three antecedents (consumer values, consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence, and role relaxation) to entertainment events’ choice, none of which has been used for this purpose previously.

These antecedents and their impacts are used to derive several implications in the context of cultural events. Specifically, age was a significant predictor of entertainment consumption in Israel. Older Israeli consumers are much more role-relaxed and de-emphasize social attributes. Youngsters are more social- and less time-oriented. Managerially, segmentation and positioning of entertainment events, accompanied with communications tailored for specific age groups of consumers should be the focus in offering a given event. The finding that internal values do not depend on others for fulfillment—so customers decide according to their individual (inner) values and beliefs—behooves marketers to use more direct communications and more individual-oriented persuasion. Third, consumers whose normative CSII is high appreciate the social benefits of entertaining activities more than those whose normative CSII is low. Thus, consumers select events with specific social and functional purposes and should be targeted accordingly. Finally, the methodology used in this paper could be used productively in other cultural surroundings. Since many entertainment offerings cater to locals and tourists, cross-cultural comparisons could be used to identify differences and similarities in buyer behavior, valuable especially in the context of standardization and adaptation of the marketing mix.
High Risk Leisure Discourse: Influence and/or Use by Adventure Companies
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ABSTRACT
Scholars of high-risk leisure consumption generally focus on psychological aspects of participation. They take the high-risk leisure discourse as given and do not particularly emphasize how this discourse forms and how elements of it are presented to consumers in the marketplace. In this study, I choose high-altitude mountaineering as an example of high-risk leisure in an attempt to analyze the surrounding commercial promotions directed to this consumer sector using a discourse analytic approach. The study reveals insights about how high-altitude mountaineering experiences are commoditized, aestheticized and glamorized by adventure companies in the process of marketing.

INTRODUCTION
So-called high risk leisure is seen as a feature of contemporary modern society. Increasing demand for high-risk sports activities, along with broadened demographics of participants, beginning to draw attention from consumer researchers as well. Although these studies provide some understanding of the subject, they take the high-risk leisure discourse as given and do not particularly emphasize how this discourse forms and how elements of it are presented to consumers in the marketplace. In this study, I choose high-altitude mountaineering as an example of high-risk leisure and analyze the surrounding commercial promotions directed to this consumer sector, using a discourse analytic approach. The study reveals insights from an ongoing study about how mountaineering experiences are commoditized, aestheticized and glamorized by adventure companies in their marketing. This paper begins with a review of the risk literature. In the methodology section, I present the discourse analytic approach that I applied in order to study adventure companies’ marketing of high-altitude mountaineering expeditions. The paper concludes with a presentation of preliminary findings.

BACKGROUND
In high-risk sport/leisure activities, the term risk refers to physical risk (of physical injury or death) in demanding environmental conditions. Studies about the topic up to this point generally focus on psychological aspects of participation such as motives, antecedents, reasons, and needs. Peak experience (Maslow 1961), peak performance (Klausner 1968; Privette 1983), sensation seeking related to biochemical and psycho-physiological changes in the body (Zuckerman 1979), extraordinary experience (Abrahams 1986), optimal experience and flow (Csikszentmihalyi and LeFevre 1989; Csikszentmihalyi 1990), edgework in an effort to link psychological and sociological dimensions to high-risk behavior (Lyng 1990), and symbolic play with death (Le Breton 2000) have all been concepts used to explain engagement in activities such as paragliding, skydiving, scuba diving, rock climbing and mountaineering.

In the consumer behavior field, Arnould and Price (1993) studied river rafting experience and the formation of a narrative through the guide’s interaction with customers. They call rafting a dramatic experience and share the narrative of skydiving and consequent risk accumulation. They further point out that mass-media enunciation of a dramatic worldview is an important factor motivating the culture’s high-risk consumption. Finally, they mention macro-environmental influences on high-risk leisure consumption from mass media, social specialization, and technology, and claim that these operate in parallel to inter- and intra personal motives.

Since “…participants in any discourse expect and subsequently experience a reality shaped or created by that discourse” (Costa 1998, p.304), it is also important to look at the meanings formed and the social constructions shaping peoples’ views and participation in high-risk leisure activities. The notion of discourse is generally associated with Foucault’s theoretical arguments and methodology. He focused on the ways in which various practices and institutions define what it was to be a human (e.g. 1972, 1979). Thus, discourse is used here to refer to groups of statements which structure the way a thing is thought about, and the way we act on the basis of that thinking (see Costa 1998 and Said 1978 for deployments of Foucault). Foucault says that “whenever one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a discursive formation” (1972, p.38). Here discursive formation connotes the way meanings are connected together in a particular discourse and “…how images construct specific views of the social world” (Rose 2002; p.140, emphasis added).

Belk and Costa (1998), in their study of mountain men, argue that mass media representations provide raw materials for contemporary fantasy construction and that this represents possibilities for character development, challenge, and performance. Furthermore, Costa (1998) suggests that marketing tourist destinations can be understood as discourse conveying meaning to the consumer. For high risk sports, Shoham, Rose and Kahle (1998) recommend that advertising and promotion should establish high levels of arousal featuring visually compelling demonstrations of the benefits of participating. Thus, to view visuality, in addition to textuality, as the research focus seems appropriate in order to explore how various images construct accounts of the high-risk leisure discourse.

High-Altitude Mountaineering and Adventure Companies
I chose to study high-altitude mountaineering as a significant representative of high-risk leisure discourse. High-altitude mountains usually refer to the mountains with an altitude of 18,000 feet or more. At this level, lack of oxygen, unpredictable weather and terrain conditions, including jet streams and avalanches prevail. As one of the famous high-altitude mountaineers puts it in an interview:

“…an environment for which human body is not well designed... it just doesn’t function at that altitude... demands on the body are much higher…”

Climbs to such mountains are organized as mountaineering expeditions for three to nine or more weeks. These high-altitude mountaineering expeditions are quite demanding activities with the high-tech and expensive equipment now regarded as essential, along with lengthy pre-trip plans, including physical and mental exercise, manpower recruitment, and logistical support. Furthermore, high altitude mountaineering is now an important economic sector involving equipment, clothing, tourism, and insurance (Kohout, 1997). It has become a lifestyle sector (Giddens 1991) and a part of
the consumption society (Ewert 1994). Except for a couple of peaks in the American, African, and European continents, peaks above 18,000 feet are only found in the Himalayan and Caucasus regions. Thus, expeditions to these mountains also necessitate travel to remote lands, since most climbers are from distant locales.

In the popular media, high-altitude mountain expeditions are usually portrayed as highly marginal and dangerous activities. Mainstream films such as Everest, K2, Vertical Limit, Eiger Sanction, and Cliffhanger involve dramatized portrayal of accidents resulting in the death of one or more team members. A disaster occurs due to a small mistake, unpredictable weather changes, or stubbornness of mountaineers. Now, we also have adventure channels providing high-altitude mountaineering shows:

"Reality is different at 29,000 ft. For the first time ever on LIVE television, follow the footsteps of...an everyday person who became immortal: Sir Edmund Hillary, ...who became first to reach the mountain's zenith. Experience five months of Global Extremes: Mount Everest every Monday, January through MAY, as participants battle the most extreme conditions on the planet for the chance to make history...only on OLN Adventure TV." (OLN Adventure TV Ad in National Geographic Adventure Magazine, Dec.02/Jan.03)

Furthermore, high-tech equipment advertisements in the marketplace use the notions of unexpected danger and risk in visual and textual information, but at the same time they also provide a remedy for these dangers through their products:

"The unexpected. No amount of planning will prevent it, but you can get through it. Thanks to innovative outwear like the Liquid Steel Jacket...Next time...you won't fear the unexpected. Because you will have the protection you can count on." (Marmot Ad, Climbing Magazine, Dec.02)

In a marketplace full of such claims, adventure companies offer a variety of mountaineering services and offer to take care of all necessary arrangements for their customers. The long and demanding preparation period mainly includes obtaining necessary permits, visas, guides, accommodations, flights, local transportation, and food. Commercial adventure companies offer a variety of mountaineering services and organize expeditions to high-altitude mountains. The cost of a commercial expedition per individual varies between US$3,000 to US$10,000 depending on the height of the mountain, the region and the services included. These figures reach to US$60,000 to US$100,000 for expeditions to Mount Everest. Today, it is almost impossible to engage in a high-altitude mountaineering experience (trekking is more feasible) without being part of an organized expedition beforehand. Even if one can go to Nepal and reach a base camp through a trekking route, it is highly difficult to be part of an already formed expedition team mostly because of the requirements mentioned above. Also, companies generally (claim to) focus on interaction among team members and knowing people better in terms of their skills and weaknesses before going to the mountains. Thus, a certain amount of psychological and physical dependency in the consumer’s relationship to an adventure company is part and parcel of the consumption experience.

In this study, I attempt to analyze such adventure companies’ involvement in helping to construct and make use of high-risk leisure discourse, with particular reference to high-altitude mountaineering expeditions. Therefore, the questions are: How is a high-altitude mountaineering experience portrayed? How do adventure companies use high-risk leisure discourse in their promotions? In what ways do these companies contribute to the discourse? What are the meanings apparently conveyed to consumers and how are those meanings connected to each other?

**METHODOLOGY**

Discourses are articulated through all sources of visual and verbal images and texts, and through the practices that those languages permit. “Objects, relations, places, scenes; discourse produces the world as it understands it” (Rose 2002, p.137). Paralleling some aspects of Costa’s (1998) paradisal discourse study, I analyze websites and brochures of 30 adventure companies as sources of visual and verbal images and texts. I chose the companies that organize expeditions to mountains above 18,000 feet. In order to find those companies, I used Outdoors Yellow Pages (2002) and the advertisements that such companies give to popular outdoors magazines like Climbing, National Geographic Adventure, and Outdoor Edge.

I employed a discourse analytic approach as outlined by Rose (2002) and Tonkiss (1998), and further incorporated five in-depth interviews with high-altitude mountaineers in an attempt to answer the questions: How is a high-altitude mountaineering experience portrayed? How do adventure companies use high-risk leisure discourse in their promotions? In what ways do these companies contribute to the discourse? What are the meanings apparently conveyed to consumers and how are those meanings connected to each other? Thus, as a first step, I look at the rhetorical organization and social production of high-risk leisure discourse as revealed by the adventure companies’ promotions to potential consumers. In addition to the inter-textuality (Rose 2002), I study inter-visuality in the data. I identify key themes and recurring texts and visual images and connections between them. I further look at the cluster of themes and relations among them in both visual and textual data. Since all discourse is organized to make itself persuasive (Gill 1996), I try to identify visible and invisible elements, complexities, contradictions, knowledge construction, and truth claims made to an audience.

In addition to the data collection and analysis described above, I conducted five in-depth interviews with high-altitude mountaineers through snowball sampling. The interviews ranged in length from one to two hours. I transcribed the data verbatim for the analysis. The people I interviewed are all highly experienced and both nationally and internationally well-known high-altitude mountaineers. All of them are also working as guides and two of them operate an adventure company and organize high-altitude mountaineering expeditions to various destinations in the world. They all have been part of both commercially and non-commercially organized expeditions as guides and/or organizers.

**FINDINGS**

Zuckerman (1979) indicated that customers themselves make a compromise and combine moderate level of sensation seeking with a strategy to minimize risk when participating in a packaged so-called adventure tours. Preliminary findings suggest that adventure companies do not necessarily incorporate the risk aspect of climbing into their verbal and visual communications. Instead they use adjectives like beautiful, best, high, highest, remote, famous, spectacular, and challenging in characterizing the mountains and experiences they are selling. With detailed itineraries, and assurances of safety and care, they legitimize the risks involved without pronouncing them. They use textual and visual materials to rationalize the risks involved in a high altitude mountaineering experience. Thus, the experience is usually portrayed as a rewarding
adventure of a lifetime with resultant high status (Please contact the author for Picture 1):

Adventure companies claim to be experts by claiming the best knowledge, skills, and experiences in mountaineering, and the best knowledge of the area and the mountain. They also work with the highly experienced guides:

“…we have led over 80 expeditions in the last 18 years. The quality and expertise of our trips are unparalleled…we have the highest success rate…all of our guides are professional mountain guides. You should expect high standards from the guides…occasionally we have very qualified local assistant mountain guides proven to be of superb asset to expeditions…not only we use the best equipment, we renew our equipment at the end of each season. We are specialized…in the art of high-altitude mountain guiding…” (www.patagonicas.com)

In order to be convincing, the claims include their knowledge and experience, and the loyal Sherpas working with them, all ready to provide every imaginable service. These claims may create an illusion of control over the uncontrollable aspects of the high-altitude mountaineering expedition. The photos serve this purpose as well since they show smiling clients with expensive and colorful technical equipment on the white peaks of massive mountains (Please contact the author for Picture 2).

They emphasize the long preparation period as a ritual which is an important part of the expedition, urging customers to sign up as early as six months. Most adventure companies also provide training for those who don’t have any prior high-altitude mountaineering experience. Training includes use of equipment, basic safety and rescue procedures. As Lyng (1990) argues “…planning and organization play some role in maintaining the illusion of control…even though the actual course of events may be largely chance determined” (p.875):

“Our goal is to give you the highest quality expedition available and to provide you with the technical skills and knowledge needed to competently reach the summit.” (www.earthtreksclimbing.com)

They provide information about how to choose the right equipment and how to use it. Providing this experience and knowledge to customers, adventure companies may create an illusion of control for their customers.

Although one would “push personal limits and live this self-rewarding experience,” it is also not necessarily an individual activity but a team activity: It is a “shared adventure” (www.earthtreksclimbing.com). This may also mean to decrease the burden on the individual–they are not the only ones engaging in such activities. The photos, which cover most of the brochures and web pages, seem to offer tantalizingly pleasant experiences with other group/team members, who look fit, healthy, and happy. The people in colorful clothing and the technical equipment shown in the pictures give the first clues as to what it means to become a member, even at the first glance. The notion of communitas (Turner, 1969) is developed by portraying the expedition as a shared ritual experience towards a common goal. Depicted feelings of linkage, belonging and group devotion to accomplish a challenging goal are some of the aspects of this notion. Also, most companies provide post-climbing activities such as barbecue parties and slide shows to maintain communitas. They also quote their prior customers’ views of their experiences and expeditions. These usually involve appreciation of the guide, planning, and organization:

“Thank you for a great adventure and a perfect vacation…everything was perfectly planned and perfectly executed.” “The experience had a big impact in terms of our attitude, our pace, our approach to work and life in general. Thanks for being our guide to this change.” (Arun Treks brochure)

In the images, Himalayan and Caucasus mountains are always shown together with some cultural features of the area (Please contact the author for Pictures 3 and 4). Images used in brochures and advertisements exoticize the Other, as in the case of Nepal (Belk, 1993) and Hawaii (Costa, 1998; see also Said 1978). Furthermore, the use of local guides is presented as an opportunity to learn more about these “different, exotic and mystic” cultures. In an effort to invoke cultural experience as a part of the expedition, companies even place sometime in the itineraries for souvenir shopping.

“This service, in turn, provides a better overall cultural experience and the chance to safely push yourself closer to your physical limits.” (www.camp5.com)

This aesthetization of high altitude mountaineering expeditions provides a sense of escape, challenge, and self-transformation through different cultural experiences. Here, one can see the basic aspects of leisure that are usually attached to a place of relaxation, a place that is restful and calm, but in any case, away from daily life.

Webpages and brochures are full of breath-taking scenes of mountains. Weather is always sunny and mountains are spectacular under blue skies. Each image captures and reflects a growing public fascination with the excitement of high-risk sports. These idealized photographs of unspoiled snow-capped mountains generate over-simplified views of nature. Adventure companies claim to open the way to the summits that only elite mountaineers are supposed to climb. Commercial expeditions “…democratize the mountains. It means that everybody has their chance to become a mountaineer…” in the words of one manager of an adventure company.

“We provide you with the technical skills and knowledge needed to competently reach the summit.” (www.camp5.com)

This is a time-honored fascination for humans and until recently, climbing the highest peaks in the world has been known only to a few, highly skilled and intrepid individuals…Now, for determined individuals following the philosophy behind our Live Your Dreams program, the Seven Summits are no longer the exclusive realm of only elite mountaineers” (www.mountainmadness.com).

“The reason non-technical climbers have the opportunity to summit is through our skilled leadership…we offer both the instruction and support you will need to realize your dreams” (Camp5 Brochure).

At the same time, guides and company managers interviewed maintained the distinction between a client and a mountaineer. They referred to people who climb in their companies’ expeditions as clients or customers, and to their guides and friends in other expeditions as true mountaineers:

“…the only gear that they carry up the mountain is part of their personal gear…the Sherpas are carrying all the tents, all the food.. As a client you are probably carrying your sleeping bag, maybe your parka, and a couple of liters of water…so your pack is very light all the way…here a guide one on one for 100,000 dollars and hire the Sherpa to carry all the bottled oxygen he can carry so that you can have oxygen all the way up and down and you can come
The boundary between client and mountaineer is maintained through the arguments of what is right versus wrong or what is appropriate versus what is inappropriate. The excerpts also imply that the means to create that distinction is something that is earned (Bourdieu 1984). However, the distinction is not necessarily problematized because it provides an opportunity for the “real” mountaineers and/or guides to go to mountains:

“Someone is going to pay $60,000 to climb Everest; it is a lot of money... but... they got more money... they have more mountaineering expedition time and the market force always will find a balance there, someone has lots of climbing skills but not the money. They [guides and clients] meet and they go to the climb.” (famous mountaineer and guide)

Target groups of high altitude expedition promotions are usually upper-middle class people, ages 30 to 45, with high discretionary incomes, living relatively routine, ordinary and safe lives. High-risk leisure activities such as high-altitude mountaineering are presented to these people as opportunities to meet with risk and with different cultures of less developed Third World countries, and thereby to more ready to face uncertainties in their lives in the future:

“We have knowledge, experience and skill to manage risk... We teach risk management... they [clients] come back, perhaps less fearful... they don’t even know... they are managing risk... by traveling and experiencing other cultures” (adventure company manager)

**DISCUSSION**

High risk leisure discourse appears to be a complex articulation of the tropes of risk, safety, control, rationality, aesthetics, and communitas. Mainstream films in addition to other popular media present a dramatized view of the risky and dangerous aspects of high-altitude mountaineering activity. Equipment manufacturers also emphasize these aspects in their advertisements to promote their high-tech equipment’s reliability. Adventure companies, on the other hand, without necessarily pronouncing the potential risk element involved, focus on knowledge, expertise, skill, control, and the opportunity to have different and aesthetic personal and cultural experiences. In an attempt to downplay the risky aspect of the activity, adventure companies rationalize and aestheticize the risk involved in high altitude mountaineering expeditions in their promotions. They achieve this by providing claims of expert knowledge about mountains, equipment, distant areas, and cultures; showing spectacular views of huge mountains and smiling people with colorful high-tech equipment on summits; exoticizing different cultures and thus making cultural experience a part of the expedition. These two views (i.e., popular media and company promotions) operate in contradiction to each other, while yet feeding off of each other, since adventure companies seek to use the most positive aspects of the already established high-risk discourse from other popular media channels (e.g., mainstream films, TV programs, high-tech equipment advertisements).

As mentioned earlier, this study is a preliminary attempt to understand how high risk leisure activities such as high altitude mountaineering, are commoditized, aestheticized, and glamorized for consumers in the process of marketing, through analyzing visual, textual and verbal information used by adventure companies. Assuming that clients pre-imagine the experience and components of the expedition, in the next step of this study, I will incorporate interviews with “clients” to reveal their expectations, the meanings they derive from such experiences, how these conform with the themes found, and whether their expectations and experiences reinforce the discourse. This work should also reveal how boundaries between a “true mountaineer” versus a “client” are maintained, penetrated, or violated by clients during and after high altitude mountaineering expeditions.

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ABSTRACT

During the late twentieth and early 21st centuries, we are witnessing an increasing popularity of the past that directly involves marketing, selling, and consumption of various products, services, and experiences. However, we are still missing a theoretical understanding of consumers attraction with the past. Towards this end we raise the following research questions: “What are the benefits consumers derive at a heritage exhibition?” and “How do consumers relate with the specific heritage that is represented at a heritage exhibition?” Our goal in this endeavor is to provide a better theoretical account of how the past is consumed. To this extent, we use the theoretical background provided by Lowenthal’s (1985). In his pioneering work The Past is a Foreign Country, Lowenthal conceptualizes six major benefits that are related with people’s attraction to the past: familiarity, reaffirmation/validation, identity, guidance, enrichment, and escape.

Empirical data was collected during a Byzantine exhibition at the White Tower of Thessaloniki, Greece. Forty-nine interviews were conducted during the period December 2001–January 2002, where the voices of 82 visitors were recorded, since all persons in a group of visitors was allowed to participate in the discussion. Interviews with visitors followed the basic premises of the phenomenological tradition (Chronis and Hampton 2002b; Husserl 1931, 1970; May 1961; Moustakas 1994; Polio, Henley, and Thompson 1997; Schmitt 1967; Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989, 1990), according to which we raised a small number of rather broad questions and we left the informants lead the rest of the discussion. Examples of the questions asked are: Can you please describe what did you have in your mind during the time you were in the exhibition? What were your thoughts and feelings during the time you were in the exhibition? What was the motive to visit this exhibition? What was your reward for visiting the exhibition? What benefits did you get?

Verbal data were read and re-read in order to gain familiarity with the text (Arnould 1998), while the analysis process followed the basic steps of categorization, abstraction, comparison, dimensionalization, iteration, and refutation suggested by Spiggle (1994, 1998). Interpretation was a more abstract, synthetic, and illuminating experience of the researchers that resulted to an emergent, holistic, extra-logical insight and understanding (Spiggle 1994).

Although Lowenthal’s (1985) benefits of the past formed the basis for the analysis and interpretation of our data, we chose to divert from his six benefit categories. We did this in order to provide a closer representation of our empirical data and to avoid following a deductive approach with the risk of losing the contextual richness and the actual experiences of the consumers. Thus, in presenting our findings in this section, we included Lowenthal’s “familiarity” and “reaffirmation/validation” benefits into one category that we coded as “knowledge.” Similarly, Lowenthal’s benefits of “guidance” and “enrichment” are included into the theme of “value.” Furthermore, we combined Lowenthal’s benefit of “identity” with the notion of “myth of origin” that we borrow from Baudrillard (1968), in order to better express our informants assertions related with their collective ethnic identity. Finally, we enrich the previously conceived benefits of the past by the theme of “temporality” that refers to consumers’ self-reflective experience of the non-permanence of everything, including their own lives.

Knowing the past. For many people, a visit to the Byzantine exhibition was motivated by curiosity (Stahl 1995). Visitors repeatedly affirmed that what they got out of the exhibition was “information” and “knowledge” that made it “very interesting.”

Cultural identity and the Myth of Origin. To a large number of visitors, the Byzantine exhibition offered the opportunity to realize that there are remarkable similarities between life in the Byzantine years and contemporary life in modern Greece. These similarities are found in religious icons, pilgrimages and language among others. Visitors seemed to greatly appreciate the benefit of origin (Baudrillard 1968) that provides an anchoring point for their perceptions of historical continuity.

Values of the Past. Our informants expressed a conviction that the Byzantine past guides and enriches the present. Visitors were impressed by various achievements of those people and they admired what they could accomplish with the limited means they had at their hands. Identified values of the past were also projected into visitors willingness and effort to preserve them and transmit them to children.

Escape into the Past. Like other escape routes, heritage too is a free area where consumers can act out their fantasies (Cohen and Taylor 1976). This escape however is an escape in time that is a result of the anachronistic property of all antique objects (Baudrillard 1968). Our informants indicated that quite often they were transferred to the past and that this was a pre-condition in order to enjoy and “consume” the exhibition.

An Aesthetic Payoff. Quite often, aesthetics surfaced as an additional benefit valued by visitors of the exhibition. In accordance with existing models of aesthetics (Ching 1996; Wagner 2000), we find that this value encompasses not only the main objects that are exhibited, but also the architecturally impressive building that hosted the exhibition and even the surrounding environment.

Temporality. The answers we gathered from our informants include some metaphysical considerations too. More specifically, a close encounter with the past may be an opportunity for self-reflection and immersion into the temporality of all things mortal, including humans. Since everything passes and goes from this life, the “self” too will unavoidably follow the same route.

In addition to the benefits of the past identified above, we also witnessed visitors’ connection with the past, as a result of their exposure into the heritage experience. We define connection with the past as a deeper cognitive and emotional understanding of life in the past according to which someone vicariously experiences what must have been like to live in the past. Connection with heritage is an immersion experience or a revelation (Tilden 1977). The state of “what it really was like” may take the form of a mental picture or an imaginary narrative vignette that depicts a specific slice of life in the past. In fact, the notion of a narrative picture came up during our discussions with visitors in the form of “a picture of the Byzantine period,” “a picture about the everyday life,” and “icons of everyday life.” Overall, the exhibition was characterized as one that “gives a complete picture” of the past. The intensity of “seeing” the past is fostered by visitors’ imagination that helps them “visualize” and even transfer themselves in the past, experiencing what it would be like to live there.

Our research shows that there are multiple benefits that consumers experience during their contact with the past. These benefits
are embedded on existing cultural narratives that are further enriched through consumption practices. Moreover, the beneficial consumption outcomes of the past are mediated by imagination. Thus, imagination, not only moderates the relationship between consumption and identity (Schau 2000), assists consumer creativity (Giorgi 1987), and fosters consumer desire (Giorgi 1987), but it also acts as the "linking glue" for the construction of heritage vignettes. In this respect, it fills narrative gaps, illuminates scenes of the past, contributes to the completion of heritage stories, and, eventually, connects consumers with the past.

References


The Effects of Survey Timing Upon Visitor Perceptions of Destination Service Quality
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ABSTRACT
This research seeks to understand the dynamics of individuals’ perceptions of a tourism destination. It particularly seeks to understand how perceptions change between the time of exit from the destination, and at some time in the future after the tourist has arrived back home. It is useful to understand the magnitude and direction of perceptual change and the mediating factors (e.g. the presence of visual cues, advertising etc) which help to prolong favourable perceptions. The issue of timing in relation to measuring service quality has often been overlooked. The paper seeks to understand how perceptions change between the time of exit from the attraction, and at some time in the future after the tourist has arrived back home. Empirical research is reported from an exploratory study of visitors to Western Australia, which lends tentative support to the idea that an individual’s rating of quality immediately following visitation (time “t”) may be significantly different to that which the respondent ascribes to the same phenomenon at some stage in the future (time “t+1”).

INTRODUCTION
The effectiveness of national, regional and local governments’ expenditure aimed at creating favourable images of a tourism destination is poorly understood. To date, promotion of tourism destinations has traditionally been aimed at the pre-purchase decision rather than confirming individuals’ perceptions of their last visit and facilitating repeat visits and word-of-mouth recommendation. This paper seeks to understand the dynamics of individuals’ perceptions of a tourism destination over time. It addresses the time effect of one element of the satisfaction construct, namely visitor perceptions of service quality and their influence upon longer-term visitor behavioural intention.

To date, tourism marketers’ involvement with perceptual processes have focused on how individuals process information about a destination prior to purchase, and in particular the manner in which promotional messages are perceived. Attention has also been paid to the manner in which consumption of a product influences individuals’ perceptual processes post purchase, for example through measures to reduce cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957; Assael, 1992). Relatively little attention however, has been given to applying theories of perception developed within the disciplines of social and cognitive psychology to the processes by which an individual perceives a tourism destination, and how perceptions change with the passage of time.

There is considerable evidence that consumer perceptions of phenomena are not stable over time and a number of experimental studies have produced a plethora of well-established theories based on timing issues and their link to consumer behaviour (Feldman and Hornick, 1981) Abercrombie (1967), Hornick, 1984).

The principal aim of this research was to gain a better understanding of the way in which tourists’ perceptions of a destination change after departure, and the key influencing factors which affect the rate of change of these perceptions over time.

Perceptions influence attitudes and there is widespread evidence of a link between attitude and behavioural intention (Fishbein 1967; Baldinger and Rubinson 1996). Observed disparities between attitudes and behavioural intention may be explained by a change in attitude between the time that it is recorded and the time that a subsequent purchase decision is made. Similarly, the link between attitudes and perceptions of a destination after a visit are particularly important, because individuals pass on their perceptions through positive or negative word of mouth recommendation. Also, a positive attitude based on current perceptions provides a vital input to the next occasion of holiday purchase decision making by an individual.

Limitations of existing methods of measuring service quality
It is interesting to note that while much research has been reported which seeks to understand the processes by which consumer expectations of service quality are formed (Kahneman and Miller, 1986; Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry, 1993), relatively little attention has been devoted to an understanding of how perceptions are formed and sustained (Boulding et al, 1993). The subject is an important one to research, as it can be argued that buyers’ re-purchase intentions are influenced by their perceptions at the time of re-purchase, rather than those which prevail immediately following or during consumption of a service. It has been claimed that while any sample’s level of expectations may show a high degree of uniformity within the sample, perceptions are more likely to show greater levels of variability (Cronin and Taylor 1994).

Of central importance here is the concept of perceptual processing and how it is that consumers select, organise, and interpret stimuli to make sense of the complex elements of a service encounter. While important during all stages of the consumption process, the role of perceptions during the post-consumption stage is particularly important in the context of attempts to increase customer retention rates.

The influence of time upon perceptions of service quality
Abercrombie (1967, p.19) highlights the fact that perceptions are not stable over time, and states that “… with the passage of time experiences which at first were defined and separate from each other tend to become associated and confused. It is not so much that we actually forget things, but that we misremember them”. Subsequently, time as an influence on behaviour has unique and crucial consequences (Feldman and Hornick, 1981.). A number of experimental studies have produced a plethora of well-established theories based on timing issues and consumer behaviour. A central proposition of these theories is that as the frequency increases of an individual’s involvement with an activity, the greater his or her propensity to recall, for example, an event (Hornik, 1984).

There are substantial differences in the way we experience the passing of time (Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey, 1969). Indeed this psychological dimension of time, or how it is experienced, is an important factor in queuing theory, with a consumer’s experience of waiting having the potential to greatly influence his or her perceptions of service quality (Solomon, Bamossy and Askegaard, 1999). Hornik (1984) found that an individual’s response to advertising varied by time of day. Experiments show that an interval of time may pass nearly five times less rapidly for a ten year old child compared to an adult of sixty. Variations also occur because of an individual’s mental or physiological state. Time slows down during periods of frustration, failure and depression. Generally events that speed up bodily processes speed up the passage of time, while physiological depressants slow it down. Our ability to judge the passage of time gives a framework in which...
events can be placed, with past, present and future events all marking a place on the time dimension. This is referred to as a ‘time perspective’ and, as a subject of research inquiry, has received little attention to date.

Various researchers have examined the process by which customers update their perceptions of service quality over time. For example, Boulding, Kalra and Staelin (1999) investigated the effects of prior expectations on customers’ cumulative perceptions of quality and highlighted the fact that consumers’ prior expectations are likely to be double counted as customers’ update their perceptions of quality. This they ascribe to the issue of confirmatory bias in evaluating new data. In a similar study, Rust, Inman, Jia and Zahorik (1999) also examined the process by which customers update their perceptions of service quality. Using a Bayesian framework, the authors derived several propositions regarding the way that consumers form their perceptions of quality, satisfaction and probability of choice and then dynamically update them over time. In contrast to the previous study, their results suggest that consumers appear to behave in a manner that is largely consistent with the Bayesian framework, in that, on average, they update their perceptions of quality over time and are not overly sensitive to any one particular outcome occasion.

The literature has suggested theoretical reasons why perceptions of a destination’s service quality may be unstable over time, although the theoretical justification for a specific direction of change is less clear. For the purpose of hypothesis testing, two plausible alternative hypotheses are presented:

**Hypothesis 1a:** An individual’s perception scores of destination service quality decline with the passage of time after a visit

**Hypothesis 1b:** An individual’s perception scores of destination service quality increase with the passage of time after a visit.

**METHODOLOGY**

The methodological framework comprised a longitudinal quantitative study of visitors to Western Australia (WA). Data collection comprised interviewing departing passengers returning from Perth domestic airport to other airports in Australia. Respondents were approached at random within the airside departure lounge, whilst they waited for their outgoing flights. Respondents were also invited to participate in a follow up study after they returned home. Whilst an attempt was made through the Western Australian Tourism Commission (WATC) to offer a prize draw incentive for both stages of the survey, this proved unproductive with the Tourism Commission suggesting there was no direct benefit to be derived from offering such incentives. On reflection, it is felt that this had a negative effect on the return over both sampling points, but particularly the second.

The second, follow up postal survey was undertaken approximately one month after the original survey of departing visitors. Respondents were asked to indicate their support for participating in the second round survey via a closed question in the stage one questionnaire. If they agreed they were to supply contact names and addresses for the purposes of stage two questionnaire administration.

**Scale development**

The scales developed were based on the importance/performance paradigm (Ennew, Reed and Binks, 1993; Joseph and Joseph, 1997; Ford, Ford and Joseph, 1999) and took the form of a 24-item self-completion questionnaire, which visitors were asked to complete immediately prior to departing WA. For each item respondents were asked to rate their perceptions of the dimensions listed on a five point Likert scale anchored at “Strongly Disagree” (1) and “Strongly Agree” (5). In addition respondents were asked to rate the level of importance attributed to each item on a similar scale anchored from “Low importance” (1) to “High Importance” (5).

Actual scale items were based on the 22 items of the original SERVQUAL, with an additional item added as a result of the extensive literature search conducted during the more qualitative stages of the research (see below). A further item addressing WA’s appeal as a nature based tourism destination was added at the request of the WATC. The SERVQUAL scale items have been used in disconfirmation models of service quality and performance-only based measures (Churchill and Surprenaut, 1982; Bolton and Drew, 1991; Cronin and Taylor, 1992). Although the validity of the SERVQUAL methodology has been questioned, the scale has been widely replicated and the factor structure found to be appropriate to a wide range of consumer services, of which tourism services are typical (Lewis, 1987; Babakus and Boller, 1992; Saleh and Ryan, 1992; Ryan & Cliff 1997; Lam, Wong and Yeung, 1997). For the purpose of this study, it was felt that the use of previously validated scale items provided a known starting point for analysis, which does not necessarily imply acceptance of the full philosophy of the SERVQUAL methodology. The fact that a number of previous studies had failed to replicate the original factor structure proposed by Berry, Zeithaml and Parasuraman (1985) was not felt to be important as no hypothesis in this study explicitly refers to the existence of previously specified dimensions of service quality. The focus of this research was not to develop a new set of measurement scales, but to apply existing widely used scales in a manner which has not been widely done previously.

In addition, an overall single item measure of quality was also included as a check for comparison purposes. Like the above listed disconfirmation measure visitors were again asked to rate their perceptions of quality on a five point Likert scale anchored at “Much Worse than Expected” (1) through to “Much Better than Expected” (5). Scale items were adapted to the context of WA as a tourism destination. Adaptation was carried out on the basis of an extensive literature review of tourism marketing texts/journals and one to one discussions with the Research Manager of the WATC. The survey sought to elicit attitudes towards service quality in Western Australia as a whole, rather than the individual service providers who make up the tourism destination.

Scale items used in the follow up survey were similar to those used in the initial survey. Additional questions sought information about respondents’ exposure to stimuli related to Western Australia since returning home. Additional questions were also asked in relation to future behavioural intention.

**Sample characteristics**

A total of 1000 stage one questionnaires were administered to departing visitors at Perth Domestic airport over a one-week period in April 2002. Participants were screened on the basis of being either visitors to the state or citizens of the state travelling inter and/or intrastate. Questionnaires were administered to the former only. Of the 1000 questionnaires administered 481 (48.1%) were returned at stage one and 58 at stage two (approximately 6%). A number of possible reasons may be postulated for the rather poor stage two response including a general unease with a perceived lack of anonymity (tracking details were required), survey fatigue given the number of variables included, the prospect of having to complete a further survey at some stage in the future, the timing of the questionnaire’s administration and the failure to offer an incentive.
The principal demographic (Age and Gender) characteristics of the stage one sample are shown in Table 1.

Respondents were categorised into one of five age groups. Subjects aged between 18-24 years accounted for 10.4 percent (50), 25-34 years for 26 percent (125), 35-44 years for 21 percent (101), 45-54 years for 21.4 percent (103) and 55 years and over for 20.8 percent (100) of the total. The 481 subjects included 312 (64.9%) males and 168 (34.9%) females, with 1 missing entry accounting for the remaining 0.2 percent.

Approximately 67% of respondents spent the majority of their time in WA in the Perth Metro/Peel region, with just over 54% of visitors utilising hotels/motels as their major accommodation type. Almost 40% of respondents listed business as their major reason for visiting WA, with just over 30% classifying themselves as pure holiday visitors and approximately 26.5% of visitors classifying themselves as visiting friends and relatives. Approximately 70% of visitors could be classed as interstate, 3% intrastate and 27% international visitors, with the UK accounting for the largest number of international visitors with a total of 8.1%. 35% of respondents could be classed as first time visitors to the state and approximately 60% of respondents stated they would be likely or highly likely to revisit within the next two years. The stage two sample comprised an almost even split of males (53.45) and females (46.6%), with the 55+ category accounting for 48.3% (28) of those surveyed. It is not known why the gender split differed between stage 1 and stage 2 surveys.

### ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

A series of statistical tests were performed in order to ascertain the specific nature and extent of any perceptual change over both time frames and whether the extent of any such change was statistically significant. The first test involved summing each respondent’s perception scores for each of the 22 items. This was done separately for the two time periods, allowing a global comparison to be made of the total quality score.

The scales were all rated from 1 to 5, with 5 being indicative of the highest rating for all items, thereby giving some justification to this global measure of service quality. The total score at each sampling period was then divided by the number of items (22) to give a mean quality score (an adjustment was made for missing observations). The mean score at the first sampling point was 3.64, compared to 3.94 at the second sampling point. Using a paired samples t-test, these means were found to be significantly different at the level of 1% (t=-2.648; p<0.017) (Table 2). These results lend support to hypothesis 1b.

Further support for this hypothesis can also be gained from an analysis of the mean scores for individual scale items. These can also be seen to have increased between the time of the original questionnaire and the follow up survey, further indicating that perceptions of quality had improved over the one-month time frame. Table 3 indicates that this increase could not entirely be accounted for by random errors, with paired samples t-tests revealing that differences in 8 out of the 22 items were found to be significant at the 1% level (p<0.05). Table 6 also gives some indication as to the magnitude of change experienced in relation to each item, ranging from .54 for “Overall, signposting and information sources were clear and accurate needs” to 1.27 which relates to the “Tourism employees were never too busy to respond to my requests”.

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This exploratory study has a number of implications for both academics and practitioners in relation to the management and measurement of service quality within the context of tourism destinations. Despite the limitations of the methodology, especially the use of only two stages of data collection, a number of conclusions can be drawn:

This research has challenged the assumption implicit in the SERVQUAL methodology that the timing of perceptions surveys is invariate to perception scores recorded by respondents. Results of
The Effects of Survey Timing Upon Visitor Perceptions of Destination Service Quality

This research suggests that tourism operators should have as detailed an understanding as possible of the psychological underpinnings of the role of perception in the consumers’ information processing system. This is essential in order to understand better how perceptions are formed so that they can be maintained and/or manipulated over time. In turn, this knowledge should enable marketers to apply themselves in building sustainable customer relationships over the longer-term.

On a more practical note, tourism organisations may wish to consider the actual timing of survey administration. For example,
most national tourism organisations and tour operators have a tendency to administer their visitor surveys upon exit from the country or upon boarding an aeroplane for the return journey home. It is suggested that where such systems are in place, operators may want to consider the idea of a follow up survey some months later when the promotion season begins for the following holiday season.

This type of research process can be strategically relevant for any service provider as the use of such a measurement instrument allows the mechanism by which past, current, and potential service consumers’ perceptions can be examined, and possible corrective actions taken in relation to identified perceptual problems.

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Plagiarized Designs: Understanding Consumer Acceptance
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ABSTRACT
The distinctive identity of a brand has enormous commercial importance. When a competitor copies that identity with a cheaper inferior product, it can jeopardize the heavy investment in creation and design of products. The identification of the original versus the plagiarized knock-off is a critical issue to the marketplace. However, even when the identity is clear, a remaining issue is whether consumers are willing to pay a premium price for the original product. A conjoint analysis is used to investigate the identification and valuation of an original vs. a copy. The willingness to pay for the original depends on the competence or knowledge of the consumer. Ways of identifying “trade dress” by distinguishing among the utilitarian, systemic or symbolic aspects of a product are discussed.

INTRODUCTION
Consumers generally distinguish and form preferences among the product offerings in the marketplace. They evaluate different brands to purchase the right products for themselves, their lifestyle, and their image. The core of branding is recognition of the product, the image and who produced the good, along with the manufacturers guarantee of a certain standard of production (Keller 1993). For the producer, branding enables them to improve the quality and image beyond an industry average because the recognition and developed brand can facilitate a premium price for a premium quality.

This can also be the case when the product, as such, is not branded by a well-established brand name, but is rather identified by the name of the inventor, creator or designer, its distinctive form, color, symbols, tags, and other visual distinguishing characteristics. For example a Picasso painting is only a Picasso if painted by Picasso himself. Many others have copied his style, but only originals command the premium prices because many people want to own originals not copies. Most luxury products, for instance furniture, interior and household items, fashion clothes, perfumes can fall into this category of distinctive design with high image and prices.

The importance of form and design to product success and consumer well being is outlined by Bloch (1995). Among other issues he discusses how design helps break through cluttered markets; can render older competitors obsolete; can create a price point of view. Specifically who is the customer most willing to pay and can they be described.

When one company has a good design that the consumer sees, it is quickly recognized by current and potential competitors, and unfortunately for the original manufacturer, usually quickly copied. While there are marketing ways to protect one’s image, the protection of one’s design is usually left to the courts. This is an enigma because the courts are confounded by consumer behavior (Dinwoodie 1997) and prediction about success of protecting design is far from certain. Officially, U.S. federal trademark law protects certain product features under the rubric of trade dress, which previously have been unprotected (Trade Dress Protection Act, 1998). But this issue is a broader one, as many companies occupy the global marketplace, and laws tend to be country specific. More recently the European Union has taken a step toward standardizing issues of trademark or trade dress infringement, but commerce has a long way to go before similar laws are applied world-wide.

Even when similar laws are in place, the legal system itself is set up to interpret the law. And the law is interpreted by those people who are consumers and have different view points about consumption of goods. The United States Trade Dress Protection Act indicates that a product’s design may function as its trademark, if the design identifies the source of product and is distinctive. The problem is how does one go about determining when a design identifies the source. This is perhaps the same as acquiring “secondary meaning” or being distinctive. In design circles, it takes time to develop secondary meaning and design, especially fashion, usually is recognized rather quickly as desirable or not.

In a recent ruling involving Wal-Mart’s strategy of copying the design of a well known clothing supplier to a competitor (J.C.Penny) and having reproductions made and then selling at a much lower price, the Supreme Court over ruled prior judgments and ruled in favor of Wal-Mart’s behavior. The ruling said that product design trade dress that is not registered as a trademark with the U.S. Patent Office is not subject to protection under U.S. Law, unless it can be established that the design had acquired distinctiveness. The interpretation is that trade dress can never be inherently distinctive and said Wal-Mart was in the realm of legal competition (Samuels and Samuels 2001).

If a company has developed a recognizable trade dress for their product and they wish to be the sole beneficiary of the value they have created, they may pursue legal action. However it may be better not to leave this in the hands of an uncertain and expensive system, such as the courts, and instead focus on the understanding the consumer demand. Given the importance of design, the need to protect ones’ customer base, and the right of individual’s and companies to reap the benefits of their design investment, this paper investigates the design and preference issue from the consumers’ point of view. Specifically who is the customer most willing to pay the higher price for original design, how much more are they willing to pay and can they be described.

SELECTED LITERATURE REVIEW
Creating and Buying Design
Companies make their designs or trade dress as distinct as possible in order to avoid the easy exchange by mistake. By using particular strong shapes (the “beetle” and the “Mac”); colors (“Coke”); texture (“Oxo Good Grips”); symbols (“Toyota”); sound, “Harley-Davidson”; and smell (“Shiseido perfumes”) a particular identity is sought. This identity is distinguishable from close copies in ways that precludes closeness with similar forms. This is probably due to our senses, which identify particular impressions as particular appealing, sensual, disgusting or scary (Ackerman 1990). In other situations, the visual image is well balanced (Chevreul 1995).
The trade dress can be defined as the total image or overall appearance of a product or service, including but not limited to the design of packaging, labels, containers, displays, décor, color, the design of the product, a product feature, or a combination of features, except that trade dress shall not be registered or protected under this act if it is functional." (U.S. Trade Dress Protection Act, 1998)

The functionality is further defined in terms of design, e.g., "such superior design for its purpose, that to afford it protection would significantly hinder effective competition". Additional factors considered are 1) whether the matter yields a competitive advantage; 2) whether alternative designs are available; and 3) whether the matter achieves economies in the manufacture or use of goods or services, or affects their cost or quality.

In the area of design and products, the law is mixed on its findings. One very famous example is the Stiffel Co. who secured design and mechanical patents on a pole lamp, a vertical tube with lamp fixtures along the outside. Sears Roebuck and Co. put a substantially identical lamp on the market that sold at a retail price similar to Stiffel’s wholesale price. In this case, any difference consumers perceived between the two brands was likely to be in price. Because furniture has a style, but little overt brand labeling, it is unlikely that the average consumer was aware whether the lamp was a genuine Stiffel. When this went to court, it was decided in favor of Sears, who continued to sell its copycat lamps to the public at a lower price (Sears, Roebuck and Co. v. Stiffel Co. 1964). Similar decisions have been made with respect to furniture, despite extensive evidence of confusion by customers and salespeople (Parkdale Custom Built Furniture Pty. Ltd. v. Puxu Pty. Ltd, 1982).

Leaving all this in the hands of the court, some manufacturers have found protection in their design of lamps (PAF S.r.l. v. Lisa Lighting Co. 1989; Bauer Lamp Co. v. Shaffer, 1991) and furniture (L & J.G. Stickley, Inc. v. Canal Dover Furniture Co. 1996; Kruger Int’l Inc. v. Nightingale, Inc. 1996), From a manufacturers perspective, it may be risky to leave this up to the legal system and time may be better spent on creating consumer demand for the original product.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to test people’s ability to identify the original product in a common consumer good category where design elements may be distinctive. Our questions were whether people were able to tell which one is the original and if they could, how much were they willing to pay for the original. Understanding consumer’s evaluation and price trade-off among original and imitation products is perhaps key to creating demand for the originals. If we have that information in addition to the market structure, we may be able to provide insight to loss of “brand equity” due to plagiarism or copying of the design.

METHODOLOGY

Stimuli

The product category is rice paper lamps, a type of lamp dominated by cheaper copies that many people buy to use in “back-rooms”, storage rooms, children’s rooms, or nurseries. Many consumers are unaware that these lamps are particular instances of products of art and high-class design. The famous Japanese sculptor and designer Nagoochi designed some of these lamps. Needless to say, the Nagoochi product is distinct and it is expensive compared to imitation copies. This lamp is sold in prestige design shops for about U.S. dollars. We have chosen to investigate design, identification and willingness to pay for this lamp by comparing it with two cheaper rice paper lamps, which were designed by anonymous designers and sold in shops with a more average assortment for about 12 and 20 U.S. dollars respectively (see Figure 1). These products are not “cheapish” or bad quality. Yet it makes...
a considerable difference whether you pay 12 dollars or 120 dollars, which is the span between the cheapest and most expensive version.

**Subjects**

A total of 107 consumers took part in the experiment, 40 males and 67 females. Forty-nine percent were under 29 years of age; 37 percent were between 30 and 49; and 14 percent were over 50.

**Design**

An experimental design was used to test how people evaluate an original when compared with two imitation brands. In the first part of the experiment, the lamps were compared in pairs and respondents were not told the names of the lamps. The lamps were marked with the letters A (copy), B (original), and C (copy) and the scales also referred to these letters. In the second part of the experiment, additional price information was given in a conjoint design. Three actual prices were quoted, $12 (copy C), $20 (copy A) and $120 (original B) respectively, but they were not fixed to any particular design. Rather, all of the three prices were assigned to each lamp in a full factorial design, such that all of the nine possible combinations (three prices by three lamps) were compared. In the paired comparisons each letter (indicating a particular design, A, B, C) was given a price tag. For example: A with price $12 was compared to B with price $20; B with price $20 was compared to C with price $120 and C with price $120 was compared to B with price $12, etc.

The comparisons were chosen such that each pair of lamps and each pair of prices were compared the same number of times, giving a randomized experiment (Gliner and Morgan 2000). In the last part of the experiment, the respondents were given the information that the famous Nagoochi designed one of the lamps and people were asked to select which one. This information was compared to how much design competence the respondents rated themselves as having, on a continuous scale, ranging from none at all to professional training and working full time in design.

Data were analyzed as paired comparison with continuous ratings (Gabrielsen 2000). In the first part of the experiment a preference scale for the lamps was estimated. In the second part a conjoint analysis for paired comparison measurements was performed, which gives separate preference scales for lamps and prices.

**Procedure**

The experiment was run at an exhibition of originals and copies at a design museum in a major European city. Subjects participated voluntarily under self-selection. The rice lamps were presented physically on a table and people could both see and touch the lamps. Beside the lamps there was a computer with a self-managed program. The program presents very briefly a choice scenario about the lamps and asks the person reading the computer screen to participate in an experiment.

Subjects were first given a training screen on the use of the computer and scale for judgment. Training trials were carried out with respect to preference for the color red compared to their preference for the color green. The cursor was directly between the
colors and this was labeled as the neutral position. Subjects were asked to move the cursor to the left or right to indicate preferences labeled either some, quite a bit, or extremely preferred it. They were instructed to be careful about moving the cursor to the last extreme right or left. (This was important to avoid ceiling effects in the measurement.) After the training trial, the subjects went on to rate the pairs of lamps. The distance the subject moved the cursor away from the middle was measured in centimeters by the computer and used as their preference measurement for each pair of lamps.

THE FINDINGS

In the first part of the experiment, in which only lamps were compared without the price information, the preference scale was estimated to show that consumers clearly favored the original Nagoochi lamp (B). It’s computed rating was 5.4, lamp A was rated –1.4 and lamp C –4.7. Therefore the preference for the original was about 10 times stronger than lamp C and about seven times stronger than lamp A. Furthermore, the difference in preference between C and A is smaller than the difference from A to B.

The conjoint analysis separates the effect of lamps and the effect of prices into two separate scales and is shown in Table 1. The preferences concerning the prices are as expected in that the preferences decrease as the price increases. The preferences for the prices $20 and $12 are almost the same, whereas the preference for the price $120 is very much lower. This is a simple negative ranking of prices, which shows, not surprisingly, that people in general prefer a cheaper to a more expensive price, not taking the product into consideration.

The preference scale for the lamps shows the same ordering of the lamps as in the simple rating without the price information and also the same relative distance between the lamps, however, the preference scale for the lamps in Table one is more compressed. The interpretation of this is that the difference between the preferences seems to diminish when the prices are attached. The comparisons are expressed by the willingness to pay for each individual lamp. What we see is not the immediate rating of the product. We get the more consequential type of rating from asking the respondents how much they are willing to sacrifice to acquire each of the lamps. This is the side of the price that concerns the perceived value in monetary terms.

The participants were asked to self-rate their design competence and then they were divided according to two groups, whether the persons claimed themselves as having low or high design competence (54 and 53 persons respectively) using a medium split. There were no significant differences of the preference scales for the lamps between the groups, however the preference scales for the prices were significantly different, (see table 2). The preference scale for prices in the segment with high design competence was highly compressed compared to the segment with low design competence. This means, that the higher the competence, the more weight is attached to the design. The competent respondent is more willing to pay a high price for the original and places less emphasis on the price.

The respondents were asked which lamp was the original. A total of 59(55%) respondents correctly identified the lamp B as the original, 21 (25%) thought A was the original and 27 (25%) thought C was the original. Identification and the split of self-reported design competence showed 48% of low competence selected correctly and 62% of those with high competence selected correctly. A chi-square analysis of these figures was insignificant ($x^2=2.42$, df=1, n.s.).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Our purpose has been to address the issue of plagiarism or copying in the design of products. The problem is urgent for many producers who experience that products they have devoted considerable resources and efforts to create and design are devoured by cheap copies that look like the original but clearly cost much less. The cases we have analyzed are not cases where deception or counterfeiting have been used, but such situations where an original and the copies differ in ways that can be detected by the trained or untrained eye. While most people will respond positively to a statement that they prefer originals, the matter is different when this means sacrificing a premium price. As we see in the study this means a ratio of 10 between the cheapest version and the original. When seen in such perspective, the preference for the original is no
longer absolute, but it depends on consumer’s competence or knowledge of design. Only those most competent are really willing to sacrifice more price for design, but it is not significant enough for them to perhaps actually buy the original.

This raises the issue of consumer education and also of trade dress. The issue is recognition of the products. Improved ways to identify the original may persuade more consumers that they should consider the premium priced product. Further research may take advantage of the developments in sensors and senso-metrics. These disciplines have been dealing with recognition and characterization of food, fragrances and drinks for many years. There is an existing body of knowledge that can lead into manageable testing procedures that we expect may be applicable for other product categories as well. While there exists a well-defined set of characterizing terms for fragrances, food and drinks, such terms may have to be invented for other products. Also here, there are insights to be learned from the recent developments in vision research and cognitive science.

Another issue is creating trade dress by means of other senses than the visual. We will assume that the product category is an important issue here. We may distinguish between pure utilitarian, systemic (technical and social) products and symbolic products. A pure utilitarian product, we assume, does not really lend itself to much trade-dress, although we are aware that it happens quite frequently. For instance if you buy a screw or other replacement (original) to an automobile, it is usually physically branded, like Ford or Daimler-Chrysler. If we assume, that a screw is a screw, the producer faces a real problem. Knowing, that the copycat market is highly lucrative, the producer claims, that the warranty is no longer valid if a copycat, however trivial, has replaced an original item. In the case of products that require a system in order to operate, like a cellular phone the issue is one of compatibility. In this sense, the situation is equal to the utilitarian product; only the focus is now in the interface with a system.

A symbolic or a social product that marks the user as a member of an “in-group” is one where the issue is urgent. Here the likelihood is high, that the social risk of erring leads more people to buy the original, paying the premium price. This is exactly what our proposal is high, that the social risk of erring leads more people to buy the original.

If we have the data for a particular product category, which we have in this case, it should also be possible to calculate the expected loss in “brand equity”. To do so, we would need to know how the market is composed. If we know how the distribution of competent vs. less competent consumers, we should be able to estimate the number of people who will buy the original and how many we risk losing because they are not willing to pay the price. This is another perspective, that needs further attention, and if possible a real market experiment.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of key constructs including materialism on the use of counterfeit goods among college students in Thailand. The results suggest that users of counterfeit goods tend to be male, from a less affluent family, less influenced by friends, strongly influenced by celebrities, and high in materialism. Materialism was also found to moderate the effects of gender, family affluence level, membership group influence, and taste for western products on the use of counterfeit goods. Family affluence level was additionally found to positively affect the frequency of counterfeit usage. Materialism again was found to moderate the effect of family affluence level.

INTRODUCTION

Counterfeiting is a profitable industry. It is the production of copies that have identical packages, trademarks, and labels as the genuine products but use low quality materials in the production process (Kay 1990; Wee, Tan, and Cheok 1995). Even though counterfeit goods are affordable, they may be harmful to the public due to the inferior quality of materials. Counterfeiting appears to be a major problem for brand name, luxurious, and high priced consumer products. A number of industries have encountered counterfeiting problems. These industries include foodstuffs, petroleum products, medicines, perfume, cosmetics, glasses, computer accessories, phone accessories, electrical appliances, audio and video cassettes, automobile spare parts, toys, apparel, watches, and leather products. However, this study only focuses on those counterfeit items that are used by consumers on a daily basis and consumers know that they are counterfeits. Hence, the counterfeit objects in this study will be confined to clothing items and accessories. The focal products consist of apparel, watches, leather handbags, purses, shoes, and belts.

Counterfeiting is a result of the violation of patent laws and is pervasive in most developing nations, particularly developing countries in Asia. With a high taste of western products and limited budgets, consumers in these nations consider buying counterfeit goods as an alternative to owning brand name luxurious goods. Loss of sales due to counterfeiting should not be considered a major problem since consumers who purchase and use counterfeit goods have no intention to purchase the genuine ones. Under this situation, deception is not an issue since consumers know and are willing to pay for the items. These consumers consider using counterfeit brand name products as a way to enhance their personal appearance and impress others. Counterfeiting may enhance the value of the brand instead of diluting it since only prestigious brand name products have counterfeits (Nia and Zaichkowsky 2000).

The buying and selling of counterfeit goods in Thailand is considered a common phenomenon. College students appear to be the primary target for non-deceptive counterfeit goods (Prendergast, Chuen, and Phau 2002). Most students tend to receive limited allowances from their parents but have a desire to look elegant and fashionable. As a result, the use of counterfeit goods is somewhat widespread among college students. This study was therefore aimed at investigating the patronage of counterfeit goods among college students. The purpose was to examine the effects of demographic and psychographic variables including materialism on the use of counterfeit goods and the frequency of usage.
tion groups refer to groups the individual expects to be a part of in the future, whereas symbolic aspiration groups are groups that an individual is not a part of and is not likely to be a part of. In this study, the influence of aspiration groups will be confined to that of symbolic aspiration groups. Celebrities, such as movie stars and singers, are considered members of symbolic aspiration groups. Consumers who are attached to the celebrities they adore will likely to purchase and use the products these people endorse. In this light, it is plausible that the individual who has a favorable attitude toward celebrities but has limited income may purchase and use counterfeit products as an alternative to enhance one’s own status.

Personal Image. Image has been extensively studied in the retail settings. It has been defined as consumer evaluation of salient attributes, which could be tangible and intangible or functional and psychological (Thompson and Chen 1998). In this study, personal image is defined as the tangible appearance of the individual. It is analogous to the level of impression one would like to have (Sampson 1995). Some people consider personal image an important characteristic, whereas some do not give much weight to personal appearance. If one has a tendency to try to impress others, one will be more concerned with personal appearance and likely to purchase and use counterfeit goods with the purpose of trying to enhance one’s own image (Nia and Zaichkowsky 2000).

Taste for Western Products. Taste is analogous to the concept of brand preference. In this study, taste for western goods is defined as individual preference given to western brand name products. For these individuals, the use of western brand name products would help satisfy their personal needs and, at the same time, help increase their personal status in the society. Drawing from this line of reasoning, it may be argued that consumers with high levels of taste for western products are likely to be users of counterfeit products.

Materialism. Traditionally, materialism is a philosophical system that pays attention to the physical matter. It is a general view of the existence of the material or physical objects in the world (Trout and Moser 2002). Belk (1984, p.291) defines materialism as “the importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions.” Materialism in consumer behavior may be conceptualized as consumer attitude toward money and objects. It involves consumer desire and passion to possess physical objects. Young adults and middle-aged people appear to be more materialistic than children and older people (Belk 1985; Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981). Materialism is also related to behavior (Brownie and Kaldenberg 1997). Belk (1984, 1985) described three dimensions of materialistic values, i.e., possessiveness, non-generosity, and envy. According to Belk (1983, 1985), possessiveness can be defined as consumer tendency to maintain possessions of one’s personal things. In this sense, consumers are reluctant to lose or throw away things. Non-generosity refers to consumer unwillingness to give away things or share things with other people (Belk 1984, 1985). Envy, the third materialistic value, has to do with one’s own possessions. It has to do with one’s displeasure at other people’s happiness, success, reputation, fortune, and possessions of things (Belk 1985; Schoeck 1966). Purchasing and using counterfeit goods may be considered a way to respond to one’s own materialistic needs. As a result, it could be argued that consumers who purchase and use counterfeit goods are likely to be materialistic. In addition, it is also plausible that a high level of materialism will strengthen the effects of other constructs on the use of counterfeit goods. Consumers with high levels of materialism may have a tendency to pay more attention to brand name products; thus, these individuals may be strongly influenced by those demographic and psychographic variables described earlier to use counterfeit products. In contrast, consumers with low levels of materialism may place little weight on personal appearance and the use of brand name products; hence, they may be less influenced by those demographic and psychographic variables.

METHODOLOGY

Depth interviews were carried out with ten target respondents. The purpose was to obtain preliminary information about the use of counterfeit goods. The information obtained was then used to develop the questionnaire. Scales used to measure key constructs were based on information from depth interviews and existing scales (Belk 1984, 1985). All key constructs associated with psychographic characteristics were measured using multiple items. To check face validity of the scales, a panel of five academic scholars was asked to evaluate the scales. After that, changes were made to improve the scales. The first draft of the questionnaire was then pretested on 30 students and changes were made to finalize the questionnaire. Some scale items were dropped due to low internal consistency with other items measuring the same constructs. The final version of all the relevant scales is presented in Table 1.

The population of interest was confined to undergraduate students at a Thai university. Students who enrolled in the business classes from year 1 to year 4 were selected as participants. Classes were randomly selected as target groups for questionnaire distribution. Two hundred copies of the questionnaire were distributed to students who took classes at each year of the four-year college level. The total number of questionnaires distributed was 800.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Of the 800 questionnaires distributed, 662 usable questionnaires were received, representing a response rate of 82.75%. The respondents consisted of 30.9% male and 69.1% female. The mean age of respondents was 20.33 with a standard deviation of 1.32. The majority of respondents had income below Baht 5,000 (41.8%) and between Baht 5,000 and 9,999 (50.2%). We received 22.1% of questionnaires from freshmen, 26.7% from sophomores, 28% from juniors, and 23.2% from seniors.

The types of counterfeit goods students often purchased and used were clothes (62.6%), handbags (60.8%), purses (57.4%), shoes (37.0%), watches (34.1%), and belts (14.8%). The cited advantages for using counterfeit goods were the ability to use cheaper brand name products (81.6%), the ability to obtain a new and modern item inexpensively (63.4%), no fear of losing (38.8%), keeping up the circulation of money in the country (28.7%), and being self-satisfied (18.6%). The cited disadvantages for using counterfeit goods were poor quality materials (76.4%), nondurability (60.1%), unethical behavior (48.6%), and losing face if friends know (13.7%).

Exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation as well as coefficient alphas were performed on those constructs using multiple measures. The three dimensions of construct “materialism” were analyzed separately at three different scales. The preliminary results suggested that item V212 of construct “taste for western products” and item V213 of dimension “possessiveness” had low factor loadings and low correlations with total than other items measuring the same scales. Accordingly, these two items were dropped from further analyses. The final coefficient alphas for membership group influence, aspiration group influence, personal image, taste for western products, possessiveness, non-generosity, and envy were 0.80, 0.72, 0.70, 0.73, 0.54, 0.55, and 0.60. The composite scores were then employed to represent each construct using multiple measures. The scores from the three dimensions of materialism were combined to represent materialism construct.
**TABLE 1**
Scale Items for Key Constructs

**EXOGENOUS VARIABLES**

**Gender**
1 item—Nominal Scale (Male/Female)
V11 What is your gender?

**Family Affluence Level**
1 item—5 point semantic differential scale—Anchored at endpoints (Not at all affluent/Very affluent)
V12 How affluent is your family?
Source: Developed by the researcher

**Membership Group Influence**
4 items—5 point Likert scale—Anchored at endpoints (Strongly disagree/Strongly agree)
V21 Most of your friends tend to use reputable brand name clothes.
V22 Most of your friends tend to use reputable brand name leather products.
V23 Most of your friends tend to use reputable brand name watches.
V24 Most of your friends tend to use reputable brand name products.
Source: Developed by the researcher

**Aspiration Group Influence**
2 items—5 point Likert scale—Anchored at endpoints (Strongly disagree/Strongly agree)
V25 You wish to be successful like those reputable movie stars.
V26 You wish to be successful like those well-known singers.
Source: Developed by the researcher

**Personal Image**
3 items—5 point Likert scale—Anchored at endpoints (Strongly disagree/Strongly agree)
V27 Our image is important to the eyes of other people.
V28 Clothing can help enhance our image.
V29 Personal items, such as bags, purses, belts, shoes, and watches, can help enhance our image.
Source: Developed by the researcher

**Taste for Western Products**
3 items—5 point Likert scale—Anchored at endpoints (Strongly disagree/Strongly agree)
V210 Western products tend to be good quality products.
V211 Western products tend to be products with good image.
V212 Western products tend to be products most people cherish.*
Source: Developed by the researcher

**Materialism**

**Possessiveness**
3 items—5 point Likert scale—Anchored at endpoints (Strongly disagree/Strongly agree)
V213 You tend to hang on things you should probably throw out.*
V214 You get irritated if someone takes your things.
V215 You get very upset if something is stolen from you even if it has little monetary value.

**Non-generosity**
4 items—5 point Likert scale—Anchored at endpoints (Strongly disagree/Strongly agree)
V216 You enjoy having guests stay in your home.*
V217 You enjoy sharing what you have with other people.*
V218 It is a good thing to let your neighbors borrow things from you.*
V219 If you own a car, you will be willing to give rides to other people.*

**Envy**
4 items—5 point Likert scale—Anchored at endpoints (Strongly disagree/Strongly agree)
V220 I am bothered when I see people who can buy things they want.
V221 People who are very wealthy tend to feel they are too good to talk to average people.
V222 I wish to trade places with those reputable people.
V223 It bothers you when your friends have things you cannot afford.
Source: Adapted from Belk (1985)
The Use of Counterfeit Goods

Logistic regression was employed to investigate the effects of key demographic and psychographic constructs on the use of counterfeit goods. Logistic regression was selected because our endogenous variable was a dichotomous variable. The endogenous variable was operationalized as users and non-users. We assigned 1 to represent users and 0 to represent non-users. We had seven exogenous variables with gender being the only categorical variable. We assigned 1 to represent male and 0 to represent female. The interaction terms between materialism and each of the other exogenous variables were also included in the model. However, including both main and interaction terms in the same model would bring about multicollinearity problem. Hence, a mean-centering technique was applied to all the exogenous variables (Smith and Sasaki 1979). All the interaction terms in the model were based on the multiplication of the new scores, whereas all the seven exogenous variables were based on the original scores.

Logistic regression was performed and the results are presented in Table 2. The overall model was significant ($\chi^2=36.502$, df=13, p<0.001). Five of the seven exogenous variables were found to be significant. These are gender (p<0.10), family affluence level (p<0.05), membership group influence (p<0.10), aspiration group influence (p<0.05), and materialism (p<0.05). Four of the six interaction terms were found to be significant. These were interactions between materialism and gender (p<0.10), between materialism and family affluence level (p<0.10), between materialism and membership group influence (p<0.05), and between materialism and taste for western products (p<0.10).

Frequency of Using Counterfeit Goods

We also examined the effects of the seven exogenous variables and the interactions between materialism and each of the other exogenous variables on the frequency of counterfeit usage among users of counterfeit goods. Since the frequency of counterfeit usage was a five point scale, OLS multiple regression was employed. The results are presented in Table 3. The results indicated that the overall model was not significant ($R^2=0.038$, F=1.431, p>0.10). However, when examining the effects of individual variables, only family affluence level and the interaction between materialism and family affluence level were found to have significant effects on the frequency of counterfeit usage (p<0.05 and p<0.10).

DISCUSSION

Our logistic regression results suggest that users of counterfeit goods tend to be male, from a less affluent family, less influenced by friends, strongly influenced by celebrities, and materialistic. The effects of gender and membership group influence have gone in the opposite directions from what we expected. It appears that the proportion of men who use counterfeit products is higher than that of women. One possible explanation is that when it comes to clothing items and accessories, men may be less meticulous than women and, as a result, they may pay less attention to product quality. They purchase and use counterfeit goods because these products are brand name products and inexpensive. In contrast, women may pay more attention to product quality and, as a result, will be more selective about purchasing counterfeit goods. The negative effect of membership group influence suggests that consumers whose friends use genuine brand name products may be forced to use genuine brand name products as a way to try to fit in (Assael 1992). On the contrary, when consumers are among friends who do not use brand name products, they will have more leeway to use whatever products they prefer including counterfeit goods. Not only materialism has a direct effect on the use of counterfeit goods, but it also moderates the effects of other constructs on the use of counterfeit goods. A high level of materialism appears to strengthen the effects of gender, family affluence level, and membership group influence but weaken the effect of taste for western products. A subgroup analysis provides confirmation of these results. When splitting the sample into high and low materialism groups using the median score, gender, family affluence level, and membership group influence were found to be significant and in the right directions under a high materialism condition (p<0.10 for gender and p>0.5 for the rest), whereas only taste for western products was found to be significant but in the negative direction under a low materialism condition (p<0.05). This negative effect of taste may be due to the fact that with low levels of materialism, consumers who prefer western products will be more likely to purchase and use genuine products while consumer who have a lower degree of preference toward western products will be content with using counterfeit goods.

In examining the effects of main and interaction variables on the frequency of using counterfeit goods among counterfeit users, only the effects of family affluence level and the interaction

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<th>TABLE 1 (CONTINUED)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Scale Items for Key Constructs</td>
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<td><strong>ENDOGENOUS VARIABLES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Counterfeit Goods</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 item—Nominal Scale (Yes/No)</td>
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<tr>
<td>V31 Do you use counterfeit goods?</td>
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<td><strong>Frequency of Using Counterfeit Goods</strong></td>
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<td>1 item—5 point semantic differential scale—Anchored at endpoints (Not at all frequent/Very frequent)</td>
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<tr>
<td>V32 How frequent do you use counterfeit goods?</td>
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<td><strong>Source:</strong> Developed by the researcher</td>
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R- Reversed coded items.  
*– Items that were deleted after preliminary data analysis

Items that were deleted after preliminary data analysis

Reversed coded items.
between materialism and family affluence level appear to be significant. Family affluence level was found to have a positive effect on frequency of usage. This implies that students who are from a more affluent family tend to use counterfeit products more frequently than those who are from a less affluent family. This may be due to the fact that students who are from a more affluent family tend to be more familiar with brand name products, however, with limited allowances, they may be forced to purchase counterfeit products as an alternative and use them frequently. On the other hand, students who are from a less affluent family may be less familiar with brand name products and, hence, may purchase and use counterfeit products sporadically. Therefore, the frequency of counterfeit usage is somewhat lower. The significance of the interaction between materialism and family affluence level suggests that a high level of materialism should strengthen the positive effect of family affluence level on the frequency of usage. Students with a high level of materialism will put more emphasis on personal appearance and, as a result, the effect of family affluence level on frequency of usage will be more pronounced.
the frequency of usage will be stronger. A subgroup analysis of high and low materialism conditions provides confirmation of this interaction effect.

This study is considered exploratory in nature. We simply wanted to investigate the main and interaction effects of some key variables on the use of counterfeit goods and the frequency of usage. However, some limitations of the study can be identified. First, the sample of this study was confined to only college students. Second, the study may have left out some other variables such as attitude toward lawfulness of counterfeit goods, quality of counterfeit goods, and ease of access to counterfeit markets. Third, some of the unexpected results, such as the effects of gender and membership group influence, were difficult to explain and, hence, warrant further investigation. Forth, the materialism measures in this study were borrowed from Belk (1984) without taking into account the measures developed by Richins and Dawson (1992). Fifth, the results from this study could be specific for Thai consumers. Therefore, future research should be extended to cover the use of counterfeit goods among working people as well as taking into account some other constructs, such as those mentioned above. A comparative study may be carried out with the use of materialism scale developed by Belk (1984) and the scale developed by Richins and Dawson (1992). A cross-cultural study may prove to be beneficial toward the understanding of consumer attitudes and behavior with regard to the use of counterfeit goods. Further, a study might be carried out to investigate pros and cons of having counterfeit goods in the market as well as the role of the country in dealing with counterfeit goods.

CONCLUSION

The production of counterfeit goods is an illegal activity. However, counterfeit goods might be considered substitute products for consumers who cannot afford to pay for the genuine ones. Counterfeit goods are abundant in most developing nations. Thailand is one of those countries where counterfeit goods are plentiful. This study focused on the effects of materialism and other psychographic and demographic constructs on college students’ behavior toward the use of counterfeit goods. It appears that materialism is one of the key constructs that has main and moderating effects on the use of counterfeit goods.

REFERENCES


Taking the ‘Sham’ out of Shamrock: Legacy Tourists Seek the ‘Real Thing’
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ABSTRACT
Demirdjian (2002) reports on Irish Americans and the “consumer awakening to the Celtic culture.” He suggests that businesses “re-green” the “Shamrock market” along with the cafes, pubs, restaurants, travel agencies, and better serve this cultural subsegment of the U.S. market. However, Fletcher and Bell (2002) specifically request that it is time to “take the ‘sham’ out of shamrock” and that the Irish pub phenomena is “Hijacking Country of Origin Image.” In this paper, the authors explore Ireland’s Country of Origin Image and discuss the impact this often-used construct has with a pilot study of respondents.

INTRODUCTION
A country image projected to the rest of the world is very complex (O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy 2000) and multidimensional (Papadopoulos and Heslop 2002). Demirdjian (2002) reports on Irish Americans and the “consumer awakening to the Celtic culture” (p. 138). He suggests that businesses “re-green” the “Shamrock market” along with the cafes, pubs, restaurants, travel agencies, and better serve this cultural subsegment of the U.S. market. In preparation for this year’s St. Patrick’s Day, the Wall Street Journal called on “experts of Irish heritage” to help judge the best sources of Aran sweaters (Hughes 2003) and reminded readers that “if you thought St. Patrick’s Day festivals were as ancient as the Blarney Stone itself, think again. Today’s iconic parades and green beers aren’t so much a product of the Emerald Isle, but in fact were born of an Irish diaspora clamoring for respect” (Kimmersley 2003, p. D2). This interest in Celtic culture leads to a desire to participate in Irish related experiences in the United States as well as an increased interest in visiting Ireland itself. Descendants of Irish ancestry often take great pride in their cultural heritage. A segment of the U.S tourism market that has been found to be specifically responsive to Celtic culture consists of legacy tourists who travel to seek their ancestral roots (McCain and Ray 2002a,b). The interest in Celtic culture and the inclination to buy to reinforce that interest do not guarantee that Irish culture is, in fact, what is being purchased. Even in the 1970s, Russell (1976) titled one of his essays, “The Wearing Out of the Green,” and lamented how American “Irishness is much diluted” (p. 463). He complained about the silly, but harmless, “Kiss Me–I’m Irish” buttons often worn in parades. Recently, Fletcher and Bell (2002) condemn the corruption of true Irish experiences, specifically in the case of the expansion of the Irish pub phenomena without maintaining the true nature of the Irish pub. They assert that it is time to “take the sham out of shamrock” (p. 15). They label the use of a localized adaptation of foreign cultural symbols as “Hijacking Country of Origin Image.” The purpose of this paper is to begin an exploration of the country image of Ireland in the U.S., where Irish immigration has historically played an important role. We review the recent marketing literature concerning Ireland, Country-of-Origin (COO) impacts, and comment on the possible “hijacking” of Ireland’s COO image. We will examine the impact of the potential of cultural hijacking of Irish Country-of-Origin image on legacy tourist travel expectations. Convenience samples of American students will be analyzed regarding the importance of COO images and their impact on overall perceptions of Ireland and the possibility of future travel there with specific focus on their heritage and legacy travel intentions.

As Chambers (2000, p. 103) reminds us, the United States is, for example, a nation of immigrants, many of whom seek opportunities to visit the countries from which their ancestors originated. Some host countries, which have experienced considerable out-migration during periods of their history, have come to base much of their tourism on inviting such people to return to their ethnic “roots.” Ireland is a good example of this.

Receptivity of the Irish to legacy tourists and the commitment to providing authentic Irish cultural experiences is not uniformly positive. For instance, Irish Roots recently reported “More Restrictions in Researching Ireland’s Vital Statistics” (2002). Therefore, the country may be projecting conflicting images (i.e., encouraging those with Irish ancestry to come find their roots, while at the same time, making it difficult to do so). Other examples of conflicting marketing images involve the proud heritage of the island’s craftsmen and hard workers (authentic sweaters, Belleek pottery, Waterford crystal, Irish peat for heating homes, etc.) with the cultural ‘sham’ of porcelain leprechauns, “kiss me, I’m Irish” signs, and the ever-present shamrocks on every item of clothing, including underwear. Even worse, for this year’s Christmas season, one could buy from the Creative Irish Gifts Christmas catalog “O’Rudolph the Green Nose reindeer” consisting of a “shamrock and antler-adorned hat, complete with flashing green bulb nose, green twinkling antler lights, and dangling figurines, balls and bells.” At issue is whether the COO of Ireland overseas is accurate and whether any hijacking of Ireland’s COO for commercial purposes acts as an incentive or disincentive for tourism.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Hijacking Ireland’s COO
There is a substantial body of literature on COO effect. Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002) state that there are over 766 works in the literature. Initially the research focused on advantages derived when there was a positive COO associated with a product category (Bilkey and Ness 1982), especially for the classic ‘made in’ studies, such as those by Nagashima (1970 and 1977). This led to research as to how to create a favorable COO or correct an unfavorable COO (Johansson and et al., 1994). This was followed by research into the impact of COO on consumer behavior. Specifically the effect of COO stereotypes on consumer beliefs and evaluation of products (Janda and Rao 1997). O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy (2000) state that buying based on a country’s image is affect-driven, in contrast to buying on the basis of “reputational capital” which is belief-driven.

Recently research on the topic has reflected the complexities of globalization (Phau and Prendergast 1999). In the global environment, ‘made in’ increasingly does not mean what is implied and COO is indicated by phrases such as ‘assembled in,’ ‘designed in,’ ‘packed in’ or ‘engineered in.’ And, of course, all of these phrases could be completely at odds with the legalities of the ‘made in’ wording (Jaffe and Nebenzahl 2001a). With the increase in the number of global firms, although products are produced in many locations, they are being promoted as associated with that country whose COO is perceived to be strongest.

However, to our knowledge, the COO variable has not often been evaluated as one having an impact on tourism, even though intuition tells us that it might be an important variable in tourism.
behavior and a recent article by Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002) lists tourism as one of the multidimensional parts of ‘place equity’ in their review of past COO research. One exception to this lack of research seems to be that research focusing on country image as impacted by mega-events such as the Olympics (e.g., Mossberg and Hallberg 1999). Asking respondents in some of our previous studies to respond to a Country Image measure (Martin and Ergul 1993) resulted in findings showing little relationship between their tourism behavior and their perceptions of the host country, so maybe COO links are strongest for physical products. The authors plan to explore this possibility.

At a macro level, COO can become an important element in national competitive advantage and governments often undertake trade promotion activities overseas to create a positive COO association, such as the recent “Cool Britannia” campaign. Stewart-Allen (2002) reports that the British Brands Group has found that this heritage can make a difference in global markets. In an age where protection of intellectual property rights is becoming an increasingly important issue in international marketing, COO research is beginning to address activities that create the illusion of COO without there being any real substance to the actual or implied claim. Mueller, Mack and Broderick (2001) coined the term ‘captive cues’ for marketing cues that mislead, confuse or create ambiguity for customers about a product’s geographical origin. Their research applied to products. However, in the area of international services, there is evidence of wholesale hijacking of COO as opposed to just the use of misleading cues (Fletcher and Bell 2002).

The proliferation of Irish pubs around the world is a prime example of COO association without necessarily having any actual connection with the country of origin. In the UK, 95% of these are Irish ‘representations’ and have been established by chains of UK breweries. Guiness has created 1250 Irish bars worldwide and is involved in joint ventures with ‘authentic Irish bar’ designers (Brown and Patterson 2000). The above however does not explain the whole phenomenon as there is also a COO effect at work, even if it is faux. As Americans are sometimes surprised to learn, Michael Flatley of Riverdance fame is not Irish, but an American born and raised in Chicago, and that the show itself is faux Irish and a classic example of hijacking country of origin image. According to Brown and Patterson (2000, p. 656),

the typical Irish theme pub with its green garish décor, pseudo-Gaelic invocations, ‘thousand welcomes’ doorways, shamrock inspired fittings, peat burning fireplace, freshly brewed stout, wide range of whiskeys, conspiratorial hints of under-the-counter poteen, and general air of pseudo-ibersno bonhomie, cannot be considered indicative of today’s Ireland, yesterday’s Ireland or any other Ireland this side of The Quiet Man.

Two dangers arise from this hijack activity. In the first place, the strength of the illusion creates an image that is in conflict with the real Irish pub and with the real Ireland. Secondly, the illusion of reality is often less (or more) attractive than the actual authentic offering. These facts have grave implications for the tourism industry, especially when tourists might be disappointed that realism doesn’t live up to the myth created by the captive cues.

Ireland and Legacy Tourism
Partly because of intermittent ‘peace dividends,’ Northern Ireland experienced a large tourism increase in the mid-1990s. In a study of German tourists concerning their potential travel to Northern Ireland, a large majority (81%) had a good or very good impression of the country as a travel destination and 59% considered it safe or very safe (Lennon, Weber, and Henson 2001). In fact, writing after September 11, Stanbridge (2001) tells her British compatriots that it is time to explore ‘the Celtic connection.’ Many UK businesses and organizations are examining venues closer to home in these turbulent times; Belfast is a new destination for many, but is close to home, and is a location which has historically shown “resilience and optimism” (p. 26) during times of trouble.

The importance of genealogy tourists (referred to as “legacy” tourists) in Ireland (mostly the North) and their key motivations when they travel has been the subject of recent research (McCain and Ray 2002a,b). While this legacy niche of travelers is important, marketers often overlook opportunities associated with this market segment. We read that genealogy is a “significant part of Northern Ireland’s tourism industry” (Evans 1998, p. 14). Unfortunately, there is little more specific about the contribution of genealogy to tourism industries, although this “significant part” is part of approximately 200 million pounds revenue per annum from foreign visitors (Collins and Beggs 2000), but still only represents less than 2% of GDP in North Ireland, in comparison to 7% in the Republic of Ireland and Scotland (“Tourism Development in Northern Ireland” 2000).

The legacy category of heritage tourism has drawn increasing attention in the industry. Although the boundaries of what constitutes heritage tourism are somewhat fuzzy, most researchers generally agree that it includes tourism related to what we have inherited. This may mean interest in our connections to history, art, science, lifestyles, architecture, scenery found in a community, or to a region, population, or institution that we regard as part of our collective lineage, or our own search for personal meaning through ancestral research. Certainly many in the U.S. care about their Irish heritage and, as Silberberg (1995, p. 364) discusses, there was a tourism shift in the 90s away from ‘escapism’ to ‘enrichment.’ He reports that 88% of American travelers said that understanding culture was very important when planning trips (up from 48% in the 80s). The next largest percentages were 73% for “location with natural beauty” (up from 60%) and 72% for “gain a new perspective on life” (up from 40%). The motive for enrichment excludes “pop” images of Disneyesque leprechauns and “Kiss Me” buttons.

To increase tourism interest, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board implemented what Silberberg (1995) has said to be the most important form of partnering with others to achieve tourism success—packaging cultural and non-cultural tourism products together. As one example of this, the Ulster Historical Foundation provides travel opportunities for those “searching for that elusive Irish ancestor” (Ulster Historical Foundation 2001). The program includes:

- a range of tours, social events and entertainment, all included at no extra cost. Delegates will visit heritage centres, explore museums and enjoy the magnificent scenery of areas of outstanding natural beauty such as The G lens of Antrim, the Giant’s Causeway and Co. Donegal. They will also have the opportunity to visit the historic city of Derry including a tour of the famous walls, the Guild Hall, St Columb’s Cathedral and the award winning Tower Museum.

This certainly represents a lot of ‘partnersing’ between the heritage institutions and typical tourist attractions.

There are some specifics on ‘cultural tourists’ who represent a contribution of more than three billion pounds to the rest of the UK economy each year, apart from Northern Ireland (Collins and Beggs 2000). Interestingly, 98% of tourists to the Republic of Ireland are motivated by the opportunity to visit ‘cultural and historic’ places. Although specific statistics are lacking regarding
the contribution of legacy tourism to local economies, tourist officials in Ulster are interested in developing marketing strategies to try to tap a “huge untapped source for tourism into Northern Ireland” (“Genealogy” 1999, p. 1). In a quick search on the Internet with Google, the words “genealogy and tourism” produced approximately 109,000 results. Of the first ten pages of listings, 20% related to Ireland genealogy tourism. Others included genealogy travel to Wales, Scotland, England, Germany, Canada, numerous states in the US, and even to Croatia and the Falkland Islands. The Republic of Ireland emphasizes this legacy motivation with advertisements enticing travelers to “come Back to Erin” (Journey Through Ireland 2002) and one of its neighbors, VisitScotland, the national tourism organization of Scotland, does this by managing ancestralscotland.com (2002, p. 82), advertising “You’ve explored your Scottish heritage. Now explore your ancestral homeland... Come home to Scotland.”

As outsiders, we applaud the willingness of the tourism boards of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to work together, especially since several sources cite lack of coordination as a weakness in tourism marketing in Northern Ireland (Collins and Beggs 2000 and “Genealogy” 1999). These partnerships are not without challenges however as “the NITB is mindful that a significant section of the Unionist Community do not wish to develop deeper links with the South of Ireland” (Greer 2002, p. 365). These reports stress the need for Ulster to “accommodate the shift towards cultural tourism” (Collins and Beggs, p. 505) and to engage in market segmentation and penetration of potential markets.

Even though place image is most often not directly under marketers’ control (Papadopoulos and Heslop 2002), perhaps determining what Ireland’s image is with potential visitors is a good step. Our recommendation is that tourist institutions in the country engage in “legacy tourist tracking” based on the changing role of cultural/heritage tourists in general and consider if Ireland’s image can be capitalized on in the marketing of its heritage. It may be a way for Ireland to take some of the ‘sham’ out of Shamrock and continue the trend away from the escapism of artificially created Irish symbols and toward enrichment and the “search for authentic otherness” (MacCannell 2002, p. 150).

Marketing researchers will need to keep in mind that legacy tourists have several types of motivations for trying to find the “trail through time” (what Candon 2000 described as the “product” the Ulster History Park sells). These include family pride, bragging rights, religious observations, and memorial respect and what one of us remembers the UHF representatives describing, at one talk on their 2001 U.S. lecture tour, as a “feeling of completeness.” While Candon (2000 p. 611) (Ulster History Park) reports the obvious (“most people, most of the time, do not believe literally that they are able to travel through time”), he also recounts the feelings of legacy tourists by quoting another author (Brett 1993, p. 186), “History, truly considered, is a verb, not an abstract noun. We history.” To history is a cue for seeking authentic experiences that take priority over being entertained. And, as tourists looking for Irish enrichment, we will certainly pay someone to help us to ‘history,’ which presumably will be more enriching than visiting faux Irish pubs or buying silly trinkets. Certainly, there is nothing more personal than one’s own legacy or heritage as a motivation for travel.1

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The authors are in the process of conducting Ireland Country Image studies with convenience samples of American undergraduates. Some of the questions from Lennon, Weber and Henson (2001) are used, specifically: whether the respondent has ever visited the country before and experience derived from frequency of travel in general (both representing “internal information”), respondents’ perceptions of the destination as a safe place to visit and overall impressions of it as a travel destination. In addition, respondents were asked to respond to a country-of-origin measure (Martin and Eroglu 1993). General travel motivations, such as those researched by Eagles (1992) are included to help determine if COO is linked to any specific motivation for travel and Meric and Hunt’s (1998) list of sources of travel information is included. Results should shed some preliminary exploratory results as to not only the perceptions that Yanks have of Ireland, but whether tourism marketers should look further into the role that COO can have in choosing a country as a travel destination.

Preliminary results of a small pilot study of only U.S. undergraduate students show 77% of them have a good or very good impression of The Republic of Ireland as a travel destination and that 52% of them believe that Ireland is safe or very safe, with 17% saying the Republic is not safe. Only three people in this small group of 48 had ever been to Ireland. The group of students has an average age of 25. The typical frequency of travel is spread out, with equal percentages (21% each) indicating that they travel once a month, once in three months, and at least twice a year, with an average of 22% of that travel being international. Almost 20 percent of this group are not citizens of the U.S., even though they are studying in America. Therefore, this pilot study information is certainly not necessarily representative of typical U.S. students. The authors use to categorize legacy tourists is important to them when they travel. However, these potential tourists also list the following travel motivations as even more important to them when they travel (in order of importance): local festivals, change from a busy job, and oceanside. Being physically active, seeing historical sites, and interacting with native peoples are also highly rated. The fact that motives like local festivals, interaction with native peoples, and seeing historical sites rate highly indicates a desire to experience authentic Irish culture. Ireland could certainly accommodate them concerning these travel motivations.2 They seek to find the real Ireland. To the degree that they bring incorrect perceptions of what

1The impetus for the investigation into legacy tourism derives from personal observations as a participant of heritage tourism experiences. One author has recently traced her own family roots and journeyed with an aunt to Northern Ireland to find information about their distant Ulster ancestor. While there, she was invited by the Ulster Historical Foundation (UHF) to witness their presentation before a meeting of the Northern Ireland Assembly Departmental Committee on Culture, Arts and Leisure at the Parliament Building at Stormont, outside Belfast. Both authors are also attempting to subsegment the heritage tourism market to focus on tourists’ personal heritage motivations. The UHF speaker mentioned both motivations when they explained to the Departmental Committee why they had asked her to attend.

2In addition to wanting to visit places where their family is from, legacy travelers surveyed in past research conducted by the authors believe that the following are the most important motivations for travel: (in order of importance) visiting historic sites, wilderness and undisturbed nature, mountains, and visiting friends and relatives. Travel guides, chambers of commerce, and word of mouth are the most important sources used in planning vacations for legacy tourists. Traditional media and even tourist bureaus play a lesser role. The convenience samples of respondents reported here tend to agree. They ranked word-of-mouth, the Internet, and travel/books and guides as the first, second, and third most important sources when planning travel.
to expect derived from captious cues learned prior to their travel, they might find the travel experience disappointing.

Country of Origin perceptions (semantic differential 14-item measure, 1 to 7 scale; coefficient alpha of .90) that stand out are that they believe that Ireland is very economically developed, very much represents a free market system, with a strong industrialized democratic and civilian government, and has high literacy rates. For none of the fourteen COO items were means higher than neutral points, with lower numbers indicating perceptions leaning toward more developed, etc. (The entire COO measure, along with representative means is shown in Figure 1.) The respondents were asked to respond to an open-ended question regarding perceptions of their overall image of Ireland and any thoughts they may have regarding products which are made in Ireland (whether they had ever been to Ireland or not). They said that it is “a very green place,” “surprisingly economically developed,” (yet one person thought it was an “underdeveloped country”) “the landscape is one of the most beautiful in God’s creation,” “moderate to cold and foggy climate,” “historic and has great beer” (“lots of Guinness”), “wool,” “lovely people,” “great place for Americans to conduct business,” “music,
dance, and culture in general,” and the fact that it offers a “rural-style vacation.” Others commented on the “medieval history and religion” and its “soccer” and “rugby.” Some commented on its high-tech reputation, yet the country was neutrally perceived as having a “high (vs. low) level of technological research” in the COO items. We cannot determine the degree to which these are based on accurate perceptions of Ireland or are artifacts of commercialized image creation. Regarding Ireland’s products, most didn’t comment, but one said, “I don’t think they are the best” and a few couldn’t think of any products made in Ireland. One added to the last statement that s(he) knew that they were “well made,” however. Comments also include “Irish linen is the best” and this person also knows about the “china and crystal.” Potatoes were mentioned by five people.

It seemed that several (five or six) of the respondents (indicating “civil unrest”) perceived The Troubles as taking place in the Republic and did comment that they wouldn’t feel safe there and that it is “not safe for Americans; they have disappeared there” and that “they have small wars there.” One indicated that the safety issue is “black and white,” with safety a problem in the North, but not in the Republic. There was evidence that the influence of hijacked COO affected students’ perspectives of Irish products through faux cues. Two mentioned Irish soap and one said, “Products made in Ireland (Irish Spring Soap) do well by taking advantage of the American view of Ireland as a peaceful countryside.” Another mentions Riverdance.

We conclude that while the legacy tourist seriously seeks authentic Irish cultural experiences, there is evidence that the definition of authentic is subject to contamination from capacious cues of the pop culture Americanization of Irish symbols. Hijacking of Irish County of Origin image appears to be altering and confusing the expectations of American travelers. To the degree that those fallacious cues are accepted as authentic components of the Irish culture, American tourists in Ireland, especially legacy tourists who are committed to authentic discovery of their ancestral past, may find the Irish (as would many countries) fail to measure up to false expectations. We also find that there is a great deal of confusion surrounding any differences between the North and the Republic. If tourists are fearful of The Troubles, both Irelands seem to be affected. Perhaps in the collaboration between the two Irelands’ tourist boards, efforts could be made to define Ireland (and the two parts of it).

Obviously this pilot study has a major limitation in the fact that the persons sampled are unlikely to travel to Ireland as tourists. It would be best to collect data from websites devoted to Ireland and related travel sources. Future research is needed into the degree to which various segments of travelers recognize the artificiality of commercialized and Americanized symbols are accepted as authentic symbols of Irish culture. And, how is their satisfaction affected by any artificial expectation?

How likely are the serious legacy tourists to be more or less critical of pop symbols than tourists overall? How different are experienced tourists from the non-traveler in their recognition of the faux nature of such symbols? And, what would be tourists’ reactions to a possible Irish brand (following the lead of “Scotland the Brand,” “New Zealand Way” national brand, and others [Jaffe and Nebenzahl 2001b])? And, should Ireland consider joining other European nations attempting to protect any valuable geographic indicators? After all, European negotiators at the WTO are attempting to protect food names associated with specific regions, such as the UK’s cheddar cheese (Miller 2003).

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Fakin’ It: Counterfeiting and Consumer Contradictions
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ABSTRACT
Fashion counterfeiting is a multimillion pound business and one which relies on the complicity of the consumer. Frequently seen as a victimless crime, it is a difficult trade to control because as long as consumers desire brands, the greater the market for counterfeits. In this study we consider the way in which consumers relate to fake brands and the implications of counterfeit for consumers creating their identity through commodities. The results point to an inherent and fundamental contradiction in consumers views on counterfeit, willing to buy and wear the fakes but condemning the duplicity of those who do.

INTRODUCTION
Buying counterfeit goods is like giving generously to crime. It has been estimated that the cost to the UK economy alone of counterfeit goods is at least £2.8 billion p.a both in terms of the amount of goods sold and the loss to legitimate manufacturers (ACG, 2001). Yet it is often seen as a victimless crime and one in which consumers are willing to be complicit (Freedman, 1999). This is particularly true of fashion counterfeits as research has demonstrated that consumers will accept counterfeit products if performance risks are low (Bush et al., 1993). Fashion goods are frequently highly branded and easily recognisable, especially at the designer or luxury end of the market, indeed the more exclusive a brand is, the more likely it is to be counterfeited (Nia and Zaichkowsky, 2000). As these goods are also high value, there is considerable profit to be made from counterfeiting these brands. At a time in which consumers increasingly inhabit ‘brandscapes’ (Sherry, 1995) in which consumer goods have become the material carriers of meaning, outward displays of identity are embodied in the signs and symbols of brands. This focus on brands as communicators of identity and the elevation of brands to cultural symbols, has implications for understanding consumer attitudes towards counterfeit goods. Whilst previous research has identified price as the main motivation for consumers purchasing counterfeits, very little attention has been paid to how consumers regard counterfeits in relation to their self image and identity. The idea that consumers seek to match product image with ideal-image is supported by studies from Green et al. (1969); Hughes and Guerrero (1971); and Landon (1974). Since products carry meaning, material objects hold the promise of bridging the distance between the actual and the ideal self. This view of commodities as bridges was developed by McCracken (1988), who describes them as “instances of displaced meaning” and clearly brands are central to this process. When these brands are counterfeit, however, does the same bridging effect apply? Can consumers achieve their ideal image through the consumption of counterfeit goods? The aim of this research is to address the role of counterfeit fashion brands and their implications in the construction of consumer identity.

THE CONSUMER AS IDENTITY SEEKER
Images of the consumer as identity-seeker are compelling and account for the obsession with brands, the willingness to read stories into impersonal products, the fascination with difference, the preoccupation with signs, and above all, the fetishism of images (Gabriel and Lang, 1998). Indeed it can be argued that consumer culture has reached a point of ‘empty self’, where the modern consumer must be constantly ‘filled up’ with all manner of things—experiences as goods and goods as experiences (Corrigan, 1998). Consumption communicates social meaning and the fulfilling of more concrete needs arising from, for example, individual feelings of cold or hunger become almost an accidental by-product. Consumers increasingly focus upon the meaning of the products, most frequently manifested as the brand, rather than the functional purpose of the commodity. It is through these issues of “competitive display” (Douglas and Isherwood, 1979) and the role of possessions as cultural signals that brands become non verbal communicators, a language that Baudrillard (1968) ultimately finds regressive as it offers a code of significations that is always complicit and opaque.

In a consumer society, all commodities have cultural as well as functional values. To model this we need to extend the idea of an economy to include a cultural economy where the circulation is not one of money, but of meanings and pleasures.

(page 27)

Indeed it has been argued that the brand is sometimes more important than the product itself (Cowley, 1998; Peters, 1997; de Chernatony and McDonald, 1998; Rohlander, 1999; Rio et al., 2001). The marketing of designer goods in particular has contributed to the images that a brand creates a personality (de Chernatony, 1999), for example, “The Gucci woman is a rock star and the YSL woman is a sophisticated movie star.” (Rice, 2000). McCracken’s (1986) theory of structure and movement of the cultural meaning of consumer goods states that cultural meaning moves first from the culturally constituted world to consumer goods, and then from these goods to the individual consumer. Several instruments are responsible for this movement: advertising, the fashion system, and four consumption rituals i.e. possession, exchange, gifting and divestment (illustrated in figure 1).

Linked to this is the idea of self concept. As Solomon (1983) stated, “Consumption does not occur in a vacuum; products are integral threads in the fabric of social life” (pg. 319). Possessions symbolise not only personal qualities of individuals, but also the groups they belong to and their social standing generally. Consumers express their personal and social characteristics through material possessions, both to themselves and to others. Therefore products are important to understanding self-concept. Self-concept by definition, “includes self-esteem, or the value with which a person views him or herself.” It also includes self-image, or the “percep-
tions people have of what they are like” (Goldsmith et al., 1999). This has two main components—the actual self and the ideal self, defined as the image of oneself as one would like to be (Belch, 1978; Belch and Landon 1977; Delozier and Tillman, 1972). Self-concept theory describes a basic motivation to achieve the ‘ideal’ self—whether in a ‘private’ or ‘social’ context (Evans, 1999). Self-concept is important because consumers select products and brands that fit or match their images of themselves or the image they would like others to see (Solomon, 1983). The more congruent the brand’s image and consumer’s self-image, the more it can induce consumers to purchase that particular brand (Graeff, 1996). A study by Mintel (2001) identified that consumers increasingly believe that designer brands improve self-image (see also Graeff, 1996; Auty and Elliot, 1998; Evans, 1999; Goldsmith et al., 1999; Rohlander, 1999; Rio et al., 2001). As Schouten (1991) states,

“One characteristics that makes human unique is our ability to examine ourselves, to find ourselves lacking, and to attempt self-betterment. This sense of incompleteness drives us not merely to create, but also to self-create, and we consume goods and services in the process (pg. 412).”

The question addressed in this research is the effect on perceptions of self image when the brands used to communicate, to self-create, are deceptive, i.e. they are counterfeit.

**COUNTERFEITING**

Before discussing counterfeit studies, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the boundaries of counterfeit. According to the Anti Counterfeiting Group, counterfeiting is defined as:

“The deliberate attempt to deceive consumers by copying and marketing goods bearing well known trademarks, generally together with packaging and product configuration, so that they look like they are made by a reputable manufacturer when they are, in fact, inferior copies (pg. 1).”

In attempting to offer a suitable definition of counterfeiting, therefore, there is the immediate difficulty of delineating similar types of activities that are commonly grouped together under one heading. Any investigation of product or copyright infringement reveals several categories of activity. Instances of infringement cover a variety of interrelated phenomena: piracy, counterfeiting,
look-alikes, sound-alikes, ‘knock-off’ brands and a large ‘grey market’ (McDonald and Roberts, 1994). Phau et al. (2001) define five main types of activity:

Deceptive Counterfeiting: the production of copies that are identically packaged, including trade marks and labelling, copied so as to seem to a consumer the genuine article. In this case the consumer is a victim of deception, i.e. they are unknowingly purchasing a counterfeit good (Grossman and Shapiro, 1988; Kay, 1990; Cordell et al., 1996).

Piracy: or non deceptive counterfeiting is when the counterfeit product’s intention is not to deceive the consumer, but on the contrary the consumer is aware that the product he or she is buying is pirated. In this case the consumer is the collaborator of the counterfeiters (Grossman and Shapiro, 1988; Bloch et al., 1993; McDonald and Roberts, 1994; Cordell et al., 1996).

Imitations: Unlike counterfeits, which are direct copies, imitations or copycats are similar in substance, name, shape and colour to look like the originals (Wilke and Zaichkowsky, 1999). While a brand imitation is designed so as to ‘look like’ and make consumers ‘think of’ the original brand, a counterfeit product is designed to ‘be like’ the original (Astous and Gargouri, 2001).

Grey Market: This describes the unauthorised sale of garment production overruns by legitimately contracted manufacturers (Mcdonald and Roberts, 1994). This practice has recently received considerable press attention as designers attempt to protect their brand integrity by controlling retail outlets. This is a supply side issue rather than one of consumer activity.

Custom-made copies: These are replicas of trademark designs of branded products made by legitimate craftsmen. Raw materials are usually of good quality. The only item missing from the original is the emblem or brand name (Phau et al., 2001).

It is non-deceptive counterfeiting that is the focus of this study, perhaps more accurately called piracy, i.e. accurate and deliberate copying of branded goods, but not sold with the intention of attempting to deceive the customer. The deception involved is on the side of the consumer who chooses to buy these goods.

Product Counterfeiting

Studies on counterfeiting approach this issue from two directions, demand and supply. On the supply side there have been several studies (see for example, Bamossy and Scammon, 1985; Bush, Bloch and Dawson, 1989; Onkvisit and Shaw, 1989; Kay 1990; Olsen and Granzin, 1992; Stipp, 1996; Behar, 2000; Blanchard, 2000) as Bloch et al. (1993) state, however, “Supply-side remedies have not been totally successful because supply will always exist where there is demand (pg. 35).” Therefore, it is imperative to address the demand, or why consumers purchase counterfeit goods. Table 1 summarises the different areas of research on consumer-demand led counterfeiting. This research shows that consumers who knowingly buy counterfeit goods are willing to trade quality and performance for the brand image of the genuine good at a presumed price saving (Bloch et al., 1993; Tom et al., 1998; Miller, 1999; Phau et al., 2001 Grossman and Shapiro, 1988; Wee et al., 1995). Consumers are willing to accept counterfeit goods, although they know counterfeiting is a civil or criminal crime (Bloch et al., 1993; Cordell et al., 1996; Tom et al., 1998). Purchase of a counterfeit is not a criminal act, but it does abet the sale which is criminal. Willing purchase of counterfeits falls into the class of non-normative consumer behaviour. Tolerance of, and participation in, non-normative behaviour is often justified by neutralisation, whereby the perpetrator excuses him/herself from blame by denial of wrong or deflecting blame to the victim. This infers that a consumer invokes his/her lawfulness attitudes selectively when confronted with moral conflict in the marketplace.

METHODOLOGY

Previous counterfeit research has demonstrated ‘what’ the consumer determinants of purchasing counterfeit goods are. Almost all studies listed in table 1 rely heavily upon quantitative methods of data collection. In this study we address ‘why’, adopting an in-depth qualitative data collection technique. Twenty interviews were conducted with a self-selecting group, recruited using a form of snowball technique, in central Glasgow. Previous studies have indicated that common segmentation variables such as age, gender and educational attainment are not a determinant of purchasing counterfeit goods (Wee et al., 1995). In order to gain consistency in brand knowledge and awareness, therefore, it was decided to restrict respondents to the under 30 age group. This group have the advantage of being fashion aware, are heavy purchasers of fashion brands and have been shown to purchase counterfeit goods (Mintel, 2000). Although Bloch et al. (1993) showed that contrary to expectations more affluent consumers who had no financial need to do so do buy counterfeit goods, the 14 female and six male respondents covered a wide range of income brackets and occupations. The gender balance was reflective of the self selecting nature of the group and the fact that more women than men were willing to discuss buying counterfeit. In order to give a broad base of opinion two consumers (one male, one female) who claimed never to have knowingly purchased counterfeit were included. The interview schedule covered four main areas, attitudes towards fashion and brands in general using a selection of designer and high street items as prompts; attitudes towards counterfeiting in general; detailed discussion of counterfeit fashion brands using a selection of counterfeit and genuine accessories and finally discussion about how respondents relate to counterfeit brands compared to genuine brands. All interviews lasted between 45-60 minutes and were taped and transcribed.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The results are reported according to the objectives of the research, to understand how consumers use brands in the construction of their identity and specifically, the implications when these brands are counterfeit. Firstly respondents understanding of brands and the role of brands in contracting self image is discussed, followed by an investigation of what they understand the term counterfeit to mean. We then examine how respondents view both their own, and other consumers, use of counterfeit brands.

Branding and Self Image

In order to address the issue of counterfeit brands it is necessary to establish the nature of ‘aspirational’ brands and what is understood by the term ‘designer brand’ compared to high street brands. Respondents were asked to describe their reaction to a number of images collected from high street and designer outlets. All respondents were able to distinguish between the two groups, they described designer brands as ‘fashionable’, ‘expensive’, ‘impressive’, ‘glamorous’, ‘sophisticated’, ‘gorgeous’, ‘elegant’ and ‘extravagant’. The majority (17 respondents) felt that they were different from the ‘average piece’ of the high-street retailers. High-street brands received less enthusiastic comments. Their descriptions of high-street brands were ‘nice’, ‘stylish’, ‘young’, ‘casual’, ‘simple’ and ‘common’. When compared, eighteen respondents felt that there was a difference either in ‘colours’, ‘models’ or ‘style’ between these brands, the high street group were described as
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author/s</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Grossman and Shapiro</td>
<td>Watches</td>
<td>Economic: Policy making for counterfeits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Bloch et al.</td>
<td>Knit sportshirts</td>
<td>Preferences and attitudes toward counterfeit versus genuine products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Wee et al.</td>
<td>Literature, computer software, leather wallets/ purses, and watches</td>
<td>Non-price determinants of purchasing counterfeit goods i.e. Five Psychographic variables (attitude, brand status, materialism, novelty seeking, risk taking). Two Product attribute variables (durability, image, physical appearance, purpose, quality, and perceived fashion content) and One Demographic variable (age, educational attainment, household income)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Cordell et al.</td>
<td>Knit shirt and 35-mm camera</td>
<td>Lawfulness attitudes and product traits of counterfeits i.e. attitudes toward lawfulness and counterfeit purchases, product performance expectations and extrinsic cues and product investment-at-risk (brand, retailer, price)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Tom et al.</td>
<td>Software, designer apparels, CD, video and tape-recordings</td>
<td>Pre-purchase (attitude), Purchase (opportunity to purchase counterfeit or legitimate products, product attitudes and demographic characteristics) and Post-Purchase (satisfaction) of counterfeit goods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>Colour television</td>
<td>Why consumers buy illicit goods (generic, counterfeit and stolen). Three variables taken in the study are: selling price, situation, and risk of purchase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Nia and Zaichkowsky</td>
<td>Luxury fashion brands</td>
<td>Do counterfeits devalue the ownership of luxury brands? Variables such as quality, price, durability, uniqueness, exclusivity and status symbols were used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Ang et al.</td>
<td>Music CDs</td>
<td>Consumer responses towards counterfeits: perceived risks in buying, perceived harm/ benefit to society, morality, social influences, and personality factors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Phau et al.</td>
<td>Branded Clothing</td>
<td>Profiling brand-piracy-prone consumers (Using demographics to understand the purchasing criteria, identification of pirated brands, purpose of buying pirates). Implication for policy making is also provided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Brand:** Louis Vuitton  
**Product:** Cigarette Case  
**Design:** Monogram  
**Authenticity:** Genuine  
**Price:** £ 70

**Brand:** Louis Vuitton  
**Product:** Cigarette Case  
**Design:** Monogram  
**Authenticity:** Counterfeit  
**Price:** £ 5
brings them no brand at all than to wear a fake item. This is because it would be like buying from thieves. Because someone designed the stuff and then it is copied. It is stealing and when you buy… it is like buying from the thieves!

Female, 28yrs

I think it is right, why not? If you feel good with a fake and you know it is a fake, it is okay.

Male, 25yrs
This illustrates an interesting ethical issue, for the majority of respondents to this research actively participating in behaviour they acknowledged as wrong was justifiable because the desire to own the brand out weighed the desire to ‘do the right thing’.

Counterfeiting and Consumer Identity

The next objective of the research was to establish why people buy fake goods and how they relate these to their self identity. Only two respondents had never purchased fake goods; the other 18 had at some time purchased goods they knew to be fake. The reasons are typified by these comments;

I bought it because I liked the style and the design and it was NOT because of the brand.  

Male 29yrs

It was a Giorgio Armani suit and it had the brand label on the sleeve. I was going to an interview, I thought ‘I will look smart in it’. I bought it because, fair enough, the brand was there and it distracts people from looking at me and instead at the sleeve.

Female, 22yrs

Honestly 10% was because I was curious, I never had these items (sic). 50% was because I like it. They are not expensive because they are fake and because they are branded and I never had these goods (sic). That’s why I bought it… and they (counterfeit dealer) made it so real.

Female, 23yrs

For these respondents the brand itself was the main reason for purchase and the messages associated with the brand that can be transferred to the wearer. This implies that the ‘bridging effect’ identified above applies when the brand is fake.

There was a wide disparity in opinion, however, about whether a counterfeit good carries the same meaning as the genuine article. Some (6 respondents) felt the meanings of counterfeit goods would only be present if a person does not know whether it is genuine or fake. Others felt that although it was fake, if it still had the symbol e.g. the LV monogram of Louis Vuitton it therefore conveyed the same meaning. On this basis it is the visual brand cue that is important rather than any intrinsic features of the item itself. It was suggested by eight respondents that it is the perception of the individual that makes the difference, if one could tell the fake, if it could be identified, meanings would not be able to transfer. For example,

You see some goods and even if there is a small difference, a centimetre difference, the feelings would not be the same… so the goods are fake and they are different. They are different and so the feelings would not be the same. 

Female, 22yrs

On this basis meanings are only able to ‘bridge’ if consumers are unable to distinguish the genuine from the counterfeit. If the fake is detectable, the aura and meanings of the genuine good would disappear. This is important in terms of deception as respondents clearly felt that a key factor in the bridging effect of these brands was the perception of the onlooker rather than the knowledge of the consumer. Several respondents were happy to wear fake brands and to believe that the brand was contributing to their self image, as long as the deception could not be detected.

There are people who buy fake products because there are other people who think they are original, they feel more confident not because the product is original BUT because of other people thinking it is original. 

Female, 22yrs

For instance you can buy a Versace copy, a jacket. You can go on the street and nobody can stop you and say ‘Wait a minute, I want to check this is a Versace or not’. So while you are going along the street, you are feeling absolutely good. It gives an impression that you are a special fashionable person, are really smart and elegant, and have a lot of money.

Female, 20yrs

Indeed the most frequently cited reason for purchasing counterfeit was to impress others. The impression could be ‘fashionable’, ‘stylish’, ‘rich’ and ‘important’. By accepting them as genuine, counterfeit goods were able to provide these meanings to others and therefore improve consumers self image.

When this logic is then transferred to other consumers, however, it falls down. Asked how they felt about consumers wearing counterfeit goods and, in effect, giving a deceptive impression by appearing to have purchased a genuine item, respondents were confused.

I do not think as deep as that. They are just carrying that bag. It is not as deep as that, they just like the bag.

Female, 22yrs

The impression of the person would not be good. You can tell the person is trying to show off. Really it would affect me a lot. It is lying.

Male, 21yrs

It depends, if she is carrying a fake bag, and not showing it off, I would say she is the kind of person who has fashion interest, she is just trying to be as fashionable as possible with money. But! if she is a person who starts showing off, and she knows it is fake, my god, she is stupid!

Female, 28yrs

The majority of the respondents felt that there were no real differences between the genuine and counterfeit buyer except that one was in a better financial position than the other. Yet, respondents appeared to think less of buyers of counterfeit if they pretended the good was genuine. It was only appropriate to buy the fake when users were not misusing the ‘privilege’ of counterfeit goods to pretend to be rich and fashionable. This illustrates a fundamental contradiction in the views of the respondents towards fake goods. Of the twenty consumers interviewed, only two claimed never to have bought counterfeit goods and a further two claimed to have no hostile view of those who wear fakes. The remainder admitted to purchasing fakes, but claimed not to be passing themselves off as something they were not. At the same time they appeared to believe that wearing fake was acceptable as long as the consumer did not make the claim that it was genuine. What remained unclear, and generated some hostile reaction during interviews, was how an individual walking along a street and displaying a fake brand with all of its non-verbal meaning, can at the same time communicate that it is fake, given earlier comments about the need to ensure that fakes are undetectable. The majority of respondents in this research, therefore, made a distinction between active and passive deception; passive deception implies the wearing of counterfeit brands, allowing the brand to communicate it is associated meaning non verbally. Active deception implies verbally claiming that a brand was genuine when it was not or acting in such a way that the implication is
that the brand is genuine. This is a complex issue and one that requires further research as a clear and fundamental contradiction was detected in respondents’ attitudes towards fake designer goods that can not be simply explained. Most respondents were willing to buy and wear fake goods, believing that as long as the fake was good enough to be undetectable the associated cultural meanings of the brand would be transferred. When questioned about how they felt about other consumers actively claiming that counterfeit goods were genuine they were hostile and claimed this was deception.

CONCLUSIONS

This was an exploratory study and based on interviews with a small group of consumers. It reveals, however, a fundamental contradiction in attitudes towards counterfeit goods, which itself perhaps explains some of the problems that genuine organisations have in addressing the trade. The market for counterfeit fashion items relies on the market for branded items, particularly at the high value designer end, which it cannibalises. If consumers did not desire these items and use them in the creation of their identities, value designer end, which it cannibalises. If consumers did not desire these items and use them in the creation of their identities, there would be no consequent market for counterfeits. Although this project focussed on a very narrow consumer group, the contradictions in the views of respondents are remarkable for their consistency. Out of 20 interviews, only four were clearly consistent in their views towards counterfeit. The issues of display, linked to brands, overrode the consumers’ reaction to the implicit deception of wearing counterfeit goods, which perhaps confirms the suggestions of, for example, de Chernatony and MacDonald (1998) that the brand can be more important than the product itself. For these respondents the transfer of meaning, the bridging effect of commodities identified by McCracken (1986) can take place if the products are counterfeit and are used passively. At the same time, if counterfeit goods are actively used deceptively, i.e. they are promoted as being genuine by the owner, they are perceived by others as having broken the bounds of acceptability.

This study suggests a number of avenues for future research. Firstly, it would be of interest to establish if wider age group hold the same contradictory views on counterfeit goods. Secondly, the issues of deceptive display require further investigation, particularly in relation to the attitudes of consumers to their own behaviour compared to that of others. Finally, further research is needed on the implications for the genuine brands of wide scale availability of counterfeits and the social risk of being ‘caught’ wearing fake goods.

REFERENCES


This session aims to stimulate debate and research development by providing three contrasting perspectives on contemporary food consumption. The study of food consumption offers insight into the nature of consumer behavior as a function of its unique qualities, as well as those generalizable to other consumption behaviors. Unique qualities of food stem from its being a particular type of consumer product that is ingested into the human body. However, the carnal, sensory properties of food consumption, as a base behavior we share with other animals as necessary to survive, tend to be downplayed. More common is attention to the intense psychological and social meanings derived in consuming food. In this sense food consumption is similar to the consumer behavior of other artifacts in being invested with intense psycho-social meanings related to the body, identity, and social categories such as class, ethnicity and nationality, and as a physical product managed through distribution channels linking corporations to retail outlets to household and individual consumption (Mintz 1996, 1985; Adams 1990; Elias 1978).

Historically, studies of food consumption reflect multiple intellectual perspectives and developments in academic disciplines which have contributed to the field of consumer behavior. For example, political economic studies of food consumption dating from the early 1900’s were concerned with rationalizing distribution systems, and food safety. By the 1940’s psychological studies emphasized latent motivations for food consumption, such as explanations for housewives’ resistance to instant coffee in terms of its inability to express their devotion to their families (Bartels 1986). Trends of modernization are readily evident in food studies as well, as the study of food consumption mirrors changes in food production over a fascinating trajectory from fresh foods, to canned, frozen and prepared foods, to genetically altered Frankenfoods (Mintz 1996). Paradoxically, modern technologies of food production offered dualities varying between the hopes that industrialization would feed the world and end human suffering, as perfected crops would transcend natural limitations, and the fears that humans will soon overwhelm the food supply, while genetic mutations will eventually threaten our means of survival. To date marked contrasts between developed and developing nations regarding food consumption continue; overabundance characterizes the food markets in wealthy countries, while millions of people die from starvation and suffer from malnutrition in developing nations. Contemporary developments in food studies range from attempts to link efficiencies of food production to remedy global hunger, to studies of changing dietary patterns and cultural values with fast foods, to examinations of the intense psycho-social dynamics of eating disorders, and efforts better manage food safety and ethnic issues related to technological advancements in mass production and genetic engineering (Mintz 1985, 1996; Smith 1991; Fishler 1990; Jonia 1995; Pimental 1994).

The general orientation of the session is interpretive, in bringing together papers dealing with such topics as globalization and consumption of foreign foods, the exoticism and selective rendering of history for foods consumed as leisure/tourism activities, consumption of foods with high fat content, and the political and institutional dynamics of regulating food safety. The unit of analysis varies as well, as individual, household, cultural group, and macro institutional dimensions of food consumption are addressed. The first three papers deal with psychological and social dimensions. The first paper begins the session demonstrating how foods are employed in conveying the properties of cultural groups, as Guion focuses on the role of food consumption in conveying culture for tourists. In the second paper Kaazi and Peñaloza food consumption practices are viewed as fertile terrain for examining the negotiation of individual and group identities and values, respectively, including those related to the nation-state and household. In the third paper, Askegaard examines phobias associated with the consumption of fat in foods against the backdrop of social pressures to conform to standards of health and slimness. Finally, the fourth paper takes an institutional, political economy perspective. Acknowledging changes in the institutional configuration of nations in Europe regarding consumption for their citizens, the increasing power of multinational agriculture companies, and the increasing significance of trade in international relations, Kalfagianni takes a network analysis perspective to food regulation in response to meat in the European Union.

Overall this session should stimulate discussion and debate regarding a number of issues central to the field of consumer behavior. First, the role of social contexts as more than extraneous factors influencing consumer behavior is emphasized. Instead differences between developing versus developed nation states, leisure versus routine household settings, social class, gender and history play formative roles in constituting different consumption behaviors. Second this collection of papers articulates important processes through which identities are produced and maintained and through consumption artifacts. In this sense, foods serve as the means for consumers in crafting understandings of themselves as human subjects, and of the world around them. The unique properties of food in nourishing the body are important; however, the body is filtered through the mind, in the form of narrative-based understandings. Finally, food consumption entails more than the activities of consumers, as government policy, agricultural lobbies, and corporate interests come together in important ways in enacting the demonstrably social milieu in which consumers operate.

This session should appeal to consumer behavior researchers interested in identity/ self-fulfillment, gender and household roles, globalization and tourism. This work should also appeal to public policy administrators in the area of nutrition, symbolic consumption, and international regulatory and policy development.

**ABSTRACTS**

“*Laissez Les Bon Temps Rouler: An Analysis of the Prominence of Food in the Marketing and Consumption of New Orleans*”

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In the marketing of New Orleans, music, food and entertainment feed the larger discourse of the hedonic and gastronomic spectacle attracting millions of domestic and International visitors each year. This study explores and critiques how the marketing and consumption of food play prominently into one particular discourse of New Orleans--the nostalgia of antebellum Southern hospitality. I begin by reviewing theoretical work on the production of cultural knowledge and how it is situated within particular socio-historical contexts. I then proceed using discourse analysis methodology to examine the intertextuality of the visual and the verbal in the official tourism website of New Orleans and two travel brochures, empha-
sizing the food section as a system of communication within the larger socio-historical context of the city. The final section of the paper develops implications regarding the marketing and consumption of culture, as multiple cultural representations of food feed into the larger discourse of the unique consumption experience of New Orleans.

Seminal to the theoretical development in this research is the work of Michel Foucault. Foucault’s conceptualization of discourse considers how historically and culturally located systems of power and knowledge construct subjects and their worlds. Foucault (1972) describes the discursive formations as “systems of dispersion,” in that they consist of relations between parts of a discourse. These systems include the working attitudes, terms of reference, and courses of action suffused into social practices. Also helpful is Costa’s (1998) deployment of Said’s (1978) analysis of Orientalism, specifically how constructions of superiority employ the discourse of the Primitive as a powerful tool in the construction of knowledge. Costa suggests that marketing tourist destinations can be understood as discourse conveying meaning to the consumer and the consumed in their invitation of otherness and the primitive.

Data consists of the official website of tourism for the city of New Orleans, www.neworleansonline.com and two travel brochures – The Good Times Guide and Christmas New Orleans Style. These texts are analyzed for the prevalence of themes communicating the role of food and the visual images that support the textual communication (Gill 1996). A concatenation of music, food, and entertainment in the marketing of New Orleans forms the systems of dispersion manifest in places, events and personalities. The French Quarter, Jackson Square and the Garden District, mark the influence of French and Spanish history in architecture and space. Mardi Gras, the Jazz Fest and the Christmas Revellion convey entertainment and revelry as a way of life – The Big Easy. Celebrity chefs and cooks, e.g., Paul Prudhomme, Emeril Lagasse, and the late, yet still celebrated Justin Wilson, act as ambassadors of the mysterious creole and Cajun cuisine legitimizing high gastronomy, while the music of Louis Armstrong, The Neville Brothers, and Harry Connick, Jr. validate New Orleans as the birthplace of Jazz.

Findings suggest that the sites simultaneously invoke and recreate a romanticized, stereotyped New Orleans of the Old South as currently available and accessible for all to consume. The verbal and visual representations of food casually combine the customs of distinct ethnic groups, while downplaying the contributions of Africans and ignoring the contributions of Native Americans. Behind the mouth-watering images and descriptions of this time-honored, mysterious cuisine, resides a nostalgic discourse that embraces and celebrates the exclusive luxury of Creole aristocracy and ignores the oppressive history of antebellum Southern hospitality. Implications discuss: 1) cultural principles underlying this selective rendering of cultural history for tourist consumption, 2) the role of these cultural discourses of New Orleans as it relates to tourist consumption of the place, and 3) the complex, contradictory interweavings of civilization and refinement with the primitive and the carnal as it relates to discourse and practices of food consumption.

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Lisa Peñaloza, University of Colorado, USA

Markets are an important site of cultural dynamics, with consumers and marketers serving as important agents of social change. In the contemporary global economy, a major area of cross-cultural confrontation and corresponding social change is international trade. Consumers attribute to products and companies identities and meanings linked to the foreign nations from which the products originate (Gurhan-Canli and Maheswaran (2000). At the same time, consumers imbue them with localized meanings as a function of domestic personal and social dynamics (Ohnuki-Tierney 1997).

In this research we use ethnographic methods to explore consumers’ understandings of market development by focusing on food consumption patterns in Karachi, Pakistan. While it is likely that third world consumers exhibit an analogous mix of foreign and domestic food consumption, how cultural meanings come to be attributed to domestic and foreign foods, and how these meanings are embedded within intra-national and international cultural dynamics are of interest.

Theoretically, we draw insights from previous research on national development, cross cultural consumer behavior, and market signification. At the macro level, such issues as respective stages in market development across nations, economic and political policies managing industrialization/modernization, and relations between nations of differing levels of development, especially relations between former colonizing nations and their former colonies are relevant (Mintz 1996). The predominance of market capitalism as the means of national development worldwide has spurred intense debates regarding on the one hand enhanced national power, wealth, and democracy with expansions of international trade and market capitalist economic programs. On the other hand, critics charge severe limits on national autonomy, losses of cultural traditions, and exacerbated gaps between the “have’s” and “have nots,” as multinational corporations extract more and more capital from developing nations (Lechner and Bolli 2000). Against this backdrop, we are interested in the ways various discourses of market and national development are played out politically in Pakistan, and in international relations between this nation and developed nations such as Britain and the United States.

Our purpose in going into the household is to explore how these larger socio-political currents filter into consumers’ daily lives. Thus, the second part of this work is micro in its orientation, and examines gender roles, women’s educational and employment levels, concepts of childhood, and tensions between individual autonomy and familial expectations. Because our focus is on food consumption, we are particularly interested in the relative presence and significance of foreign and domestic foods, how food consumption differs at home as compared to away from home, various household roles related to food, activities with friends and family, and individual activities related to food consumption.

In exploring food consumption in Pakistan in this way, we hope to stimulate theoretical and substantive discussion regarding the important nexus of national development, household dynamics, and personal freedom. Previous research on globalization has highlighted the concept of hybridity, as elements of the domestic and foreign collide and interpenetrate. Clearly various stages of development simultaneously co-exist in different sectors of society and do not necessarily entail a direct temporal sequence from Third to First world models of development, as Alvarado (1996) noted. Our goal is to move beyond recognition of the presence of products and meanings systems related to multiple cultural domains in Third World nations, to begin to unravel the respective roles of discourses and practices regarding the nation-state, the household, and the individual as they overlap in fashioning ideals of freedom, health and status.
In this retrospective portrait of the time around the turn of the 21st Millennium, Danish author Jacob Jonia captures the essence of what this paper is about. The paper grows out of a larger project investigating the lipophobia of modern societies, i.e., that they express a deep anxiety of fat and fatness (Fischler 1990). From many contemporary medical and governmental sources, fatness is presented as one of the potentially most costly and lethal epidemics of late modern society. One the other hand, though biased towards lipophobia, public discourses about health and well being are far from unanimous. The background for this paper represents an attempt to understand how consumers experience and negotiate the contradictory messages of hedonism and asceticism, indulgence or health advanced by various professional, commercial, personal and governmental agents (Warde 1997).

The more specific aspect of this investigation emphasized here is the degree to which current lipophobic discourses have generated a kind of food scare that is different from the “standard” food scares discussed in the media (e.g., unwanted ingredients found in food products, or a more general scepticism towards modern production technologies such as genetically modified organisms (cf., Ekström & Askegaard 2000). Lipophobia is oriented towards food in general and has potential consequences of anxiety-related attitudes and concerns regarding what might be perceived by others as normal food products. These attitudes may appear to range from the slightly peculiar to the outright bizarre. This kind of food scare is not an equivalent to pathological eating patterns like anorexia or bulimia, although for some unfortunate people it might be a step on the way to developing such diseases.

The empirical material of the paper consists of investigations of 40 young women’s (20 Danish and 20 Swedish) relationship to consumption of fat, to their own bodies and to their consumption in the realms of food, leisure and fashion. Only the data pertaining to food are used in this context. The empirical study took place in three steps. In a first step, empirical material was collected through an adapted use of the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET), generating a set of projective data. In a second step, this data set was discussed in a semi-structured interview with informants. Finally, the informants were gathered in focus groups of approximately 6 participants each in order to discuss researcher-provided material covering, sometimes in a provocative way, the different discourses on lipophobia.

The paper thus provides a metaphorically and cross-culturally rooted image of consumers’ fat intake and dietary practices. It furthermore represents an attempt to desymbolize consumers’ body imagery, inform future food policies, and analyze to what degree the food industry satisfies public and private interests in consumers’ dietary patterns. In these ways the paper contributes to an understanding of the complex role of food consumption or non-consumption in a contemporary food market, where the body is in focus as a personal and social asset, and where food thus becomes a primary locus of meaning for many consumers. “And since we did not have to fight for our food, we started to fight against it” (Jonia 1995).

This paper analyses and explains the political feasibility and potential effectiveness of EU and Dutch policy proposals fostering transparency in the Dutch meat chain. Our analysis provides a clear insight on the way the level of transparency in the meat chain is decided in the Netherlands, and the implications such decisions have for the consumption choices of the final consumer.

The several food crises that outburst in Europe recently resulted in a major public distrust in food handling and regulation and an urgent call for reform of food policies (Vos 2000; Smith 1991). The EU and national authorities, realizing the economic losses incurred by the food industry, the potential threat to the smooth functioning of the common market, and the political consequences faced by the bodies responsible for food, decided to proceed to a reorganization of the food policies, placing consumer health safety at the fore. Under this spirit, transparency in the food chain received central attention as a prerequisite to restore consumer confidence to the food industry, on the one hand, and to the ability of public authorities to protect public health, on the other.

As a consequence, a number of policy proposals have been initiated at the EU level (Revised General Product Safety Directive 2001/95/EC, EU Food Law Regulation 2001/95/EC), and a number of initiatives are being undertaken at the Dutch level (i.e. the establishment of Information Chain Technology in the food chain) to foster transparency in the food chain, from farm to table. As yet no final decisions have been made.

In this study we explain how the network of public and private actors in the Netherlands, which has evolved around the issue of transparency, influence the final provisions of the identified EU and Dutch policy proposals, determining in that way their political feasibility and potential effectiveness (Kellow and Zito 2002; Ligteringen 1999; Kassim 1994). More specifically, we use a policy network approach to assess actors’ policy preferences, as well as their resources and relations (Greer 2002; Konig and Brauinger 1998). Thereby we assess in what way and to what extent the identified actors can influence the fate of policy proposals. In short, actors’ positions explain the direction of influence, be it positive or negative. Actors’ resources explain their ability to exert influence. Among the important resources we have identified are: political authority and legal rights, financial resources, internal coherence, availability of expertise, and information on other actors’ positions and resources. Finally, actors’ relations explain further their ability to exert influence through access to and coalitions with other important actors.

The basic tool for data collection is structured interviews with representatives of the most important actors around the Dutch meat chain, including governmental organisations, food companies, meat processors, retailers, consumers’ organisations, independent food organisations. Information is also being gathered from policy documents, research institutes and the literature.

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SESSION SUMMARY

Introspection as the central element in self-report is a multi-headed hydra which is involved in consumer responses in interviews, surveys and experimental responses, as well as in researchers’ tales of their own experience, not to mention their reflexivity in research acts, ranging from choice of domain to interpretive processes (cf. Brown and Reid 1997). It also has been studied and considered in a wide range of perspectives, ranging from the psychological to the interpretive. Yet, for all the study, there is so much that remains unconsidered and unexplored. Perhaps this is because of the controversies surrounding it. In psychology, Nisbett and Wilson (1977) questioned how much introspection could even take place. In consumer research controversy over the very ability of researchers to even use introspection has so dominated the discussion that further inquiry has been largely blocked (Gould 1995; Wallendorf and Brucks 1993). But what a mistake. It is as though a novelist or an athlete could not further delve into and further develop her craft.

This session aims to push forward the craft of introspection (and consumer research) by investigating it from a Bakhtinian heteroglossia or multiple reading perspective (Brown, Stevens and Maclaran 1999). The approach here adapts the approach of Brown et al. who provided multiple readings of a single ad but also differs because we may not be looking at a single phenomenon. We are all using the same term, “introspection,” but it is an open question as to whether we are referring to the same thing or not or even what that same thing might be. Nor is our aim here to provide some sort of nebulous agreement on what it is we are talking about. Instead, we triangulate among four quite different readings with the aim of opening up and enriching the scope of introspective investigation, both with respect to researchers engaging in personal introspection and with respect to “self-report” research (the dominant data source in consumer research) involving the broader range of everyday consumers. In many respects, the research process and the researcher qua researcher are revealed in their omnipresent reflexiveness. Thus, to borrow from one of the presenters, Lorna Stevens, it is beneficial, if not outright mandatory for us to introspect on introspection.

The four presentations draw on a wide variety of perspectives, including artistic, narrative, philosophical, psychological, and ethnographic and draw on personal applications by the presenters. Stephen Brown and Pauline Maclaran explore some of the issues involved in getting consumers to engage in subjective personal introspection, an issue virtually all researchers involved in seeking any type of self-report may recognize, but are not fully able to address. They provide new insights in this regard by considering the impact of creative writing by informants and how related techniques might also be used. Stephen Gould lays out various ways to introspect about the self and addresses a topic familiar to many researchers in unfamiliar ways, namely how both researchers and consumers perceive the self. Through introspective exercises, he explores both narrative and non-conceptual awareness perspectives on the self and renders the self as a set of introspective practices. Barbara Olsen explores the introspective elements of participant observation and uncovers some of the important dynamics of researcher-informant interaction. In doing so and drawing reflexively through introspective retexualization upon her own, extensive experiences as an ethnographer in the field (in Jamaica), she derives a new concept of Empathetic Ethnography that was driven by her sharing of her personal suffering with her informants. Finally, Lorna Stevens undertakes her own personal introspection on introspecting, describing some of the thoughts and feelings that she has experienced when writing introspections and offering her own defense for writing in the third person.

While clearly interpretive researchers will have an interest in this session, any researcher who engages in self-report research or deals with issues of researcher subjectivity or bias will gain from the insights provided in this session. Audience members should also benefit from these extended perspectives and applications of introspection, which reflect its broad ranging reach in addressing issues of concern in consumer research. When it comes to various types of consumer research, most, if not all of it is touched in some way by issues of introspective insights, reflexive responses and self-conscious narrativity. In addition although secondarily, researchers who deal with such issues as creative expression, reflexive and ethnographic-cultural issues will also benefit from this session.

ABSTRACTS

“Celebrating the Artist in Us All: Gathering Multiple Subjective Personal Introspections”

Pauline Maclaran, De Montfort University, UK
Stephen Brown, University of Ulster, UK

The basis for what Holbrook (1995) describes as ‘subjective personal introspection’ (or auto-ethnography) is that, as consumers, we can all meaningfully conduct participant observations on the nature of consumption from the experiences of it in our own lives. Using this method the researcher recalls and recounts thoughts and feelings on a particular subject or experience, bringing them together in the form of an extended autobiographical essay (Holbrook 1985, 1986, 1995, 1996; Lehmann 1987; Hirschman 1990, 1991, 1992; Gould 1991, 1995; Brown 1998a; Reid and Brown 1996; Brown and Reid 1997; Sherry 1998). Introspection is an important part of the researcher-as-instrument approach on which interpretivism is based, and it is particularly useful in providing fresh insights for emergent theory building (Gould 1995).

Despite its apparent usefulness, subjective personal introspection has proved a controversial and often criticised research technique (Wallendorf and Brucks 1993; Uusitalo 1996; O’Guinn 1996; Campbell 1996), particularly when judged by the criteria set down to prove validity and reliability according to positivistic research traditions. In this respect Brown (1998b) has offered the technique’s strongest defence by illustrating its similarities to autobiographical criticism, a well-respected literary technique whereby a critic reflects on his or her own personal experiences in relation to literary texts. The justification of introspection as a research method, Brown (1998b) argues, involves abandoning any aspiration to scientific status. If it is judged by appropriately aesthetic criteria, if it is seen as creating meaning and generating understanding, then it comes into its own. In other words, it needs to be assessed more as an art and less as a science.
Additional support for the technique comes from psychology, where personal introspection, both on the part of the researcher and the research subject, is recognised as having a role to play in studies of autobiographical memory. In particular, it is used to show how personal and social experiences are stored in the memory and later retrieved (Linton 1975; Wagenaar 1986; Brewer 1986; Menon and Johar 1993). The technique is also used to study other areas of inner experience such as daydreams or stream-of-consciousness thoughts in both psychology (Singer 1975a, 1975b; Singer and Switzer, 1980), and anthropology (Caughey 1984). It is recognised as yielding rich phenomenological descriptions similar to those used by James Joyce in Ulysses and giving insights into the dreams that “may take us to other worlds” (Caughey 1984, p. 119).

We seek to address one of the technique’s most recurrent criticisms, that it gives too much credence to the researcher’s own accounts, and that it is, in effect, a sample of one, by showing how this limitation can be overcome through the collection of multiple accounts. In its use as a way to allow research participants a mode of free expression, introspection is similar to the use of projective techniques that have a long tradition in the history of marketing research. Certain applications of these, such as Thematic Apperception Tests (TATS) (Rook, 1988) and creative writing (Durée 1987) are regarded as particularly useful to elicit fantasy material. A major advantage that introspection has over such techniques, however, is that it allows participants much more time to express themselves, resulting in more detailed and imaginative expressions.

Specifically, we refer to a research project that collected sixty subjective personal introspections to explore the consumer imagination during a major refurbishment at a festival marketplace in Dublin. Individuals willing to write these accounts were identified through the researchers’ personal and professional networks. They were asked to write creatively as they wished about their visits to the shopping centre, and to describe their impressions, feelings and associations, together with any memories that might have been evoked. Accounts reached essay size in some cases, varying in length between four hundred and two thousand words. These introspections proved a richer way to generate insights into aspects of the consumer imagination than either in-depth interviews or group discussions.

A major difficulty encountered during the research, however, was persuading individual consumers to write at sufficient length about their visits. Often they expressed embarrassment and a lack of confidence about committing their thoughts and feelings to paper. Our presentation is designed to consider the practicalities of collecting data through informant introspections and we discuss the various problems that we experienced alongside the many benefits. First we look at how informants can be encouraged and stimulated to express themselves creatively and in sufficient length. Then we outline the difficulties of obtaining volunteers willing to undertake introspections and the use of “captive groups” like students where the introspective essay is built into a module as part of their coursework. We also make reference to our own failed attempt to use creative writing groups in Ireland. Finally, we consider the future potential of this research technique, suggesting innovative ways to link up with willing writers (for example, through creative writing courses and book clubs) and how to carry out the technique in conjunction with other creative methods of data collection such as photography and videography.

The self is a central topic in consumer research and investigating it is very much the stuff of introspection. But what is the self we are speaking of? We can consider at least three perspectives that incorporate or embody various epistemological and ontological outlooks: psychological (There is a unitary self but how can consumers tell about it?), postmodern (Which self?) and Buddhist (Self? What self?). Psychological perspectives deal with a self that can be primed in various ways to focus on it and the mental processes related to it. Following the famous Nisbett and Wilson (1977) article, there still remain many issues concerning what people can introspect about mental processes involving the self, among other things. Postmodern, interpretive processes deconstruct the self in a number of ways, including multiple and extended selves, focus on it as a reflexive cultural construction and rely on various narrative forms of introspection to reveal it (e.g., Brown, Earl, Gould, Holbrook). Such introspection involves stories about oneself. A Buddhist perspective deconstructs the self even further by taking it apart and ultimately denying that such a self even exists. While it does recognize the conventional self that we all use in everyday life (i.e., myself as embodied in my body and mind), it seeks through meditative-introspective exercises (e.g., Gould 1995) to investigate whether there is a self beyond that designated self or not. For these I draw on my own long, longitudinal experience with them, as well as my continuing readings of introspective texts, including researchers’ introspections, consumers’ introspections as revealed in various research projects and articles, and texts everywhere construed broadly in terms of form (books, movies, everyday speech) that reveal something about the self and/or introspection.

Considering these three introspections as distinct but potentially intertextually linked in terms of what they tell us and how they may be applied, we apply exercises or physical/thought experiments to attempt to answer several questions. First, what is it we can tell ourselves about ourselves? To attempt to deal with this question however provisional any answer might be, we look for ourselves in whatever form we can discern, if we can at all, in our thoughts, emotions and physical feelings. Here, I want to explore something I have not seen in any research, namely conceptual thought versus non-conceptual experience or awareness as self-revelatory. This non-conceptuality is not the same as peripheral cues, unconscious impulses or automatic processes, but instead is direct conscious experience of something unmediated by thought. A sequence of short introspective exercises will aim at these manifestations of the alleged self.

Second, when either consumers or researchers engage in narrative introspection, what self is it they are revealing and which one are they hiding? For this question, we look as exercise at the discourse of the self in a narrative and see how it self-constructs. Third, when researchers interpret the introspections of consumers what of their own self are they drawing on and what can they know of other selves? What is emic about the etic? For these questions, we conduct a Buddhist introspective exercise of putting oneself in the place of the other.

In the end, after asking these questions and conducting these exercises, we ponder the practices of the self as both practitioners...
of introspection and as consumers. Indeed, the self would appear to be comprised of a set of ever-occurring introspective practices, incorporating both epistemological and ontological dimensions. Thus, whether we consider multiple selves, extended selves, desired selves and so on, we might explore them in terms of introspective practices in which consumers simultaneously search within and narratively produce the self on a dynamic, real-time basis. We may never agree on what the self is, or how to know it, or even whether it exists or not, but hopefully through considering the self in this way we will be more informed, both as researchers and as human beings.

“Reflexive Introspection: The Participant in the Observation”
Barbara Olsen, SUNY Old Westbury, USA

This paper explores the implications of reflexive introspection as an innovative contribution to ethnographic consumer research. Clifford (1988, p.24-25) reminds us that participant observation is a particularly sensitive tool “...as a means for producing knowledge from an intense, intersubjective engagement,” that when translated by the observer becomes “…complicated by the action of multiple subjectivities and political constraints beyond the control of the writer.” The participant in the observation is thus implicated in multiple layers of ethnography, each of which is bracketed by personally unique agendas that optimally must be revealed to harmonize the research hermeneutic.

Applying reflexive introspection to previously experienced ethnographic contexts allows a reinterpretation of those experiences. This introspective tool has been particularly fruitful in reanalyzing fieldwork notes (“retexutalization”). For the purpose of this paper I will limit the primary discussion to ethnographic research collected during an evolving project that has spanned three decades with informants from several extended families in one community. Successive iterations have merged previous fieldwork and introspection with more recent fieldwork. This approach has benefited an “anthropologically engaged” research which finds it imperative to include the perspective of the participant in the observation (Olsen 1997).

A recent probing of my earlier fieldwork in Jamaica yielded a curious relationship obtained initially between the researcher and informants 30 years ago that, subsequently and interestingly, has driven the later fieldwork (1999) and the emergent themes discovered in a current analysis (working paper with Stephen Gould). The participant observer 30 years ago was in fact observed by the informants to be a victim of affairs of the heart that initiated a more intimate ethnographic experience. The quality of the research I obtained thereafter is because of a failed marriage in the midst of the primary research collection. My personal loss was a familiar scenario that generated an outpouring of support and understanding from informants that helped evaporate the racial and class distinctions complicating fieldwork. The depth of the life histories I collected from both men and women was a response to similar emotional losses that we shared. Thus, in this longitudinal diachronic analysis, by utilizing a reflexive introspection of the fieldwork a new category of research, *Empathetic Ethnography,* was revealed.

As with any reflexive analysis, the goal of the research objective is determined by the historical circumstances of the researcher. In conclusion, other applications of this innovative approach will suggest new sites for ethnographic introspection.

“Introspecting on Introspection: The Laugh of the Medusa?”
Lorna Stevens, University of Ulster, UK

Like most of us, I suspect, I don’t know whether I would be categorised as an introvert or an extrovert and have often considered myself to be both. From being an extremely talkative, happy, confident and gregarious child I became at fourteen, a painfully self-conscious, lonely, withdrawn and miserable teenager, and when I emerged from this dark period in my life in my early twenties I seemed to have rediscovered my former self but I also retained my introspective, melancholy side. On the one hand I constantly subject myself to intense self-analysis and self-criticism with regard to my thoughts and feeling on all things, yet I am also an extrovert who is very interested in other people and I happily externalise my neuroses, foibles and frustrations, and indeed torture friends, family, colleagues (and even my students) with my discursive and self-relaxive musings. If I can make such musings entertaining to all concerned I am a happy woman indeed, and feel lifted by this externalising process. Like the true Venusian (as Gray would have it), I speak (and probably write) as I think, in a discursive and self-relaxive way, working out my ideas as I engage in this process of outward articulation, wearing my neuroses like a badge or an endurance medal, with pride.

I am very comfortable with French feminist writers views, that as women we write from our bodies and from our essence as women, and we don’t want to write like men; we want to write “female sexed texts” as Cixous (1975) would describe them. I’ve always preferred circularity, and I’m not going to apologise for that, although I know it can be frustrating to listeners and readers who want me to come to the point (a masculine preoccupation, as Paglia 1990 would have it in any case, and I’m not a man and don’t want to be!).

What this discursive preamble is coming around to is: for some reason when I made my first foray into personal introspection, an interpretation for a Moët and Chandon advert (Brown et al 1999), I wrote entirely in the third person. I didn’t see this as particularly significant, but when we compared our respective readings of the ad Stephen commented on this, struck by what appeared to be my reluctance to get personal and write in the first person. Subsequent forays into subjective personal introspections about ads such as the Caffey’s Irish Ale campaign (Patterson et al 1998; Stevens et al 2000), an ad campaign for a women’s magazine called Red (Stevens 2002), as well as a shopping experience (Maclaran and Stevens 1998), have also followed this pattern. I am not aware of deliberately hiding myself in the text but I seem to want to assume the mantle of ‘everywoman’. Maybe it’s the feminist in me—the personal is political—which makes me generalise my response, as if I speak for other women; or maybe its arrogance; or maybe I want to be multiple, not singular in how I write; or maybe I don’t want to expose my inner self to the gaze of others (the painfully shy teenager who hated walking inside a room of strangers and still does, come to think of it), unless it’s on my terms. Here’s a confession; laugh at it if you like; in fact I want you to laugh; I’m laughing too; let’s share the laugh; but I’m allowed to have some secrets, and I’m not going to share my innermost thoughts with all and sundry! Come to think of it all my written introspections have been deeply personal, but only people who know me very well would recognise this. Personal anger translates into feminist rhetoric, perhaps, in some of the introspections I have written; personal disappointments are represented as disappointments all women may have felt. The truly personal is tucked away in the text, perhaps camouflaged by the third person narrative I feel comfortable with, coded so that only an inner circle of loved ones can fully understand my interpretation; then again maybe it’s all out there and very obvious.

Maybe my writing in the third person can be attributed to a gender difference? Stern (1998) for example, writes of women’s greater propensity to propriety in their writing, and research we carried out with students on the Caffey’s Irish Ale campaign showed that women reacted to this androcentric text by writing third
person, tentative, descriptive and non-personal interpretations whilst
the male students (the target audience of course) responded with
often raucous, joyous and humourous first person ones (Stevens et al 1998). Men often tend to veil their innermost thoughts and
insecurities within a protective veneer of self-mockery and humour
(Bauer 1993; Gauntlett 2002); perhaps we all do to a greater or
lesser extent. Sometimes, though, a soap box just feels right.

Finally, I end my discursion into discursive writing, my
introspection on introspective writing, with some inspiring words
from Cixous, words that I may aspire to and certainly admire.
Cixous describes women’s writing thus:

“her language does not contain, it carries; it does not hold back,
her idiom ambiguously uttered – the wonder
of being several – she doesn’t defend herself against these
unknown women whom she’s surprised at becoming, but
derives pleasure from this gift of alterability.”

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Providing Product Information Consumers Can Handle: Assortment and Type of Product Information in Mass Customization Environments
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ABSTRACT
The strength of mass customization environments is their ability to offer large assortments. What assortments sizes are consumers still willing to search? What product information should be presented in such mass customization environments? Numerical or verbal representations are more appropriate to communicate product functionality, whereas pictorial representations are more appropriate to communicate product appearance. This study investigates these questions related to the amount and type of product information offered in mass customization environments. The results lead to implications for the design of mass customization environments.

INTRODUCTION
Current technologies make the production of personalized products technically feasible (e.g., Lampel and Mintzberg 1996; Swaminathan 2001). Consumers show an increased interest in customizing the functionality and appearance of the products they purchase. The number of product variants that can be offered is enormous. Car dealers offer choices between different colors, types of engines, types of upholstery (for the seats and the interior), the types of wheel rims and a huge variety of other options. Consumers can choose all these options for the Volkswagen New Beetle, for example, potentially offering 10,000 different car models. Consumers may be overwhelmed by the large assortment of products that are offered through customization systems. Retailers cannot carry all these products in their assortment, because stores have limited space for showing products. In a retailer’s store, there is always limited shelf-space and the amount of different products that can be displayed is also limited. Mass customization environments are able to offer large assortments of products (Degeratu, Rangaswamy, and Wu 2000). A manufacturer can always add more products to the mass customization environment with minimal costs. Therefore, manufacturers increasingly offer products through product configurators on the Internet or at in-store computer systems. These systems allow consumers to customize products in an interactive manner by choosing preferred product characteristics and receiving direct feedback on these choices. How should these systems be designed? In this study we try to answer this question with respect to two properties of such a system: the size of the assortment (small versus large) and the type of product information (functionality versus appearance). These properties may have major consequences for the way consumers process product information (e.g., Bettman, 1979; Bettman, Luce and Payne 1998) in mass customization environments.

SIZE OF THE ASSORTMENT
The number of alternatives that is offered in mass customization environments is also called the product assortment. Various researchers have investigated the effects of increasing the size of the assortment on the way consumers process product information. An increase in assortment size generally leads to (1) an increase in the variability of the choices, (2) a decrease in the quality of choices, and (3) an increase in consumers’ confidence in their decisions (Payne, 1982; Payne, Bettman and Johnson 1993). Furthermore, the size of the assortment positively influences the amount of search (Schmidt and Spreng 1996; Srinivasan and Ratchford 1991). However, most of the assortments in these studies were limited in range. Also, no research has directly investigated the search effort that consumers invest when the size of the assortment increases.

The effort that consumers invest in searching for information in mass customization environments often consists out of two phases. In the first phase, consumers have to invest effort in finding, starting and learning the system. In the second phase, consumers search and interpret the product information. We concentrate on the second phase of this search process. Consumers can search the mass customization system until they find a product they like. However, the more products there are available for the consumer, the more effort is needed to interpret all this product information. Searching all the information when the assortment is large, takes more effort than searching all the information when the assortment is small. More effort is needed when consumers search a large assortment of products compared to a small assortment of products. In a retailer’s showroom, for example, consumers are likely to spend more effort on evaluating cars when there are two cars on display compared to one. Thus, when the assortment increases, consumers are more likely to invest effort into their search process. This indicates a linear relation between the size of the assortment and the amount of effort. On the other hand, Olshavsky (1979) found that increasing the product information by adding characteristics to the alternatives, leads to more selective processing of characteristics. Thus, consumers actually invest less additional effort when the amount of product information increases. This suggests an inverted-U-shape relation between the size of the assortment and the amount of effort.

For small assortments, consumers invest increasing effort to be able to search all products in the assortment. However, when the assortment becomes large, consumers cannot search all products and they are willing to invest a limited amount of effort. Eventually, when assortments become really large, consumers are not willing to search the assortment at all, because searching such large assortments take too much effort. Because manufacturers can offer almost unlimited assortments in mass customization environments, they need to know the boundary conditions for the size of the assortment. It could be disastrous for manufacturers when they are offering too much information, because consumers do not invest effort in using the system, i.e. they do not use the system at all! Thus, consumers spend more effort when the assortment increases, but not proportionally more. Consumers are not likely, for example, to spend four times as much effort on evaluating 100 cars compared to 25 cars. The amount of effort invested per product thus decreases when the size of the assortment increases. We hypothesize a linear relationship between the relative effort (effort per product) and the size of the assortment; relative effort is large when the assortment is small and relative effort is small when the assortment is large. This leads to the first hypothesis.

H1. In a mass customization environment, consumers invest less effort per product when choosing from a large assortment of products versus choosing from a small assortment of products.

The effort that consumers are willing to invest in searching an assortment also depends on the uncertainty they experience. Moorthy, Ratchford, and Talukdar (1997) argued that uncertainty
determines whether search takes place. They distinguished between two types of uncertainty: **individual product uncertainty**, which is the uncertainty about what a specific product offers and **relative product uncertainty**, which is uncertainty about whether the current product is the best available. The product uncertainty is very subjective. Consumers may believe, for example, that a certain product is the best product available, when in fact this is not the case. Individual product uncertainty of a chosen alternative is expected to be the same because consumers will gather the same amount of information on a product they are about to choose regardless the assortment size. Consumers try to reduce the relative product uncertainty before making a choice. However, when the assortment size increases, even this may take too much effort. Relative product uncertainty about large assortments of products may therefore be relatively greater compared to small assortments.

**H2.** In a mass customization environment, consumers experience more relative product uncertainty when choosing from a large assortment of products than when compared to choosing from a small assortment of products.

**TYPE OF PRODUCT INFORMATION**

Not only the size of the assortment, but also the type of product information may affect the effort and uncertainty in mass customization environments. Consumers searching for products, are often interested in both the functionality and the appearance of these products. Thus, product configurators should provide information about both the functionality of the products as well as the appearance of the products. Every product configurator will to some extent offer product information about functionality and appearance, either by numerical, verbal, or pictorial representation. There is evidence that numerical and verbal representations are more appropriate to communicate product functionality, whereas pictorial representations are more appropriate to communicate product appearance (Loosschilder, 1998). The number of pre-programmable telephone numbers for a telephone, for example, is more appropriately communicated by numerical representations, whereas the product appearance of a telephone is more appropriately communicated by pictorial representations. In the current study, functions will be represented numerically or verbally, whereas appearance will be represented pictorially. Consumers may have to invest less effort in searching appearance related characteristics than searching functionality related characteristics. A pictorial representation tends to be perceived in an imagery system, whereas a verbal representation is received in an independent but interconnected verbal system (Holbrook and Moore 1981; Paivio 1991). Treisman (1986) argues that processing of images is primary to the processing of words. This suggests that processing of pictorial representations of product characteristics may be less effortful than processing of verbal representation of product characteristics. Thus, searching through assortments of products with characteristics represented verbally takes more effort than searching through assortments of products with characteristics represented pictorially. Searching through pictorially represented product characteristics should take less effort than searching through verbally represented product characteristics.

This is not to say that manufacturers should only provide pictorial representations of the product, just because they take less effort to process. After all, verbal representations allow evaluations of the product functionality, whereas pictorial representations allow evaluations of the product appearance. Pictorial representations often do not allow deduction of the product functionalities and verbal representations often do not allow deduction of the product appearance. Therefore, manufacturers should offer both verbal and pictorial information. In many situations all this product information cannot be displayed on one computer screen. How can the product functionalities and the product appearances of 36 products be presented on one computer screen? In such cases manufacturers have various options. Two of these options are (1) to have consumers choose the functionality first and show the appearance later and (2) to have consumers choose the appearance first and show the functionality later. It is hypothesized that it takes consumers less effort to evaluate the pictorial representations of the product appearance first compared to evaluate the verbal representations of the product functionality first. In that case, it makes sense to show consumers the pictorial representations of the products first. This leads to the third hypothesis:

**H3.** In mass customization environments, consumers invest more cognitive effort when evaluating the functionality of the product first, compared to evaluating appearance of the product first.

Consumers will try to reduce the (individual and relative) product uncertainty before choosing a product. Verbal representations are more likely to reduce uncertainty regarding the product functionality, whereas pictorial representations are more likely to reduce uncertainty regarding the product appearance. This applies to both individual and relative product uncertainty.

Product functions, such as the number of pre-programmable telephone numbers, are more easily conveyed by verbal than by pictorial representations. Verbal representations are often able to represent the product functions more precise and less ambiguous, especially when the functions cannot easily be deduced from the product appearance (such as with the number of pre-programmable telephone numbers). Verbal representations are therefore more likely to reduce the uncertainty of functions than pictorial representations. Verbal representations will provide precise and unambiguous information about the number of pre-programmable telephone numbers, for example. This makes verbal representation more likely to reduce both individual product uncertainty (how many pre-programmable telephone numbers has a certain telephone) as well as relative product uncertainty (which telephone has the most pre-programmable telephone numbers).

Conversely, characteristics related to product appearance, such as the color of telephone, are more easily conveyed by pictorial than by verbal representations. Pictorial representations are often able to represent the product appearance less ambiguously, but not necessarily more precise. When a telephone is grey, for example, what shade of grey is it? Is it metallic? A pictorial representation would resolve these questions in a glance. However, verbal representations of product appearance can often be more precise than pictorial representations. By a verbal representation in a hexadecimal system (for example #666666), the precise color out of 16 million different colors can be designated, whereas the human eye can distinguish far fewer colors. In many cases, verbal representations are able to define characteristics related to appearance more precise than pictorial representations. This does not mean that verbal representations of either product functionality or appearance may be more likely to reduce uncertainty than pictorial representations.

Remember though, that pictorial representations may at times be able to define product appearance less ambiguously. Manufacturers therefore should offer product information related to both product functionality as well as product appearance. When consumers are evaluating the verbally represented functionality first compared to evaluating pictorially represented appearance first, they are less likely to experience both individual product uncer-
tainty (what color is this telephone) and relative product uncertainty (which telephone has a specific color). Thus,

**H4.** In a mass customization environment, consumers evaluating product functionality represented by verbal representations first compared to consumers evaluating product appearance represented by pictorial representations first, will be less likely to experience:

a. individual product uncertainty
b. relative product uncertainty

**METHOD**

To investigate these four hypotheses an empirical experiment was conducted. A randomized $2 \times 2$ factorial design was used with assortment (small assortment condition, large assortment condition) and type of product information (functionality-first condition, appearance-first condition) as independent variables.

**Stimuli**

The product chosen for the experiment was a telephone for home use. The Internet was used to acquire a realistic set of telephone functionality and appearance. Four functional characteristics were selected: model, price, color, and number of programmable telephone numbers. The corresponding appearance of the product was represented by a picture. Respondents used a matrix of telephone characteristics on a computer, that was especially designed and programmed for the experiment.

**Respondents**

Ninety-eight students (58 male and 40 female) participated in the study. On average it took the respondents 6:30 minutes to complete the experiment.

**Design**

To test hypotheses 1 and 2, a small and large assortment of telephones was created. Respondents in the small assortment condition had the choice of 9 telephones, whereas the respondents in the large assortment condition had the choice of 36 telephones.

To test hypotheses 3 and 4, two conditions for the type of product information were created. In the functionality-first condition respondents were initially provided with the functionality of the telephones. They could click on the functionality of the telephones to investigate the appearance. In the appearance-first condition, respondents received a matrix with the product appearances. These respondents could click on the product appearance to investigate the functionality.

**Procedure**

Prior to the experiment all functions were explained to the respondents. They were explained how to operate the matrix; clicking on a cell in the matrix would reveal additional information (about either functionality or product appearance) in the upper left corner of the screen. The respondents were instructed to choose a telephone as if they needed a new one. They were told to search as much as they liked. When they had found the telephone they wanted, they choose this telephone by clicking the button “confirm choice” in the upper left corner of the screen. Next, respondents completed the dependent measures. After the respondents had completed the questionnaire, they indicated their gender and age, and were informed about the purpose of the study.

**Measures**

All questions were measured using seven-point-scales.

Control Measures

1. **Assortment.** To check whether respondents in the large assortment condition did indeed view the assortment larger than the respondents in the small assortment condition, respondents indicated the perceived size of the assortment. The perceived size of the assortment was measured using one item with anchors ranging from “Very small” (1) to “Very large” (7).

2. **Characteristics’ importance.** In order to determine whether respondents in the functionality-first condition placed different weights on the products characteristics than respondents in the appearance-first condition, they indicated to what extent their choice was determined by the provided product information with anchors ranging from “Not at all” (1) to “Completely” (7).

**Dependent measures**

1. **Effort.** Effort was measured in three ways. Next to the search time and the number of mouse clicks (Johnson and Payne 1985), the perceived effort was measured.
   a. The search time was recorded from the moment a respondent started to search the matrix until the “confirm choice” button was clicked.
   b. Respondents could click on different boxes to see additional information (about either functionality or appearance of the product). Each *mouse click* was recorded up until the respondent clicked “confirm choice.”
   c. Three questions measured the perceived effort, with anchors ranging from “Not a difficult choice” (1) to “Very difficult choice” (7), “Not a fast choice” (1) to “Very fast choice” (7), and “Not an easy choice” (1) to “Very easy choice” (7).

2. **Uncertainty.** Both individual and relative product uncertainty were measured.
   a. **Individual product uncertainty** was measured with three items, with anchors ranging from “Don’t know much about the product” (1) to “Know very much about the product” (7), “Don’t know enough to decide whether to buy the product” (1) to “Know enough to decide whether to buy the product”, and “Don’t need additional information” (1) to “Need additional information” (7). These three items were averaged to form an individual uncertainty measure ($\alpha = .70$).
   b. **Relative product uncertainty** was measured with three items with anchors ranging from “Very uncertain” (1) to “Very certain” (7) about the best product, best functionality, and best appearance. The reliability of the relative product uncertainty items was low ($\alpha = .58$). Respondents apparently found the telephone a rather functional product, because the items about the best overall product and the best product functionality correlated ($\alpha = .69$). Therefore, these two items were averaged to form a relative product uncertainty measure.

**RESULTS**

**Outlier Analysis**

The data was checked on any outliers. Some respondents invested a disproportional amount of time into the task. These respondents were removed from the sample using outlier analysis, because their disproportional influence would distort the results.
All respondents that had a number of clicks more than three standard deviations from the mean were removed from the sample (Hair et al. 1995, p. 59). The same procedure was followed for search time. Two iterations resulted in a sample of 93 respondents (61% male and 39% female).

Control measures

Assortment. The assortment was varied to create a small assortment condition and a large assortment condition. To determine whether this manipulation had succeeded, respondents indicated the perceived size of the assortment. An analysis of variance with perceived size of the assortment as dependent variable and assortment size as independent variable revealed that respondents in the small assortment condition perceived a smaller size of the assortment than the respondents in the large assortment condition ($F(1,92)=61.4$, $p<.001; M=2.9$ versus 4.8). These results indicated that the manipulation of assortment size was successful.

Characteristics’ importance. Respondents indicated to what extent the characteristics were important in their decision-making process. Paired sample T-tests were used to determine whether the differences in the degree of importance were significantly different from each other. All pairs were significant different (all $t(92)>2.11$, $p<.05$), except for the model-price pair ($t(92)=-.80$, ns) and the appearance-price pair ($t(92)=-1.9$, ns). Thus, respondents’ choices were largely determined on the model, appearance, and price of the telephone and hardly on the color, number of pre-programmable telephone numbers, and the name of the telephone. Six two-way ANOVAs revealed that there were no differences in the characteristics’ importance between assortment conditions or type of product information conditions ($All F(1,89)<2.6$, ns) and no significant interaction effects ($All F(1,89)<2.6$, ns).

Dependent measures

To provide tests for all hypotheses the data were analyzed by separate 2 x 2 analyses of variance with between subject-factors of assortment and product information type.

Effort. Three measures of effort were taken: (1) the number of mouse clicks, (2) the search time, and (3) the perceived effort. Table 1 shows the number of mouse clicks for each condition. Respondents clicked almost twice as much when the assortment was large versus small ($F(1,89)=18.1$, $p<.001$). Thus, respondents clicked more when the assortment is large compared to small. To investigate hypothesis 1, the relative effort for each condition was investigated, i.e. the amount of mouse clicks per telephone. The number of mouse clicks per telephone is smaller when the assortment is large compared to small. Respondents in the large assortment condition clicked 2 times per telephone, whereas respondents in the small assortment condition clicked 0.8 times per telephone, whereas respondents in the small assortment condition clicked 2 times per telephone ($F(1,89)=32.4$, $p<.001$). Thus, large assortments lead to relatively less mouse clicks compared to small assortments, providing support for hypothesis 1. The type of product information did not influence the number of clicks ($F(1,89)=.002$, ns). Thus no support for hypothesis 3 was found.

The search time for each condition is also shown in table 1. Respondents searched significantly longer in the large assortment condition than in the small assortment condition ($F(1,89)=21.7$, $p<.001$). To investigate hypothesis 1, the relative effort for each condition was investigated, i.e. the amount of time spent per telephone. Respondents in the large assortment condition search 5 seconds per telephone, whereas respondents in the small assortment condition search 14 seconds per telephone ($F(1,89)=69.4$, $p<.001$). Thus, large assortments lead to relatively less search time compared to small assortments, which provides support for hypothesis 1. Also the type of product information affected the search time. Respondents in the functionality-first condition searched longer than respondents in the appearance-first condition ($F(1,89)=5.3$, $p<.05$). Per information unit respondents spent 10s per telephone in the functionality-first condition, whereas they spent 9s per telephone in the appearance-first condition. This provides support for hypothesis 3.

The results for perceived effort are presented in table 1. The analyses of variances revealed no significant results of assortment and type of product information ($All F(1,89)<3.2$, ns). Thus, all respondents perceived the same effort regardless the condition. Thus the results for perceived effort do not support hypotheses 1 and 3.

Uncertainty. To find support for hypothesis 2, the uncertainty measures were analyzed. The results for both relative product uncertainty and individual product uncertainty are presented in table 2. No significant effects of assortment size on individual product uncertainty were found ($F(1,89)=.30$, ns). The assortment size did not influence the relative product uncertainty either ($F(1,89)=1.3$, ns). Respondents in the small assortment condition were as uncertain they had chosen the best alternative as respondents in the large assortment condition. Thus, no support for hypothesis 2 was found.

Next the effects of type of product information on uncertainty were analyzed. No significant differences between type-of-product-information conditions on individual product uncertainty were found ($F(1,89)=2.5$, ns). This means that all respondents indicated they had as much information about the products. Respondents in the functionality-first condition did not perceive more information than respondents in the appearance-first condition. Thus, no support for hypothesis 4a was found. However, significant effects of type of product information on relative product uncertainty were found. Respondents in the functionality-first condition were less uncertain they had chosen the best alternative than respondents in the appearance-first condition ($F(1,89)=4.4$, $p<.05$). Thus presenting appearance related characteristics first leads to more relative product uncertainty than presenting functionality related characteristics first. These results provide support for hypothesis 4b.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Limitations

In the current study, respondents considered product information related to functionality and product appearance. However, four functional product characteristics could be considered versus one characteristic related to product appearance. The amount of effort invested could depend on the fact that respondents considered more functional characteristics than appearance related characteristics. Furthermore, these multiple (verbal) characteristics could also have lead to more confidence about the choice of a telephone. Therefore, further research should investigate which product characteristics are used, when the number of characteristics related to functionality and appearance are balanced.

Furthermore, the current study showed that increasing the size of the assortment influenced effort and uncertainty. The respondents in the large assortment condition had more product information available, because the assortment size was larger than the assortment in the small assortment condition. Are effort and uncer-
Providing Product Information Consumers Can Handle

Influence of Product Information on Uncertainty

The results show that the amount of product information available to respondents influenced their uncertainty in searching for a telephone. Respondents who were provided with product functionality used more time choosing a product than those who were provided with product appearance, but they did not click more. Respondents in both conditions were able to use both product information types. Apparently, the difference in accessibility of the information led respondents to use the product information types initially provided (c.f. Bettman and Kakkar 1977). Thus, respondents that initially received characteristics related to functionality seem to use these representations to choose a product. Respondents that initially received characteristics related to product appearance also seem to use these representations to choose a product. However, all respondents based their choices on the same characteristics regarding product functionality.

### Table 1. Means for Respondents' Effort in Searching for a Telephone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents' Effort</th>
<th>Assortment</th>
<th>Type of product information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouse clicks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Clicks</td>
<td>17.6***</td>
<td>30.4***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clicks per telephone</td>
<td>2.0***</td>
<td>0.8***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in seconds)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Search time</td>
<td>127***</td>
<td>193***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>176*</td>
<td>144*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time per telephone</td>
<td>14***</td>
<td>5***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Effort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search difficulty</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed of choice</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of program</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<.05; *** p<.001

### Table 2. Respondents' Uncertainty in Searching for a Telephone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uncertainty measures</th>
<th>Assortment</th>
<th>Type of product information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual product</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncertainty</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative product</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncertainty</td>
<td>3.1*</td>
<td>3.8*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<.05; higher means denote more uncertainty

Respondents

Students of industrial design engineering served as respondents in the experiment. There are two requirements for respondents participating in studies concerning mass customization. First, they need certain computer skills, since the studies involve computer handling. Second, respondents need to be interested in product customization. If they are not interested in product customization, the validity of their customization choices is doubtful. These two requirements can be found in the student sample that was used. Students of industrial design engineering have learned more computer skills than are required to operate and navigate through product configurators. Furthermore, their interest in customization was high, because they have a preference for unique and personalized products. An additional advantage of using students industrial design engineering is their open mindedness towards new ideas and technologies. Mass customization is still a rather new idea for consumers and a new technology for manufacturers. New ideas as such often encounter resistance, which negatively affects the validity of results. Because students industrial design engineering are trained to develop new ideas, they are less likely to resist such new ways of acquiring products, which adds to the validity of the results. In conclusion, the results can be generalized to consumers that have the skills to operate computers and are interested in product customization.

Type of product information

Respondents that were initially provided with product functionality use more time choosing a product than respondents initially provided with product appearance, but did not click more. Respondents in both conditions were able to use both product information types. Apparently, the difference in accessibility of the information lead respondents to use the product information types initially provided (c.f. Bettman and Kakkar 1977). Thus, respondents that initially received characteristics related to functionality seem to use these representations to choose a product. Respondents that initially received characteristics related to product appearance seem to use these representations to choose a product. However, all respondents based their choices on the same characteristics regard-
less of the information they received initially. That is, respondents based their choices largely on the model, appearance, and price of the telephone and hardly on the color, number of pre-programmable telephone numbers, and the name of the telephone. This suggests that respondents used both product information types in their choice processes. Respondents seem to use the information initially provided to select the products that look promising and then look at the additional information. Initially providing functional product information leads to more search time compared to initially providing appearance related product information, but not to more mouse clicks. Respondents do indeed seem to invest more effort when using functional characteristics to choose products compared using appearance related characteristics of the product, but they perceive the same amount of effort.

When appearance related information is shown in mass customization environments, consumers choose products more easily, compared with when functional characteristics are shown. However, consumers will also be more uncertain about whether they have chosen the product that is best for them. When the functional product characteristics are presented instead of appearance related characteristics, consumers have more difficulty choosing products, but they are less uncertain about whether they have chosen the product that is best for them. In short, presenting appearance does not demand a lot of effort, but leaves the consumer with relative product uncertainty. Presenting functionality, on the other hand, demands effort, but does not leave the consumer with relative product uncertainty.

**Amount of product information**

How much information should manufacturers offer to consumers in mass customization environments? When consumers are confronted with small assortments, consumers may get bored and they stop searching the product configurator. On the other hand, when consumers are confronted with large assortments, they have to invest a lot of effort to search this assortment. Consumers may get tired of searching and they will stop searching as well. Thus, the number of products offered through product configurators should be balanced. Consumers may be willing to search through these systems, but they want to invest no more than a certain amount of effort. Respondents perceived an equal investment in searching the small assortment or the large assortment. This suggests that consumers may want to invest effort in searching an assortment until the perceived effort reaches a certain level. Thus, consumers may want to invest more effort in an objective sense (e.g. mouse clicks and time), but want the perceived effort to remain the same. They might have some maximum perceived effort they want to invest in searching through mass customization environments. Thus, manufacturers should either offer a balanced assortment of products or make the mass customization environment easier to search in order to keep the perceived level of effort below this maximum level. Further research should focus on the issue of perceived effort, because determining the threshold level seems essential in providing managers with guidelines for the size and nature of the assortment provided.

**CONCLUSION**

Offering consumers the possibility to customize products in store allows for larger assortments, because sales personnel will be able to reduce consumers’ effort by offering assistance with the customization process. Retailers can use product configurators to increase their assortment without increasing stock. With help from retailers, consumers can choose from more variety without increasing effort. Therefore, implementing product configurators in store would be beneficial to manufacturers, retailers, and consumers.

**REFERENCES**


ABSTRACT

Variety-seeking behavior occurs if customers derive utility from the change of service providers. In this case customer satisfaction does not lead to customer loyalty. As high customer loyalty is assumed to lead to higher profits, variety-seeking behavior is a disturbing factor in the service profit chain. This article will show variety-seeking behavior in a more positive light. Variety-seekers are satisfied customers and therefore they are likely to engage in positive word-of-mouth communication. Recommendations will help to attract new customers and thus increase profits. As a consequence, customer satisfaction is central for realizing profits.

INTRODUCTION

The service profit chain consists of the relationships between employee satisfaction, perceived service quality, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and higher long-term profits. Research on the service profit chain has shed light on the fact that these relationships are not always simple (Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1996; Olsen and Johnson 2003).

The following paper addresses variety-seeking behavior as one disturbing factor in the service profit chain. Variety-seeking behavior of consumers has received considerable attention in marketing literature (Faison 1977; Givon 1984; Hoyer and Ridgway 1983; McAlister and Pessemier 1982). The focus of past research has been on consumer goods. Although Hirschman and Wallendorf (1980) state that people may exhibit variety-seeking behavior in several areas of their lives, there are relatively few approaches to transfer variety-seeking behavior to other areas. Variety-seeking behavior in services markets has not received very much attention yet. However, we believe that variety-seeking behavior might be even more important for services management. Variety-seeking behavior has some negative consequences for the firm. This paper contributes to the existing literature as we will discuss recommendations of customers as one instrument to reduce these negative consequences, thereby shedding some positive light on the phenomenon variety-seeking behavior.

THE SERVICE PROFIT CHAIN

The impact of service quality on profit and other financial outcomes of a firm has received considerable attention in marketing theory (Rust, Zahorik, and Keiningham 1995). It is often argued that high service quality leads to a high degree of customer satisfaction (Zeithaml and Bitner 2000). Satisfied customers repeatedly buy products and services. They become loyal customers. Customer loyalty and the development of long-term customer relationships will lead to higher revenues and lower costs, thus profits will increase (Berry 2002; Bruhn 2003). The service quality depends on other things – on the employee’s abilities and willingness to perform well. Therefore, employee satisfaction is necessary to reach customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and increased profits (Topolosky 2000). Further, there is wide belief that highly satisfied customers are likely to engage in positive word-of-mouth communication (Bloemer and De Ruyter 1995; Cornelsen and Schober 1997; Harrison-Walker 2001). We further assume that recommendations increase with higher customer loyalty, because loyal customers feel more attached to the service provider (Zeithaml et al. 1996; Harrison-Walker 2001). Positive recommendations lead to higher revenues and hence, to higher long-term profits.

However, these relationships are not always straightforward. Investment of companies in improvements of service quality have not always led to improved economic success (Zeithaml et. al. 1996). There are factors which disturb the causalities shown in Figure 1. In this article we will have a closer look on variety-seeking behavior as one of those factors. If variety-seeking behavior occurs, the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty is ambivalent, because variety-seeking tendency is negatively correlated with customer loyalty. Therefore, the influence of customer satisfaction on recommendations is not clear, because loyalty is positively correlated to customer satisfaction but negatively to variety-seeking tendency. We assume that the effect of customer satisfaction on recommendations is stronger than the effect of variety-seeking tendency, because there is also a positive correlation between the degree of satisfaction of variety-seekers and recommendations.

DETERMINANTS OF VARIETY-SEEKING BEHAVIOR

Suppliers on a number of markets are facing the problem that customers are satisfied with the products or services offered but switch to another supplier for the next purchase. There might be several reasons for such behavior, such as external factors (e.g. stock availability), or a change of situation-specific preferences. But as research has shown it might as well result from the simple desire for change. To Givon (1984) variety-seeking (or avoidance) behavior is “the phenomenon of an individual consumer switching brands (or repeat buying) induced by the utility (or disutility) she derives from the change itself irrespective of the brands she switches to or from” (p.2).

The central theoretical explanation for the phenomenon of variety-seeking behavior is provided by the theory of the Optimum Stimulation Level (Berlyne 1960). Each individual has its own specific optimal level of stimulation, which is relatively constant over time (Helmig 1997). In situations containing an increased level of arousal, further stimulation will be avoided. In situations where the level of stimulation is below the optimum, individuals will seek additional stimulation.

A purchasing situation may provide a less than optimal level of stimulation for a consumer, thus leading to a state of boredom. As a consequence, the consumer will try to increase the arousal potential of the situation, for example, by exhibiting variety-seeking behavior (Helmig 1997; Menon and Kahn 1995).

Other explanations for variety-seeking behavior are for example the uncertainty about future preferences (Kahn and Lehmann 1991) as well as the belief of people that no one item provides desired levels of all attributes (Farquhar and Rao 1976).

Personal factors seem to influence the optimal level of stimulation of an individual and hence the degree of variety-seeking behavior (Hoyer and Ridgway 1983) the individual shows. The age of an individual plays an important role. ‘Childhood’ and ‘Youth’ are characterized by a higher level of curiosity than retirement age mainly due to more experience of life. Generally, the desire for change decreases as people grow older, although this cannot be
applied to all areas of life and to all purchasing situations. Furthermore, people’s cultural backgrounds, ideological attitudes and their lifestyles influence their variety-seeking tendency. People dedicated to a rather spartan life are less likely to engage in variety-seeking behavior than people living a hedonistic lifestyle (Van Trijp, Hoyer, and Inman 1996). Venturesome, spontaneous and extrovert people will as well have a higher tendency to show variety-seeking behavior than riskavers, rational people. The degree of education and the level of income are also assumed to be positively correlated with variety-seeking behavior (McAllister and Pessemier 1982; Raju 1980). The degree of variety-seeking behavior even appears to depend on gender: men are more likely to exhibit variety-seeking behavior than women (McAllister and Pessemier 1982; Tscheulin 1994).

McAllister and Pessemier (1982) suggest that there are also motives like the desire for group affiliation or individual identity that influence variety-seeking behavior because social pressures for conformity create the need to express individuality in subtle ways.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Antecedents of Recommendations

Past research on word-of-mouth communication mainly focused on its effects on the receivers attitudes and behaviors (Anderson 1998). Relatively few researchers have paid attention to potential antecedents of recommendations (Anderson 1998; Harrison-Walker 2001). Anderson (1998) found that word-of-mouth activity increases as either satisfaction or dissatisfaction of customers increases.

As variety-seeking consumers will choose another service provider at the next purchase, one could argue that it is unnecessary to provide high service quality to these consumers. High service quality leads to high costs and variety seekers will not generate future revenues, thus profits are decreasing. However, past research revealed that high service quality positively affects word-of-mouth communication behavior of customers. (Bone 1992; Helm 2000; Harrison-Walker 2001). Positive word-of-mouth communication will attract new customers and, hence, lead to higher revenues.

Therefore customer satisfaction is central for realizing profits. Moreover, extremely dissatisfied customers are even more likely to engage in word-of-mouth than satisfied customers (Anderson 1998; Harrison-Walker 2001). Negative word-of-mouth will probably lead to lower customer loyalty and negative consequences for the attraction of new customers.

Past research further revealed that customer loyalty is positively related to word-of-mouth communication (Zeithaml et al. 1996; Harrison-Walker 2001). Not only loyal customers are satisfied with the service but also they feel attached to the service provider.

Empirical Study

Research Design. The empirical study was one part of a larger research project in the popular German destination Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Winter 2001/02. The objective of the overall study was to get a better understanding of the influences of tourists’ decision for a destination. Further satisfaction of the tourists with their vacation in Garmisch-Partenkirchen should be analyzed. Moreover, factors that influence the duration of stay of tourists at a destination should be investigated. Determinants of customer loyalty were another main part of the study.

This part of the study will focus on the relevance of variety-seeking behavior and recommendations within the service profit chain. Within two periods of time a total of 428 personal interviews with tourists were conducted, whereby standardized questionnaires were used. The age quota was linked to the official registration statistics.

Research Hypotheses. In our empirical study we focus on one part of the service profit chain. The following hypotheses are of interest.

H1: Customer Satisfaction is positively correlated with recommendations.
H2: Customer Loyalty is expected to increase as customer satisfaction increases.
H3: Recommendations are expected to increase as customer loyalty increases.
Table 1: Indicators for Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer Satisfaction</td>
<td>How satisfied are you in general with your holiday in Garmisch-Partenkirchen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Loyalty</td>
<td>I will definitely spend at least one holiday in Garmisch-Partenkirchen within the next 3 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>I am happy to recommend Garmisch-Partenkirchen as a holiday location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety-seeking tendency</td>
<td>I travel to a different place each time I go on holiday.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H4: Variety-seeking tendency should be negatively correlated to customer loyalty.

H5: The influence of customer satisfaction on recommendations is stronger than that of variety-seeking tendency.

Table 1 contains the indicators used to measure the variables. As we conducted the study in only one period of time, our indicators for the variables measure only behavioral intentions instead of observed behavior. As the original objective of the overall study was different from the focus of this article, we can only measure one indicator for each variable.

Results. All variables were measured on a 5-point scale (not satisfied at all to extraordinarily satisfied for overall customer satisfaction and strongly agree to strongly disagree for customer loyalty, recommendations and variety-seeking tendency).

Hypotheses 1 to 4 were tested using correlation analysis. All correlations are statistically significant (p<0.001), thus supporting the hypotheses. Figure 2 shows the correlation coefficients.

A regression model was used to investigate hypothesis 5. Recommendations was used as the dependent variable and customer satisfaction and variety-seeking tendency as the independent variables. The model was highly statistically significant. Table 2 contains the regression coefficients.

An examination of the results shows that the influence of customer satisfaction on recommendations is stronger than that of variety-seeking tendency, thus supporting hypothesis 5. Although the influence of variety-seeking tendency is significantly negative, the influence of satisfaction is much stronger. A high satisfaction level will always lead to positive recommendations.

Table 3 shows the distribution of the tourists in our example on the basis of the variables “customer satisfaction” and “variety-seeking tendency”.

Over 30 percent of the tourists have been relatively dissatisfied with their vacation in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. A medium degree of satisfaction (3) is not enough to induce customer retention, if the degree of competition is very high (Bhote 1966). There is no doubt.
that in tourism there is intense competition. In addition dissatisfied customers are assumed to engage in negative word-of-mouth communication. However, dissatisfied inertia tourists might not spread very much negative word-of-mouth. Although they are unsatisfied, they still come back, which might decrease the probability that they tell something negative about the destination. Dissatisfied movers are probably the most problematic group, because they are dissatisfied and do not feel attached to the destination. Hence, it is very likely that they spread negative word-of-mouth.

Consequences for Management

Our empirical example confirms our assumed correlations in the service profit chain. Further our results show that satisfaction management is central for realizing profits! This is why satisfied variety seekers and satisfied inertia tourists give recommendations. Another argument emphasizing the importance of satisfaction management is that dissatisfied customers are likely to engage in negative word-of-mouth communication, which can cause severe damage.

In addition, one could argue that a variety-seeking tourist meets more people because he spends every holiday in another destination. In general, variety-seekers might meet more people because they change shopping locations more frequently, go to many different places to spend their spare time, etc. This is consistent with previous research that revealed that variety-seeking consumers seem to be more extrovert, spontaneous, venturesome, etc., thus possibly they are more communicative (Raju 1980; McAllister and Pessemier 1982).

If variety-seekers really are more communicative, one could assume that they have more contacts with potential customers of the firm to which they could give a recommendation. As figure 3 shows, the number of relevant recommendations a satisfied customer gives might as well depend on the number of potential customers the person meets as on the personal probability of this person to engage in positive word-of-mouth communication.

Variety-seekers are valuable word-of-mouth communicators because they probably have more contacts with potential customers. In our example, variety-seeking tourists are traveling around more and hence meet a lot of other tourists that prefer the same type of destination. As a consequence, high service quality should be provided, even to variety-seekers, to generate positive word-of-mouth communication.

In order to estimate how valuable recommendations are, it would be necessary to know how many of the relevant recommendations lead to the acquisition of a new customer. In our study, the proportion of people who came to Garmisch-Partenkirchen because of a recommendation of friends or relatives was relatively high (37.9%). However, probably the total mix of communication instruments as well as other factors (e.g. family) will influence the decision to spend vacation in one particular destination, or in

**TABLE 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regression Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety-seeking tendency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sign F=0.000  
R²=0.206  
Adj. R²=0.202  
Dependant variable: recommendation

**TABLE 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution of Tourists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variety-Seeking Tendency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (4-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (1-3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
general, to buy a particular product or service. Therefore, further research is necessary to better understand the weight of the influence of recommendations.

CONCLUSION

This paper discusses variety-seeking behavior as one disturbing factor in the service profit chain. We have shown that customer satisfaction and positive word-of-mouth communication are positively correlated. Moreover, we have shown that the influence of recommendations on satisfaction is stronger than the influence of variety-seeking tendency. Therefore, management of customer satisfaction is central for realizing profits.

We have discussed that recommendations of variety-seekers might be valuable for gaining new customers. Although they will change the service provider at the next purchase, they have been satisfied with the service quality offered and are likely to engage in positive word-of-mouth communication. As they probably meet more potential customers, they can give a lot of relevant recommendations. This sheds more positive light on variety-seeking behavior of consumers.

As we have shown, variety-seeking behavior has important influence on the relationships in the service profit chain. However, positive recommendations of variety-seekers will reduce the negative consequences of such behavior.

Several limitations of our empirical example in the tourism industry must be recognized. The results may not be true for other service industries. Further, the variables were mainly behavioral intentions rather than actual behavior, and hence, the results of this study must be interpreted with caution.

Future research concerning recommendations as an instrument to reduce the negative consequences of variety-seeking behavior is necessary. The value of recommendations for the acquisition of new customers should be investigated, because the weight of the influence of recommendations on acquisition determines profits. Moreover, empirical research as well as deeper theoretical research is necessary to find out whether variety-seekers are really more communicative. If this were true, variety-seekers could be better word-of-mouth communicators than loyal customers.

If recommendations are valuable, it remains a question, what management can do to induce customers to spread positive word-of-mouth. Therefore, deeper insights on the antecedents of word-of-mouth communication behavior are necessary.

REFERENCES


The Effect of Positive Mood on Variety-Seeking: A Qualification
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Michelle L. Roehm, Wake Forest University, USA

ABSTRACT
We report evidence that the effect of positive mood on variety-seeking depends on the extremity of the mood. With mild positive moods, variety-seeking appears to be enhanced, but with extremely positive moods, variety-seeking seems to be reduced below control levels. Our experimental results provide a qualification of the finding from extant research that variety-seeking generally increases when consumers are in a positive mood. We offer a theoretical explanation and discuss implications.
ABSTRACT
In this paper, we explore the relationship between consumers’ perceptions of time and their particular shopping styles. We consider four timestyle constructs: behavioral, planning, social, and temporal orientations, and six shopping style constructs: pre-purchase planning, variety-seeking, impulse buying, price search, market mavenism, and frequency of shopping trips, to develop our hypotheses. Results obtained from survey questionnaire data are reported. Based on these results, we offer some preliminary theoretical and substantive insights about consumers’ behaviors with regard to their time and shopping styles.

TIMESTYLE AND SHOPPING STYLE
North American consumers increasingly feel time-stressed and time-pressed. Whether consumers in fact have less time or not, they certainly feel as if they have less free time (Robinson and Godbey, 1997; Novotney, 1994; Schor, 1991). Many societal trends appear to be influenced by this perceived time crunch (Bluedorn, 1998; Hochschild, 1997; Kaufman and Lane, 1997; Schor, 1991). One particular domain that has been affected by consumers’ perceived time shortages is retail shopping habits and patterns (Dellaert et al., 1998; Kaufman and Lane, 1996). In this study we examine the impact of individuals’ perception and use of time on various shopping styles and behaviors.

Each individual has a unique way of perceiving, thinking about, and planning their time, or a timestyle (Cotte and Ratneshwar, 2000). In a very real sense, people’s unique perceptions of time can be said to pervade all facets of their decision-making and behavior. This study examines when timestyle and shopping style intersect; it examines how one’s perception and use of time impacts various shopping strategies. Although the idea that time perspective can influence the traditional stages of consumer behavior has been previously put forth (Graham, 1981) our research makes a unique contribution by merging two streams of research—research on temporal perception and behavior and the various literatures that examine shopping behaviors. An important goal of this research is to offer a theoretical explanation of the influence of temporal variables on consumer shopping behavior. Further, our work offers substantive insights about consumers’ perceptions of time and how a particular timestyle might direct shopping behaviors.

We organize our paper as follows. We first briefly define and discuss the constructs involved in timestyle and shopping style. We then develop hypotheses for the relationships between individual timestyle dimensions and shopping behaviors. Finally, we test our hypotheses using survey data, and review the contribution of our research for understanding retail shopping behavior.

TIMESTYLE
Prior work in this area (Cotte and Ratneshwar 2000) suggests that timestyle is a multidimensional construct and that individuals vary across several different dimensions in how they perceive and behave with respect to time. Although there are many ways one can examine how an individual perceives time, we believe that four dimensions in particular are important for helping us understand shopping behavior and style.

Behavioral Orientation
The first dimension on which people might differ is their behavioral orientation: whether one prefers monochronic or polychronic behavior (Hall, 1959; 1976; 1983; Hall and Hall, 1987; Feldman and Hornik, 1981; Graham, 1981; Kaufman, Lane and Lindquist, 1991). Although Hall’s work is complex and generally cross cultural, his ideas have been simplified and made relevant to marketing research by Kaufman et al. (1991), among others. Treating time monochronically means emphasizing one thing at a time, and proceeding through tasks linearly. Treating time as polychronous means using time for more than one purpose at once, like watching TV and reading, or working on one thing and jumping to another task, then going back to the first one. This monochronic/polychronous distinction has relevance in the shopping domain, as we will examine below (see also Kaufman and Lane, 1996).

Planning Orientation
Planning orientation is how an individual perceives, organizes and thinks about planning his or her time. People may be differentiated by planning orientation (Bond and Feather, 1988; Calabresi and Cohen, 1968; Cotte and Ratneshwar, 2000.) The major aspect of planning orientation we examine is the continuum from a highly analytical style to a less concrete, spontaneous orientation. Analytic planning is akin to the highly structured planning suggested in many time management seminars and training courses, while spontaneity, at the other extreme, might simply mean trying to avoid planning, or refusing to make plans at all.

Social Orientation
The third dimension on which people differ in their perception of time is social orientation: time alone versus time with/for others (Hall, 1976; Kaufman and Lane, 1990; Manrai and Manrai, 1995; Rhees, Uleman, Lee and Roman, 1995). This social orientation dimension means that time is categorized differently, depending on the priority given to alone time vs. others time. The motivations to categorize a unit of time as for, or with, others can be either voluntary (someone intrinsically preferring time with others over time spent alone) or obligatory (“this is time I should spend with my husband”).

Temporal Orientation
A final dimension of timestyle is the relative significance individuals attribute to the past, present or the future—this is referred to as temporal orientation (Cottle, 1976; Holbrook, 1993; Jones, 1988). This emphasis helps create an individual’s unique personality (Graham, 1981; Kaufman and Lane, 1990; Philipp, 1992). This is not to say that, for example, future-oriented individuals will only consider the importance of the future in their lives, but this temporal emphasis helps us differentiate individuals based on the relative importance they give to the three temporal zones (Cottle, 1976). For example, being oriented to the past is conceptualized as nostalgia, defined generally by Holbrook as “…a longing for the past, a yearning for yesterday, or a fondness for possessions and activities associated with days of yore” (Holbrook, 1993, p. 245).

SHOPPING STYLE
We believe that an individual also has a shopping style and we also conceptualize this as a multidimensional construct, consisting of both trait and behavioral dimensions. The dimensions of shopping style that we examine in this exploratory study include amount of price search (Urbany, Dickson and Kalaparakal, 1996), variety-
seeming (Menon and Kahn, 1995; Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1992; Van Trijp, Hoyer and Inman, 1996), impulse buying (Rook and Fisher, 1995), market mavenism (Feick and Price, 1987), the use of pre-purchase planning (Lichtenstein, Netemeyer and Burton, 1995; Moore-Shay and Lutz, 1988), and finally, frequency of shopping trips (Kaufman and Lane, 1996). Although some have argued that these variables are context-dependent (see Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1992; Menon and Kahn, 1995) we believe that people do have a general trait shopping style. Thus, for example, in the services domain delays in one’s waiting time (Taylor, 1994) may lead to specific behavioral reactions, e.g. tapping one’s foot, or mumbling under one’s breath. As a consequence, a consumer’s shopping style may be heightened or altered in experiences or situations where context-dependent behaviors occur, such as waiting in line.

**Price Search**

Price search is the effort expended in comparing prices (Urbany, Dickson and Kalapurakal, 1996). Researchers generally conceive of price search as price comparison between stores, an approach we also adopt in this research. We believe price search is part of one’s shopping style, an idea first suggested by Urbany et al. (1996, p. 101) “…early search patterns become habitual, perhaps part of a shopping persona.” The customer makes it a point to search for the most appropriate price, even if it means going elsewhere. Therefore, both planning and actual execution, i.e. behavior, become important.

**Variety-Seeking**

Variety-seeking shopping behavior is when a consumer tries a different brand in a category simply for the “utility inherent in variation,” that is, not because the new brand has better attributes, but because the change feels good (Van Trijp et al., 1996). Variety-seeking sometimes leads to permanent brand switching, and therefore is important to managers. Van Trijp et al. (1996) point out that true variety-seeking behavior is intrinsically motivated, not driven by external pressures. For example, switching brands because one has a coupon is not considered true variety-seeking behavior (see also Hoyer and Ridgway, 1984; McAlister and Pessemier, 1982). Variety-seeking is thought to be the result of boredom, a need for stimulation, and curiosity (Van Trijp et al., 1996). Again, the customer follows a specific plan, based on the need for something different, and as a consequence makes a new or different purchase.

**Impulse Buying**

After reviewing the psychological literature, Rook and Fisher (1995) conclude that impulse buying tendencies can be thought of as a consumer trait. This trait reflects a “consumer’s tendency to buy spontaneously, unreflectively, immediately, and kinetically” (Rook and Fisher, 1995, p. 306). We included this shopping style in our investigation because the trait includes, by definition, many temporally related ideas that could be influenced by one’s timestyle. Impulse buying connotes a hasty or quick decision to purchase, a behavior, often influenced by the pressure of one’s time constraints or even social obligations.

**Market Mavenism**

Market mavens make themselves feel good by gathering information about products, prices, stores and other shopping details and then relaying this information to others (Feick and Price, 1987). Mavens learn about products earlier, and enjoy informing others about their discoveries. Social interaction plays an important role in the maven’s behavior, thus his or her shopping style seems intrinsically related to his or her preference for spending time in general with other people.

**Pre-Purchase Planning**

We conceptualize pre-purchase planning behavior as actions taken before the shopping trip to help the consumer plan the shopping trip. We operationalize this planning behavior as making shopping lists before shopping and going through the house to check what is needed before shopping (Lichtenstein, Netemeyer and Burton, 1995; Moore-Shay and Lutz, 1988). This often occurs as a result of having to coordinate things for others, like family and friends. Pre-purchase planning, by definition, also involves planning for future events.

**Frequency of Shopping Trips**

Finally, we believe that an important shopping style variable may be the frequency with which one shops. As we will discuss below, we posit that this outcome should be inextricably connected to one’s timestyle in several important ways.

**HYPOTHESES**

The behavioral orientation dimension of timestyle (polychronic or monochronic behavior) involves simultaneous behavior—doing two things at once or hopping back and forth between two tasks. “Two or more activities are performed within the same time block, apparently at the same time” (Kaufman et al., 1991, pg. 393). Kaufman and her colleagues have found that polychronic time use is associated with less role overload, and we hypothesize that this is because polychronic people enjoy more stimulation (i.e. have a higher optimal stimulation level). Optimal stimulation level has been shown to predict variety-seeking behavior (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1992). Thus we posit:

**H1:** Polychronic shoppers (versus monochronic shoppers) are more likely to engage in variety-seeking behaviors.

Polychronic time use may also influence how an individual blocks out time. Relatively more polychronic people may lump various tasks together into a block of time to try and achieve more simultaneously, to get more tasks done at once while shopping (Kaufman and Lane, 1996). It is therefore likely that less individual trips to the store will be necessary, and so:

**H2:** Polychronic shoppers (versus monochronic shoppers) will make less shopping trips per week.

Comparing prices from one store to another requires a focus on shopping for the best price, even if it means more time spent on this one shopping task. Polychronic people try to engage in multiple tasks, thus a single focus on best price may be unappealing, because they are less likely to be able to combine activities together in one unit of time. Concerning the behavioral orientation dimension of timestyle, we thus posit:

**H3:** Polychronic shoppers (versus monochronic shoppers) will engage in less price search behavior.

The planning orientation dimension of timestyle involves a continuum from analytic planning to spontaneity. Analytic planning includes the use of detailed temporal categories (as an extreme example, planning a day in 15 minute intervals) whereas spontaneity allows for a great deal of flexibility with one’s time. This planning orientation dimension should be related to shopping style
in a variety of ways. For example, impulse buying has been described as “spontaneous and unreflective” and impulse shoppers are theorized to use more “open” shopping lists (Rook and Fisher, 1995). In the mental budgeting literature, researchers have shown that rational planners are less likely to give in to an impulse purchase (Heath and Soll, 1996). One might argue that rational planning tendencies extend to the temporal domain, so that analogously, analytic planners, who tend to use specific planning tools, like lists and schedules, would be less likely to impulse buy. Thus:

\[ H4: \text{Analytic (versus spontaneous) planners are less likely to impulse buy.} \]

Research has theorized that better time managers have more free time and therefore engage in more price search activities (Urbanay et al., 1996). By definition, analytic planners are extremely focused on time management and planning time, and they should therefore have more free time for price search behavior, and so:

\[ H5: \text{Analytic (versus spontaneous) planners are more likely to engage in price search.} \]

Analytic planning, by its nature, requires written plans and organization. Pre-purchase planning involves making shopping lists and methodically checking the house before leaving for a shopping trip, which is quite an organized approach to shopping.

\[ H6: \text{Analytic (versus spontaneous) planners are more likely to undertake pre-purchase planning.} \]

Analytic planners plan their time in discrete, well-organized units. They are less flexible with their schedule, and try to stick to their plans. Therefore, store visits will be as planned as possible. Analytic planners may accomplish their shopping in one well-planned trip a week, while holistic planners may frequently stop in to pick up a few items on the spur of the moment. Thus:

\[ H7: \text{Analytic (versus spontaneous) planners will make less shopping trips per week.} \]

Analytic planners may also tend to be rigid in their planning. We previously argued that these individuals engage in price search, are less likely to impulse buy, and undertake more planning before they shop. It seems unlikely that these sorts of planners would engage in variety-seeking behaviors—we believe it would be more likely for them to stick to the plan of their shopping trip. Thus, our final hypothesis regarding planning orientation is:

\[ H8: \text{Analytic (versus spontaneous) planners are less likely to be variety seekers.} \]

The third timestyle dimension we discussed above is social orientation. Individuals vary on their preference for spending time alone or with other people (Zerubavel, 1981; Rhee et al., 1995). “Market mavens” are those who gather shopping knowledge because they want to share it with others (Feick and Price, 1987). Thus, it is likely social orientation plays a role in this “mavenism.”

We propose:

\[ H9: \text{Socially oriented (versus alone oriented) individuals are more likely to be market mavens.} \]

We assume that the socially-oriented individual will be more likely to shop with others, and will shop for recreation with others, rather than alone. The presence of other people may influence both impulse buying and pre-purchase planning, because social influences may lead to a quick, on the spot decision, with little or no planning. Thus:

\[ H10: \text{Socially oriented (versus alone oriented) individuals are more likely to impulse buy.} \]

\[ H11: \text{Socially oriented (versus alone oriented) individuals are less likely to engage in pre-purchase planning.} \]

The final dimension of timestyle is temporal orientation. Temporal orientation to the past, present or future helps to shape one’s personality. Future orientation in particular has been related to one’s attitudes and actions towards products—future oriented individuals actively seek opportunity (Bergadaà, 1990). Future temporal orientation has also been shown to be related to self esteem, optimism and a sense of purpose and direction in life (Bond and Feather, 1983; Feather and Bond, 1988; Philipp, 1992). In the shopping domain, this active seeking of opportunity and a sense of purpose may be analogous to planning out purchases. Thus:

\[ H12: \text{The more future oriented an individual, the more he or she will engage in pre-purchase planning.} \]

\[ \text{METHODOLOGY} \]

\[ \text{Data Collection} \]

Our research examines the relationship between timestyle and shopping style through a survey of adult consumers in the Eastern United States. As part of a course, undergraduate students enrolled in marketing courses from two large state universities were recruited to distribute surveys to non-student respondents. The intention of the data collection procedures was to focus on respondents who make a majority of household purchase decisions—e.g., parents, siblings, relatives or family friends living on their own or heading their own households, etc., and who consequently have intact timestyles and shopping styles. Each undergraduate took up to three surveys, with accompanying addressed and stamped envelopes, to distribute to family members and family acquaintances. Each survey was coded with a three-digit number, which was in turn matched to the undergraduate who distributed the survey. The undergraduates distributed 360 surveys, of which 251 were returned, generating a response rate of 69.7%. Of these responses, 68% claimed to visit at least two stores during one shopping trip, 51.2% claimed to spend at least one half hour in a grocery store during a normal trip, and 60.6% had at least one child living at home. Females constituted 68.3% of the responses in this convenience sample.

\[ \text{Measures} \]

The survey consisted of eight pages including a cover letter explaining the research. The survey contained items measuring the four timestyle dimensions and the six shopping style dimensions. The construct measures were 5-point, multi-item scales, anchored by strongly disagree and strongly agree. In order to avoid patterned responses, certain items were reverse-coded. The majority of measures used in this study were from previously published research, although in some instances minor wording changes were necessary in order to make an item fit with the current research agenda. The last page of the survey consisted of closed-end questions pertaining to the respondent’s allotment of time and money when shopping (how many stores visited, how much time spent in the store, how often one shops per week, and how much one spends per week), and also general demographic information about him/herself (e.g.,
number of children at home, sex, education, age, total household income).

We assessed scale validity for each measure looking at the item inter-correlations and factor analyzing the scales. Because timestyle is a relatively unknown construct, Table 1 lists the items used to make up each timestyle dimension measure as well as the exploratory factor analysis loadings, and coefficient alphas obtained for each dimension.

The four items measuring behavioral orientation are the Polychronic Attitude Index (Kaufman et al., 1991). This assessed the respondent’s attitudes about carrying out one task at a time versus multiple tasks simultaneously. Results from an exploratory factor analysis of this construct’s measures indicated that all items loaded well on one factor, suggesting unidimensionality. We performed a second factor analysis specifying only one factor (DeVellis, 1991). All four items had factor loadings greater than .50. We subjected the items to a reliability analysis; the resulting coefficient alpha was .75. The higher one’s score on this scale, the more polychronic one is.

The planning orientation dimension attempted to capture the respondent’s preference for setting up an orderly schedule of events. Six items focused on issues such as how the respondent felt about postponing activities, doing activities on the spur of the moment, and making daily lists. Additionally, they accounted for how time affects one’s scheduling routine (Block et al., 1984; Calabresi and Cohen, 1968), and also whether or not the respondent follows a daily routine, organizes tasks, or leaves things to the last minute (Bond and Feather, 1988). We also included additional items to probe issues pertaining to keeping a routine schedule, falling behind, varying one’s schedule at the spur of the moment, and making plans at home versus at work. A factor analysis of the planning style construct items yielded a one factor solution, attesting to the unidimensionality of the scale. A second factor analysis specifying only one factor showed that all six items had factor loadings greater than, or equal to .60. A reliability analysis resulted in a coefficient alpha of .76. Higher scores on this scale indicate the respondent is relatively more analytic (versus spontaneous) in planning.

Seven items comprised the social orientation measure. All the items were from the first author’s prior work, except for a measure of the respondent’s preference for working in a team versus working alone, which was added for this study. The items focused on the respondent’s preference for being alone versus being with others and how being in one of these two situations makes the respondent feel. The resulting coefficient alpha was .85, and a factor analysis of the items resulted in a one factor solution, with loadings on the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Items</th>
<th>Exploratory Factor Analysis Loadings</th>
<th>Scale Reliability (α)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Orientation (Polychronic Attitude Index)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to juggle several activities at the same time</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People should not try to do many things at once*</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work on one project at a time*</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am comfortable doing several things at the same time</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At my job, I have a daily routine I follow</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a definite schedule each day</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I generally prefer to have a set time for daily events, such as getting up, eating meals, and so on, rather than doing things unscheduled</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I am not at my job, I have a daily routine I follow</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it difficult to keep track of time*</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My schedule is usually set in stone</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working as a team is preferable to working alone</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to spend my time alone*</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socializing with other people makes me feel good about myself</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t like to be alone much</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get a good feeling from doing things with a group of people</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like being around other people more than being alone</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending time with other people is usually more fun than spending time alone</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tend to focus attention on the future, not on the past</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often think about what I am going to do in the future</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is fun to plan for the future, even though the plans may not work out</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I daydream about the future</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Items were reversed scored
* All items were 5 point scales: 1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree
one factor .60 or higher. Scoring highly on this scale indicates a relative preference for spending time with others over spending time alone.

We used four items to measure the temporal orientation construct. The purpose of this construct was to identify the respondent’s mindset as being more future-oriented. The items focused on one’s acts in the future (Block et al., 1984) and one’s thoughts about planning for the future (Calabresi and Cohen, 1968).

The results of a factor analysis on the items showed that one factor explained the variance well. We performed a second factor analysis specifying only one factor, and all four items had factor loadings greater than .60. We subjected the items to a reliability analysis and obtained a coefficient alpha of .61.

The pre-purchase planning construct consisted of two items that examined the respondent’s actions before going shopping, including making lists (Moore-Shay and Lutz, 1988) and going through the house in order to figure out what he/she needs (r=.47, p<.00).

Three items, created by Van Tripp et al. (1996), measured the variety-seeking construct. The items focused on issues pertaining to the respondent’s level of caution when choosing purchases, and one’s aptitude for switching to other brands. When factor analyzed, the items revealed a unidimensional structure, accounting for 77% of the variance (alpha=.68; factor loadings all above .70).

The impulse buying items focused on the respondent’s willingness to make purchases on the spur of the moment. Eight items covered issues pertaining to acting without previous intention (Moore-Shay and Lutz, 1988) and having a “just do it” attitude (Rook and Fisher, 1995). All items loaded on one factor, with coefficient alpha of .89; factor loadings ranged from .65 to .81.

The price search construct measurements came from two items created by Urban et al. (1996). They focused on whether or not one generally compares store prices, and whether or not one compares the prices of fruits and vegetables from store to store (r=.51, p<.00).

Six items, taken from the work by Feick and Price (1987), were used for the market maven scale. These items focused on the respondent’s willingness and interest in gathering and sharing information with others. As expected, a factor analysis on these items showed a unidimensional solution (coefficient alpha=.88; one factor loadings all above .60).

### RESULTS

Table 2 shows the correlational results between the timestyle dimensions and the shopping style dimensions.

Behavioral orientation is positively correlated with variety-seeking, and negatively correlated with deal proneness, price search, and the number of shopping trips per week. Relatively more polychronic people variety-seek while shopping, make less shopping trips per week, and are less likely to undertake extensive price comparisons. These results support H1-H3.

A relatively more analytic timestyle is positively associated with pre-purchase planning, supporting H6. However, there was no relationship between planning orientation and price search, as expected from H5. The more analytic one’s planning style, the less one is likely to make impulse purchases, offering support for H4. We did not find support for H7, but supporting H8, we found that variety-seekers are less likely to be analytic planners. An unexpected finding was the positive association of an analytic planning orientation and market mavenism.

The more one prefers to spend time with others, rather than alone, the greater the likelihood of impulse buying while shopping, supporting H10. Socially oriented individuals are more likely to be market mavens, as predicted in H9, and generally undertake less pre-purchase planning, supporting H11.

Finally, we found no relationship between temporal orientation and pre-purchase planning, as we expected in H12. However, an unexpected finding was that the more future oriented a consumer, the less shopping trips per week they take.

We also looked at the relationships between timestyle and shopping style by regressing the timestyle dimensions onto the various shopping styles. Results confirmed our bivariate correlational results, and demonstrated that timestyle taken as a whole, does influence shopping styles, however, the amount of variance explained by timestyle is low.

### SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Our study has the potential to illuminate the role timestyle plays in consumer shopping behavior, a topic previously overlooked in consumer research. The exploration of timestyle offers consumer researchers the opportunity to study an aspect of the consumer that pervades his or her behavior and decision-making. From a more substantive perspective, retailers and other marketers...
can use knowledge of the link between temporal and shopping styles to target appeals for time-related offerings like one-stop shopping (Kaufman and Lane, 1996) and on-line shopping.

One of our interesting findings is that polychronous people, those more likely to combine multiple activities simultaneously, actually do less when it comes to traditional shopping behaviors. While variety-seekers, these consumers are less likely to engage in price search, and they make less shopping trips per week. American customers are increasingly facing time pressures and adopting innovative strategies for dealing with time pressures (Hochschild, 1997; Kaufman and Lane, 1996; Schor, 1991)–thus it is likely that polychronic behavior will increase, not decrease over time. This has implications for understanding changes in retail formats. For example, we can now posit a theoretical reason for why traditional department stores seem more and more like dinosaurs in a world increasingly populated with one-stop shopping centers. Simply put, polychronous people reduce their traditional shopping behaviors. As time pressures mount, polychronicity becomes more common, leading to less traditional shopping patterns and the development of more hybrid stores, where a pharmacy morphs into a small grocery store and Walmart carries everything from lawn and garden to beauty supplies. More speculatively, increased polychronicity, with its attendant reduction of shopping trips, bodes well for increased on-line transactions.

Our finding that market mavens are more analytic in their planning styles suggests that these socially driven individuals are perhaps also driven to be “correct” in the information they pass on to others. Planning time quite carefully may allow these shoppers the opportunity to carefully assess stores, prices, and other features of the retail environment before they share information with others. This adds another layer of understanding of this important opinion leader.

From a retailing perspective, our finding that social orientation correlates with impulse-buying could justify an actionable merchandising strategy. Knowing this association, retailers could structure displays so that those who are likely to shop with friends would be more attracted, for example, to displays that encourage shoppers to examine items and get others’ feedback. Socially-oriented displays could thus encourage the impulse-buying tendency.

In this research, we used the concept of an individual timestyle to explore differences in shopping behaviors due to individual perceptions and treatments of time. With our data, we offer some preliminary explanations for emerging retail trends and behaviors, and posit an important role for temporal perception in the retail domain. Future research could explore the positioning and segmentation opportunities possible using timestyle as a variable, or more ambitiously could place our current American perceptions of time in a more historically situated context.

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Religion as a Consumer Acculturation Variable: The Case of British Indians
Andrew Lindridge, UMIST, UK

ABSTRACT
The inter-relationship between religiosity, culture and acculturation is explored within the context of British Indians’ consumer behaviour. Literature indicates a strong relationship between religious identity, self-identity and the acculturation process. Quantitative data analysis, using multiple regression analysis, indicated a significant relationships between religiosity levels, temple attendance and consumption orientation among British Indians, when compared to British Caucasians. The paper concludes that declining religiosity can be identified with acculturation categories of assimilation and marginality.
ABSTRACT

Ethnicity and cultural affiliation has recently become increasingly important as research begins to establish the extent to which culture is passed from generation to generation. This is not, however, an easy linear trajectory. Even though cultural values are being passed from one generation to another, external influences and forces, such as peers and opinion leaders begin to weaken cultural ties leading to mixed messages and responses to aspiration and rejection of these influences. This paper focuses not only on consumption patterns but also on how geographical location and the density of the ethnic population influences consumption patterns, comparing predominately “white” populated neighbourhoods with more “ethnically” dominated areas. At this stage the paper is focusing on the conceptualization of consumption patterns and in time will also include results of actual primary research undertaken. Previously consumption patterns have been reviewed with a generic mass in mind, the authors purpose that the enhancement of marketing campaigns, the delivery of added value service can only take place if the less obvious, less publicised, less media orientated segments are also analysed. By using self-categorisation to find out how people perceive themselves and by identifying and comparing how the more “ethnically” dominated areas compared with the more “white” populated areas, this paper proposes to analyse cultural assimilation and degrees of integration against a buyer behaviour backdrop.

ETHNICITY AND IDENTITY

How significant is the role of identity when considering individual’s ethnic cultural orientation and to what extent does this impact on consumption? Rex (1996) argues that it is important to distinguish between two uses of identity. The first relates to the ways in which individuals are guided by cultural norms; perceive social entities and their own place within a given society. A second use of the term is more emotive, involving a sense of identification or association. This term can, however be further distinguished, as Laroche et al (1992) have, between subjective and objective measures of ethnicity and identity. Subjective measures conceptualise ethnicity as a matter of personal belief and reflect an individual’s psychological identity about their cultural attributes.

On the other hand objective measures of ethnicity include socio-cultural features such as religion, language and cultural tradition. To some extent it seems likely that the two are embedded in some way together. A theme here is the juxtaposition of individual feelings and emotions as related to common themes of cultural identity running through different ethnic groups, i.e. the individual’s response to their cultural situation. It can be argued that the cultural situation is indeed influenced by the density of the local ethnic population. Are immigrants more affiliated to home cultures because those residing close to them also share the same values and traditions? Will the following of traditional norms vary because a “white population” is more dominant; hence friends and peers on a daily level are from the host country.

In a discussion of the relationship between ethnicity and identity we need to consider their likely role in the relationship between first/second generation immigrants and their localization. Are they able to localize or do they stay inherently loyal to their host countries with little adaptation? Additionally the relevance and receptiveness of this group to global marketing strategies will be dependant on factors beyond their cultural orientation, for example the consumers’ financial situation, opinion leaders’ influence, geographical location of residency and personal preferences. Deshpande et al (1986:215) argue that any combination of objective and subjective characteristics are insufficient without also measuring the intensity of attachment within ethnic groups—is it a strong or weak ethnic affiliation? Donthu and Cherian (1994) found that when the strength of ethnic identification is measured, it is a significant factor in consumer purchase decisions. If the latter is found to be true, then a further question must be posed, how can marketing practitioners and academics utilise this information to provide an increased value driven service? Also will the level of affiliation be influenced by the strength of ties with other ethnic groups in the neighbourhood?

The issue of importance, which marketers in multi-cultural societies need to address, is whether ethnic minorities will ultimately accept the culture of the host country or whether they will retain their own culture and this is largely an emotional, subjective issue not necessarily suitable for objective measurement. It may of course be that it is not an either or situation, but rather an integration of both i.e. acceptance of the host country as well as successfully retaining own culture, following the “between two cultures” way of thinking. It does, however, seem intuitively likely that those with high assimilation levels will accept and be more receptive to marketing messages than those with low levels, as the latter possess home country loyalties and thus may ignore host country marketing campaigns. The latter of course needs to be tested in future primary research. The rationale behind this statement is that those strongly affiliated to the home country may choose to ignore host country marketing campaigns or may not be forthcoming in responding to these campaigns as previous countries’ influences may be the stronger driving force. Also the content of the message may need to be revised to take account of the differing cultures and issues of importance to the consumer.

CULTURAL VALUES

Individual issues related to identity and ethnicities need to be incorporated within the larger sphere of cultural values. Culture is a collective phenomenon, because it is at least partially shared with people who live or have lived within the same social environment, which is where it was learned. It is the “collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (Hofstede 1997). Thus, culture is not genetic it is learned. It is the result of the permanent human interaction. It is not inherited; it is transmitted from one generation to another generation. It derives from one’s social environment, not from one’s genes (Dussart, 1993). Culture influences, decides, establishes a behavioural framework (Ward et al, 1987). In summary, culture is a set of ways of speaking, thinking, doing things, and behaving which drive human acts. If culture stems from the local social environment, how does this change the one who immigrates to a host country and is faced with a differing environment, which may replicate partial home country traditions.

From a consumption perspective, the concept of culture incorporates two expressions of culture: physical culture, the material objects and artifacts created by mankind, and subjective culture, the subjective psychosocial responses of a man to experience. The former can be viewed as the physical manifestation of cultural...
meaning (Belk, 1987; Hirschman, 1988; Holbrook, 1989) while the latter refers to the corporate cognitive system with which a society interprets experience and imputes meaning to objects (McCracken, 1988). Both expressions of culture are important factors to individual ethnicity and identity in consumption terms.

The authors building on the work of (Dussart, 1993) accept the notion of culture as passed from generation to generation. Even though cultural values are being passed from one generation to another, external influences and forces, such as peers, opinion leaders, present country of residency begin to weaken cultural ties leading to mixed messages and responses to aspiration and rejection of these influences.

THE ROLE OF ACCULTURATION

Consideration of the concept of acculturation plays an important part in this research. Degrees of acculturation vary from generation to generation with second and subsequent generations clearly developing new loyalties and becoming more assimilated than first-generation immigrants (Bhopal 1998). Acculturation levels are an important factor in understanding the first generations’ willingness to accept the host country’s values and treat it as their home. Several studies (Metha and Belk, 1991; Penaloza’s 1994) have already been developed with the explicit purpose of understanding and conceptualizing the acculturation process that many immigrants have to deal with. Penaloza’s ethnographic exploration of the consumer acculturation of Mexican immigrants, for example, develops an empirical model of their consumer acculturation consisting of movement, translation and adaptation processes leading to outcomes of assimilation, maintenance, resistance and segregation.

Metha and Belk’s work (1991) modified the definition of cultural assimilation. They suggested that while assimilation is the proper term for immigrants who want to be absorbed in the dominant culture, integration is more appropriate for immigrants who wish to preserve their cultural identity while maintaining good relations with the dominant culture. A more recent study by (Ganesh 1997) developed existing research by examining the cultural acculturation of the Indian immigrants, in terms of relative spousal influence by product and stage of purchase. However limited research actually focuses on levels of ethnic residents effecting consumption patterns of immigrants in differing geographical locations.

As (Metha and Belk’s 1991) work has shown even second generation immigrants that are born in the U.K are still integrating into the dominant culture rather than actually being a true part of it. These descendants of immigrants while native born are in reality only partially integrated into the host country’s culture. This is not necessarily due to the host country’s resistance to welcome these individuals but is also related to these immigrants’ desire to stay loyal to the older generation and the home country. It may however be that these generation gaps actually push subsequent generations away from their parents and their culture, this will of course be dependent on lifestyle patterns and the main influencing groups, for example a second or third generation immigrant that goes away to study at University might become more integrated with the host country and thereon follow in the main host country values, weakening ties with the home country of origin. A question that needs to be considered in further development of acculturation is whether this leads to a form of assimilation or integration or whether indeed tensions exist which preclude neat solutions of either. Levels of assimilation also vary considerably for first generation settlers. These conflicts or opportunities need to be further exploited/researched, as these consumers realise their individuality is often ignored and put into the main western mass marketing “melting pot”.

IDENTITY

Belk (1974) defines a “situation” as something outside the basic tendencies and characteristics of the individual and beyond the characteristics of the stimulus object to be acted upon. He identifies five objective dimensions of situations (1975a): the physical surroundings, social surroundings, temporal perspective, task definition and antecedent states. The antecedent state (momentary moods or conditions immediately preceding choice) and social situation (the presence or absence of others) are most relevant to situational ethnicity and will be discussed further in the context of this paper. For example, consider the celebration of Diwali (festival of lights), given the probable heightened state of felt ethnicity due to the celebrations, may be more likely an Indian restaurant than if the same individual were choosing a restaurant on a different, non-Indian celebration. Similarly, Indian individuals living in England are perhaps more likely to watch a cricket match between India and England to enhance their own sense of ethnic identity.

Acculturation and ethnicity levels will also account for the conflicting mechanisms at work on second and subsequent Asian Indian generations. Some of these mechanisms will be pressuring them into conformity, whilst some into liberalisation of or deviation from these norms.

Asian Indians can also categorised as living “Between two cultures”, where there are “manifold contradictions between the expectations of the minority community and the demands of wider, western society.” This can mean that they have to be sensitive towards, two often contradictory and polarised ways of living. The pressure of negotiating between parental and community demands for respectability on the one hand, and the expectations of the majority culture on the other hand, can be intense. Thus new identities are being formed that are a mixture of cultures, values, religions and beliefs, resulting in postmodern identities that are further influenced by the make up of the local population.

Saeed et al (1999) demonstrated that hybrid identities exist amongst immigrant populations. However, for Indian immigrants living in England, would a hybrid identity be acknowledged? And how, if at all, would this affect consumption patterns? How would Indian immigrants self categorise their identity? How would these identities and subsequent consumption patterns differ according to different geographical regions?

CULTURAL MEANING OF CONSUMER GOODS

If these first/second generation immigrants are living between two cultures, what is the meaning of their purchases? To what extent are the marketers facing decisions that will have implications on buyer behaviour? This will be more problematic if the cultural outcomes of understanding first/second generation consumers do not lead to clearly defined categorizations. Before we assume neat categorization of such consumers it is worth returning to a deeper analysis of meaning and its circulation with regard to both culture and consumption.

From McCracken’s perspective (1990) to understand the relationship between culture and consumer behaviour, one must first treat culture as meaning and assume that this meaning is constantly in circulation. Citing his own and other’s research, (McCracken 1986) drew broader attention to the fact that consumer goods have a significance that goes beyond their utilitarian character and commercial value. This significance consists in their ability to carry and communicate cultural meaning. Those meanings and significance for different generations of immigrants is likely to
build up from an eclectic mix of cultural understandings. In particular the author feels that there are likely to be a number of influencing and possibly contradictory factors that motivate first/second generation immigrants to buy the products and brands they do. As such we see this to be some kind of mixture of culture, acculturation levels and the need for status and symbolism. We see these as needing interpretation and understanding rather than to be treated as variables in consumption terms. Also how do consumption patterns differ for those labelled as “border mentality” consumers (Ribeau, 1994)?

SITUATIONAL ETHNICITY IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

To further this study it is deemed necessary to focus on immigrants who are geographically closer to the country of settlement. The authors will conceptualise and eventually test the belief that levels of actual and desired assimilation to the host country’s values duly affect levels of acculturation, loyalty to home country ways and purchasing patterns. Furthermore the idea of situational ethnicity influencing purchase patterns is also explored. Recent work suggests that ethnic identification and behaviour is at least partly situationally determined. That is, ethnicity is not just who one is, but how one feels in and about a particular situation. The authors thus believe that ethnicity and related behaviour is not just a stable sociological trait of individuals that is manifested in the same way at all times. It can, however, be a transitory psychological state manifested in different ways in different situations and at varying levels of emotional patriotism and loyalty to the home country. Geographical location and the density of ethnic settlers in a given town/city will mean that these clusters of individuals or groups of individuals are directly or indirectly affected by these situational factors.

No work in consumer research has focused on the social psychological role of transitory ethnic states and levels of patriotism in moderating the relationship between choice and individual such as ethnicity and its role in affecting general consumption patterns and choices.

This paper will extend the discussion of consumer ethnicity into the realm of the consumption situation and will seek to further studies based on McGuire et al 1978’s belief that ethnicity is not just who one is, but also how one feels.

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

To establish consumption patterns based on ethnicity & level of assimilation or integration, it is necessary to identify the extent to which, respondents consider themselves to be Indian and how much importance they place on belonging to an ethnic group at a personal and professional level.

This paper aims to introduce a conceptual model that integrates geographical location with levels of cultural assimilation and its resultant influence on consumption patterns.

The matrix in Figure 1 can be used as a way of identifying consumer influences and the impact of the local residents on consumption patterns, linking levels of assimilation with the majority make up of the population. Each category will form the basis of hypotheses development.

Even within these segments, however, it is recognised that there will be different degrees or levels of use of ethnicity and that use of ethnicity may vary depending on situational variables. Also residents within a certain geographical location will vary considerably but in the first instance the majority population is being used as an indicator of general ethnicity of that area.

The matrix is aiming to integrate cultural assimilation levels with the local population make up. For example if a consumer lives in a predominately ethnic populated area (i.e. Southall–U.K) and has low levels of cultural assimilation with the host country, consumption patterns maybe based more on home country values rather than the host country. This may further impact on the brand choice, distribution channel and even the reason for the purchase, which may be based on social identity and self-concept rather than functionality. The model is in the early stages of development, after preliminary research has been undertaken it could be that dependent on the consumers’ categorization this will then determine why products are bought and the reason for the decision. The local population may indirectly influence the consumer or it may be that the consumer has a more “rebel reaction” and decides to purchase products that are different to the local norm.

At present the paper is focusing on Asian Indians, which are a mixed group of people, whose parents or grand parents could have resided in Delhi, Bombay, Punjab, or even Calcutta—this has further implications as these areas are very diverse and so are their cultural patterns. It could be that these identities through consumption are more fluid for one group than another, so making for a new set of
“post modern identities”. Another factor that may also lead to differences is the religious influence on these consumers. As the differing levels of religious practice might also influence levels of cultural affiliation and hence consumption patterns.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Preliminary research that has been undertaken has looked at third and fourth generation Immigrants and it seems that the local population have a definite role to play in consumption patterns and processes.

From the results there is a very “Asian Indian” role, with a definite influence of the local inhabitants, whether “white” or indeed “Asian Indian”. Also belonging to a group is indeed influenced by local residents as the interviewees expressed their consumption patterns were dependent on who was around them. Further themes will inevitably arise as more interviews are conducted and analysed in these different locations. Interesting to note however is, the adapted sense of Asian Indian identity and its impact on situational consumption and consumption generally.

FURTHER RESEARCH

Having identified the extent to which ethnicity is relevant to the consumption patterns of Asian Indian immigrants, it may be interesting to consider the way in which these immigrants “use” their ethnicity. Rutland & Cinnirella (2000) raise salient issues regarding self-categorisation and the extent to which it is fluid, context dependent and consistently relative to the comparative context. Are people as motivated to maximise differences between groups and similarities, and, if so, to what extent is ethnicity “used” to assist in integration or assimilation through consumption patterns? Their results indicated that context affects on self-categorisation and the extent to which it is fluid, their ethnicity. Rutland & Cinnirella (2000) raise salient issues context dependent and consistently relative to the comparative context. Are people as motivated to maximise differences between groups and similarities, and, if so, to what extent is ethnicity “used” to assist in integration or assimilation through consumption patterns?

The model will also then be developed to categorise consumers into types of buyers, this categorization will be a result of new information to enhance the development of global marketing strategies from both a communications and behavioural perspective.

The model will also then be developed to categorise consumers into types of buyers, this categorization will be a result of new information to enhance the development of global marketing strategies from both a communications and behavioural perspective.

LIMITATIONS

It is acknowledged that this will be an exploratory study and that results from the comprehensive analyses will inevitably be open to questions of validity. However, it is hoped that with salient issues raised and explored in this initial stage, that further qualitative and interpretive research, following a positivistic route of hypothesis testing will be developed.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This paper has provided a detailed literature review, which explored self-categorisation theory, ethnicity, cultural affiliation and also how people perceive themselves and how consumption patterns are then influenced, by a number of factors, notably local residents and their ethnic origin. The study has helped to highlight a number of themes, which may be a feature of the interviews that are still to be conducted. The final analysis will consider not only whether, but also why and when ethnicity is important in consumption situations and the influence of home country loyalties and ties to behavioural patterns. Also more work remains to be done to identify whether and when the self-concept notion applies to consumption situations. Additionally, different ethnic groups may bring different sub-cultural perspectives to bear regarding sensitivity to group norms. It may be that we are now in an “era” where identities are now man-made and impact on consumer behaviour explicitly rather than just implicitly.

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An Ethnoconsumerist Enquiry Into International Consumer Behaviour
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ABSTRACT
This paper reports some qualitative research using an ethnoconsumerist approach to ‘culture-crossing’ consumer behaviour. Nationality is shown to be a poor indicator of the consumer behaviour of international visitors. The experience of ‘culture-crossing’ differs by product category and buying situation. International visitors use perceptions of culturally specific market characteristics as a strategy to understand, contrast and differentiate between the cultural values of the places travelled to and from. This ‘consumption mirror’ forms an important basis of sense making and orientation to new cultural environments.

GLOBALISATION AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

While a firm may choose to conduct its activities in one (typically its own) domestic market, the global movement of people means that even domestic firms have to embrace some notion of globalisation simply because its consumers, and perhaps its most profitable ones, are increasingly likely to have diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This international dimension to consumption effectively means that no firm can dismiss global marketing trends, even those who retain a specific domestic locale. Successful global marketing requires understanding of international consumer behaviour and how cultural dimensions affect it (Usunier, 2000). This demands some consideration of the ways that international consumers adapt, orientate and integrate into new market environments when they cross cultural boundaries.

People move or cross cultural spaces for many reasons. Much of the work on cross-cultural consumption has looked at cross border movement in terms of migration by people from the developing world moving to developed cultures. These acculturation studies have shown that individuals experience a wide range of emotional, practical and symbolic disorientation when they enter new cultural environments (Ward and Kennedy, 1994; Ethier and Deaux, 1994; Chataway and Berry, 1989). The vast majority of acculturation studies examine immigration by one migrant group into a particular host cultural context (usually the US). Considerable effort has been gone to examining the processes of acculturation among African, Hispanic and Asian people into Anglo-American culture (O’Guinn and Faber, 1985; Jun et al, 1993; Penaloza, 1989, 1994; Penaloza and Gilly, 1999).

One of the persistent problems with developing research in the area acculturation is the degree to which findings from studies conducted in one cultural context can be transferred to other contexts. In order to use models of acculturation and cross cultural experience developed from, for example, research based on Mexican immigrants moving to the US to inform studies into immigrants moving to a European context, it is necessary to assume that acculturation processes are, at least to some relevant extent, non-culturally bound. Such an assumption is highly debatable. Different cultures have varying attitudes towards ethnicity, cultural homogeneity, immigration and acculturation. The process of adapting to a new culture can thus be expected to be highly, if not totally dependent on the cultural history of the immigrant or immigrants (Chataway and Berry, 1989; Piontkowski et al, 2000), the cultural identity of the host culture (Nesdale and Mak, 2000), as well as particular institutions and situations. The experiences of a professional Asian migrating to a metropolitan area in the US for work and permanent residence would be expected to be qualitatively different to, for example, the experiences of a Russian student migrating to a mainly rural region in the UK for a limited and pre-specified period of study. Visitors from the US would be expected to find greater levels market commonality in the UK than if travelling to other parts of Europe, in terms of for example, common branding and common retail chains. There is a strong argument to suggest that cross cultural marketing research should be seen as culturally relative to specific contexts. Rather than looking to develop generic models of cross cultural movement it is more appropriate to take a case by case approach with the objective being to examine the types of experiences among particular groups of individuals in particular cultural contexts and settings.

This research is based on an in-depth three month longitudinal ethnographic study of international students who travelled to the UK for the purpose of studying. Whilst the selected group may appear at first glance to be limited, closer consideration clearly illustrates the problem with research that seeks to examine ‘typical’ international consumer behaviour in ‘typical’ cultural contexts. Different types of cross cultural movement are to a certain extent qualitatively different and non-comparable. The group of individuals examined here show that culture can only be examined in context. For example, whilst there may be a desire to try out and experience host UK culture there is no necessity to do so. The students examined here can, if they wish to do so, spend most of their time and build most of their friendships with other people who are equally unfamiliar with UK culture. This may include people who share their own ethnic background as well as other migrants who have different ethnicities to their own (Lee, 1994). The period of residence in the UK was pre-determined prior to moving and all of the migrants planned to return to their home cultures at a specified future date. Furthermore, the student environment is a particular type of host environment that is more cosmopolitan, culturally diverse, and ethnically tolerant than many other social contexts in the UK. The cross-cultural experience is also willingly entered into, rather than forced or coerced by, for example, economic or political factors. Finally it is predicated, at least in part, on the idea of ‘experiencing a new culture’ and being away from home for a specified period (Gmelch, 1997). This brief description shows that all cross cultural movements, whether among students, economic migrants, refugees or long-term tourists, have their own specific characteristics and motivational contexts, in addition to the complexities of the type of culture moved from/to.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND INTERNATIONAL VISITORS’ USE OF THE MARKET

Many of the codes and categories that construct consumer behaviour as a meaningful activity have been shown to be culturally derived (e.g. Briley et al, 2000). Consumption and markets have been conceptualised as a crucial cultural information system and a process through which categories of culture are made visible and stable (Douglas and Isherwood, 1978). Individuals in consumer societies utilize consumption and other marketing technologies (such as brands) as resources to construct and their identities (Bauman, 1988; Belk, 1988; Elliott and Wattanasuwon, 1998;
Gabriel and Lang, 1995), to communicate with one another, and to integrate into everyday social life. Developing a sense of place and identity in the UK involves developing a sense of what is appropriate consumer behaviour and understanding how markets operate and function. However, consumption is not only a process that has to be learnt but also a process of learning. Many of the studies on consumer acculturation locate culture as an antecedent of consumer knowledge rather than consumer behaviour as an antecedent of cultural knowledge (e.g. Penaloza, 1989). Consumption is not simply something into which the international visitor needs to orientate him or her self so as to manage and negotiate new cultural environments, but constitutes an important mechanism through which cultural norms are accessed.

Consumption symbolism often has transnational signification especially in the case of global consumer brands. For example, visitors arriving in the UK may find the rules of social behaviour alien but are likely to find at least some aspects of the supermarket shelf, the high street and advertising familiar. Getting to know people, making friends, sorting out official documentation and working out how the transport system works may be a highly disorientating process, but the basic process of shopping, including where to shop for various items, selecting goods, exchanging money and assessing product choice are likely to be easier to negotiate for many international visitors. There is something ‘transcultural’ about shopping, using services and buying goods. Even reasonably complex cultural readings, such as evaluating brand quality and reading brand symbolism may be possible if only at a very basic and rudimentary level. Markets, marketing and consumption provide what is perhaps the most global and cross cultural sign system available to visitors faced with an unfamiliar alien environment. The piece of research reported here examines the experiences of international visitors to the UK and considers some of the ways that they come to understand and evaluate the market place during the first few months of arrival.

THE ETHNOCOMSUMERIST RESEARCH APPROACH

The temptation to draw comparisons and distil universal categories is always present, and is to some extent necessary. The tautological issue, which justifies an ethnographic approach, is that the very basis of measuring cultural differences is itself culturally specific. Just as Ger and Belk (1990) recognised the need to ‘modify’ scales of measurement to attend cultural differences in the measurement of materialism and possession centrality (Belk 1985), so to must this enquiry into the experiences of international consumer behaviour acknowledge the culturally embedded aspect the experiences themselves. Marketing researchers have acknowledged this dimension to cultural research. One of the most relevant and coherent suggestions for how to conduct such research is that of ‘ethnoconsumerism’ suggested by Venkatesh (1995).

Ethnoconsumerism calls for all marketing research into cultural aspects of consumer behaviour to acknowledge that people from different cultures, ethnic backgrounds and nationalities see and evaluate the world differently. Furthermore, researchers themselves have a particular cultural ‘lens’ through which they describe, analyse and interpret the market place. In-depth research into international consumer behaviour can only be achieved if marketing researchers set out with the objective of trying to understand consumption from the consumer’s own cultural view point rather than imposing a particular perspective on the research before hand. Whilst the ethnoconsumerist approach does in one sense offer an obvious and significant opportunity for cross cultural researchers, it also demands certain limitations be acknowledged. It has to be accepted that deriving a common scale of measurement across or between cultural categories is not possible. The purpose of the ethnoconsumerist approach is to develop in-depth understandings of cross cultural consumer experiences as understood from the point of the consumer, or consumers themselves, rather than looking to impose generic and universal categories onto their behaviour.

22 international students who had come to the UK to study for a university degree were invited to take part in a three month longitudinal research program. All of the students had been in the UK for less than 18 months. Some of them had only been in the UK for a few weeks and only intended to stay for a few months. Others were studying for a degree program with duration of more than one year and had been in the UK for several months. They represented a wide range of nationalities and ethnicities including Romanian, Nigerian, Spanish, Chinese, French, Italian, American (USA), German, Singaporean, and Canadian. Whilst nationality provides a crude measure of ethnic diversity, it is also limited. For example, one of the students had lived in France all her life but her parents were both of Arabic origin. Similarly one of the Canadian students involved with the research had Vietnamese parents. One of the Italian students preferred to give their background as Sicilian and one of the Spanish students identified themselves strongly with a specific region of Spain. To try and further distance the ethnographic study from the limitations of specific cultural viewpoints, the research team was also culturally diverse and included British, Irish, Romanian, French, Italian, and Malaysian members. Each researcher took responsibility for two or three student participants for the research period. Data was collected using a variety of qualitative techniques including observation, participant observation, interviewing, accompanied shopping, and photography of personal living spaces. Meetings with the visiting students typically took place at twice monthly or monthly intervals although at some points meetings were held on a weekly basis. The collected data consisted of field notes, semi-formal interview transcripts and photographs. Each researcher took responsibility for preparing initial analysis of data collected from their own student respondents. These analyses were then forwarded to all other members of the team and discussed in a series of weekly or bi-weekly meetings.

The ‘data’ from the ethnographic research is presented here in two parts. The first part shows how the experiences of each student are substantially non-comparable because they represent reflective and relative experiences. However, whilst visitors with different backgrounds have different experiences they all seem to conceptualise the UK in terms of a ‘mirror’ in which their own cultural experiences can be reflected. Developing this level of interpretation, the second part of presenting the data specifically identifies and discusses the role of consumption in the experience of cultural disorientation for the students involved.

MAKING SENSE OF A NEW CULTURE–THE MIRROR ON THE ‘OTHER’

Perhaps inevitably, the ethnographic data reveals more about the experiences of the visitors themselves rather than the cultural environment moved into. When one reviews the field notes and diaries collected during the research it is necessary to remember that they all refer to life in the same physical space (i.e. the UK) despite the enormous variations in the types of descriptions given. This extract is taken from an interview with a Nigerian visitor, (Female, aged 22 ‘Amy’):

“...I find it easier to interact with international people, both foreigners and English people that have lived abroad. I feel I have more to talk about. I think that the English atmosphere is
more formal and, on the whole, less free, than in Africa; people are not as open, and, at the same time, when you open up to them, they are not very discreet. I feel that the British think that being overly open can be impolite... therefore I often find myself in difficulty because of this.”

‘Amy’ interprets English social relations as being more formal, less free, and less open than her experiences of social relations in her home culture. In some respects they share similarities with the comments given by ‘Mark’, a Spanish visitor (male, aged 21) during a semi-formal interview:

“The British have another kind of social network: they need societies in order to have a reason to meet, they are not spontaneous like in Spain, where you just go out and then meet new people just like that.”

Here British society is interpreted as being more socially formal and less spontaneous than Spanish society and this was a source of frustration and annoyance. However, in some diary notes written up from an informal conversation held during an accompanied shopping trip with ‘Peter’, a visitor from Singapore (Male, aged 23), a similar experience is reported but in a generally positive manner:

“… the conversation went on to the question about the different behaviours between people in the UK and in Singapore. He said that he found that people in UK were more polite and good mannered. He said that a lot of Singaporeans could ‘learn a lesson or two from them’.

The same experience of British society, i.e. of formality and politeness, is given in terms of a negative reflection on the visitor’s reflexive attitudes about his home culture. In stark contrast to these comments, ‘Dave’ another Singaporean visitor (male, aged 22) reported that he found British society to be more informal and outspoken than people at home in Singapore:

“When I asked about the difference between the people in the two countries, he said that Singaporeans were more reserved while the British were more outspoken and friendly. He gave me quite a lot of differences of living in the UK and living in Singapore. In the UK, racism is a bigger issue and I could sense that he was quite angry about it. There was also the difference of climate, i.e. the cold weather in UK while Singapore was always hot. He also felt he was more independent and had more freedom to live his life.”

These excerpts illustrate the danger of drawing categorical boundaries around aspects of individual experiences of cultural disorientation on the basis of national or ethnic origin. In some respects ‘Peter’s comments have more in common with the experiences of ‘Amy’ from Nigeria and ‘Mark’ from Spain in that he found the British to be more polite and mannered, although he differs in terms of experiencing this as positive rather than negative behaviour. In contrast ‘Dave’, who shares a similar ethnic and national background to ‘Peter’, says he finds the British to be more outspoken and friendly although this does not seem to facilitate feelings of security or comfortableness.

These excerpts show how the meaning and experience of certain aspects of the cross cultural experience is expressed principally through the construction of difference and comparison. The oppositions generated and used as the basis for interpreting differences are themselves created by visitors as a reaction to cultural disorientation rather than necessarily representing actual cultural disparities. Experiences of UK society form a kind of ‘cultural mirror’ in which visitors reflect upon themselves and their own cultural expectations. As suggested by some of the acculturation models (e.g. Furnham and Bochner, 1986; Berry, 1997), some visitors articulate experiences of crossing cultural boundaries in terms of a multi stage process, involving excitement, followed by feelings of disorientation and so on. There is also a sense in which resolving aspects of cultural disorientation is enabled by establishing viable differential structures:

“How did you feel when you first got here? Very Excited. Coming to England opened up my eyes to a different way of thinking. At first, I didn’t know how to act around people—it was very unsettling. Here there is different interaction: there are tight groups of people. Coming to England I didn’t have much in common, and I didn’t like doing the same things...However, our sense of humour were very much in common. The Spanish tend to be dry, while the British are very much sarcastic.” (‘Frank’, male aged 21)

This excerpt, taken from an interview transcript with ‘Frank’ from Spain, shows that although he felt that he had very little in common with people and found gaining access to existing social groups to be relatively difficult at first, a feeling of a common sense of humour provided some basis for integration.

The data lends itself to a semiotic reading, whereby opposites can be identified as constructing the basis for meaningful experience. In order to make sense of a new cultural environment, visitors need to first establish discriminatory differences manifest in binary oppositions (for example, Hot-Cold; Reserved-Open; Formality-Informality etc.). Having established what are understood to be credible and justifiable differences, visitors are able to then use this as the basis for constructing value judgments that form the basis for personal opinion, e.g. “The British are more outspoken and friendly (than people at home)”, “English atmosphere is more formal (than the atmosphere at home)”. The following excerpt, taken from an interview with ‘Rosie’, a French visitor (female, aged 23), provides a clear illustration of the structural, oppositional and comparative basis for cross-cultural experiences:

“English people are unsociable, very individualistic. I have never seen that before. They drink a lot and go out very often. It’s as if they were going out just for drink. Girls are very smart sometimes, but they can be also kind of like ‘sluts’. There are some crazy things like driving on the right, and the toaster is the contrary to French ones. There is another thing: everything is closed early: shops at 5.30, clubs at 1.30, pubs, at 11.30! This is crazy! In France, you don’t come back home before 4 am, and you have plenty of time to have fun! And the cinema is very expensive, and the weather is rubbish.”

Here, the frustrating experience of cultural disorientation can be interpreted through a series of explicit binary oppositions that have a clear discriminatory basis: sociability–(unsociability); individualistic–(communal); drink a lot–(drink moderately); Go out often–(go out infrequently); smart dress–(casual dress), and so on. This process of constructing and maintaining meaning, what we might call a process of ‘sense making’ or ‘cultural orientation’, involves continual comparative assessments between ‘home’ and ‘away’. As the following section of the analysis shows, this comparative behaviour is transferred into aspects of consumer behaviour.
CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS TO THE UK

As with other parts of the findings from this study, nationality does not provide a useful method of categorising individual differences in shopping behaviours and attitudes towards consumption. The two excerpts below are from interviews and accompanied shopping trips with ‘Frank’ (male, aged 21) and ‘Susie’ (female, aged 21), both Spanish:

“The layout of many shops is very similar [between the UK and Spain]. The food shops, on the other hand, are very different. There is more of a market culture there rather than supermarkets. Food is fresher. There are supermarket chains, like Intermarche in France, but they are just not as important.” (‘Frank’)

“Susie commented on the length of time it takes her to locate products in the supermarkets. She finds them badly laid out. Another area she made reference to is the bread counter. She found it amusing how many different types of bread are on display over here. Clothes shopping for Susie is a different experience altogether in Britain. She describes the shops as disorganised and says the experience can be frustrating whilst at home it is therapeutic.” (‘Susie’)

It is clear that developing a theory of cross cultural consumer behaviour on the basis of nationality differences would be an over simplification at best, and a misrepresentation at worst. As with the comments shown previously, the manner in which visitors express their experiences of a new consumption environment is founded on a basis of comparative assessment in which experiences of both ‘home’ and ‘host’ culture are brought together for the purpose of structuring and representing meaning. ‘Frank’s’ attempt to make sense and acclimatise to the particular characteristics of consumption spaces is facilitated by the construction of both oppositions and similarities—between freshness and preserved, and market culture versus supermarket culture (which he associates and compares to retail in France with which he is already familiar). Both excerpts, and ‘Susie’s’ comments in particular allude to the frustration and vulnerability that results from participation in UK consumption environments, which may in turn reflect other aspects of cultural disorientation. Although consumption, like many aspects of British culture, are unfamiliar to the visitors on arrival, some indicated that getting used to shopping in the UK was fairly straightforward and easy to do:

“At first I had some difficulties because I could not find the brands I am used to from back home, but I soon figured out which to buy. I can find pretty much everything I want here in the shops, except for oriental food and spices. At home we eat Vietnamese food and I miss that here. I think the British food is very bland. I was lucky because some Asian students who are living on my floor in the student accommodation gave me some Oriental spices and told me where to get some more. Another thing I miss is beef, because over here it doesn’t taste that good as it does at home.” (‘Kyle’ from Canada, male, aged 21)

“My shopping is not that different. I can find pretty much everything I want here in the shops. I miss the big grocery markets we have in Germany, but I guess there must be some here as well… I usually only buy the groceries I know I like, the only “experiment” I did here was when I bought cider—I liked it. I find the offers 2 for 1 and the like very interesting: it can save you a lot of money. You cannot find offers like that in Germany…I have no difficulty finding the products I want. I just noticed that Tofu is very expensive here—I am not eating any meat here in England, so I wanted to buy some Tofu, but it was so expensive.” (‘Lucy’ from Germany, female, aged 21)

These two excerpts are interesting because they illustrate the role that consumption and market related behaviour plays in the process of orientating to a new cultural environment. Although both visitors report that they are unable to get some types of products they are used to eating at home, and comment on the relative or comparative differences between the different shopping environments, they both indicate that shopping was either easy to get used to or was in the main consistent with prior consumer behaviour norms that they were used to back home. Some of the visitors identified that whilst procedural aspects of shopping were reasonably easy to get used to, other more culturally specific aspects, such as judgments of quality, took more time to perfect and tune. The following excerpt is taken from field diaries recorded shortly after a discussion with ‘Charlie’ a visitor from the USA (female, aged 20):

“She told me that in the U.S.A. there is much more variety. At home you do a large shop to last maybe 1 month, rather than return to the supermarket on a regular basis like people here in the UK. You cannot buy alcohol at the supermarket in America, you have to go to a liquor store. Also in America a lot more stores are open 24hrs. Quality was difficult for ‘Charlie’ to discern when she first arrived. For example she associates Wal Mart with bad quality in America but in England she was not sure. She was weary of shopping at the wrong stores. She asked me if Argos was considered to be low quality in this country.”

The consumption environment, unlike many other aspects of new cultural environments, is also perceived by some visitors to be relatively ‘open’ and negotiable. Visitors can continue to follow the consumption routines, consumer expectations and consumer behaviours typically followed at home although in a consumption environment which has an alternative cultural context. By merging ones existing consumer expectations with those observed in the host culture, individuals are also using their consumer behaviour as a mechanism to feel relaxed and reassured. Whilst many aspects of everyday life may be disorientating, market environments offer some degree of freedom to behave in accordance with existing habits and norms, as well as offering an exciting and fun space in which new products, sales mechanisms (e.g., sales promotions) and shopping environments can be experienced. The following excerpt is taken from field notes from an accompanied shopping trip with ‘Mary’, a visitor from Romania (female aged 22):

“I met ‘Mary’ again…she was going shopping…so I went along. We went to Tesco’s, Sainsbury’s, to a greengrocer’s on the High Street and finally to Poundland. She bought different things in each of these shops. General food in the supermarkets, some tomatoes from the greengrocer and toothpaste from Poundland. She said it reminded her Romania, where one goes to the market, shops around for the best deals and nicest tomatoes on offer… ‘Mary’ said she would not expect to find any market abroad at all.”

Some respondents undertook comparisons and identified differences between shopping in the UK and at home using otherwise sophisticated market referents and cues, such as quality assess-
ments, and price and cost comparisons. Food safety was also a major issue for many of the visitors, indicating that details about various food scares in the UK (such as BSE and Foot and Mouth) were not only reported abroad, but that they continued to retain salience in the minds of visiting consumers despite measures taken domestically to reassure the consuming public. This excerpt is from an interview with ‘Laurie’ from France, (female, aged 21):

“I don’t eat meat because it looks awful and I am scared of the mad cow disease. Moreover, it’s very expensive. Yoghurts and cheese are also very expensive if we compare to France. Vegetables are OK for the price. I eat the same things that I was eating in France. I am eating typical English food like donuts and cookies. I am not used to them in France that’s why I am happy with that here.”

The relative nature of cross-cultural assessments is further evidenced in these comments, showing that the cultural specificity of judgment also extends into the market place and consumer behaviour. Assessment of what constitutes ‘typical English food’ in ‘Laurie’ s’ quote is quite different to the types of assessments one would expect from a visitor from the US for example. Furthermore, consumption opportunities enable this visitor to follow what Berry (1997) discusses as a ‘separation’ strategy, in which visitors seek out means to reaffirm and consolidate familiar host cultural norms in alien cultural environments.

CLOTHING BRANDS AS SOURCES OF CROSS CULTURAL FAMILIARITY

The comments from the visitors given above show that shopping in general, and food consumption in particular, play an important part in the representation of cultural differences. One of the most interesting contrasts that emerged from the ethnographic work was between attitudes and experiences of food consumption, and attitudes about consumer behaviours relating to brands, fashion and clothes shopping. Few of the visitors found fashion codes or shopping for clothing to be difficult to get used to. The standardisation and proliferation of international and global fashion brands such as GAP, H&M and designer labels offers visitors a familiar and ‘readable’ set of symbols and values that are almost immediately recognisable in any cultural context.

“I went shopping for clothes, but I think you can find the same things here as you do in Spain–it’s the same fashion.” (‘Roger’ from Spain, aged 21)

“I have not yet bought any clothes here, because I do not need anything, but from what I have seen so far, you can find pretty much the same things as you do in Germany. You can find the same shops in both in Germany and England: H&M, Oasis etc.” (Lucy’ from Germany, female, aged 21)

“As for the clothes, I do not find it that different: you can find the same brands over here as back home.” (‘Kyle’ from Canada, male, aged 21)

One visitor uses her observations of clothing choices and fashions in the UK as the basis to develop a fairly sophisticated cultural critique of UK society and lifestyle. Not only do her comments illustrate the role of consumer goods in maintaining and making stable categories of ‘home’ and ‘away’ (Douglas and Isherwood 1978), but they also show how brand values that are perceived to transcend cultural specificity offer useful sources of reliability, risk reduction and trust:

“Fashion is different from France: young people [in the UK] dress very badly, and are quite dirty, with very long pants which fall on the ground. We find shops here that we also find in France, like Etam and H&M. I trust them. I will go there first because I am used to them. I like doing shopping. Thankfully there is a H&M and an Etam, and prices are more moderate for clothes…” (‘Laurie’ from France, female, aged 21)

Confidence in the codes of high street fashion also allows some visitors to ‘play’ and have ‘fun’ with cross-cultural experiences. As well as being disorientating and frustrating, crossing cultures is also potentially exciting. Consumer behaviour and the market offer an important source of enchantment (Ritzer, 1999) for cross cultural visitors, as indicated from the following comment recorded in field notes from a discussion with ‘Emily’ from France (Female, aged 22):

“She said that when she goes shopping for fun, she goes to ‘English’ stores if something in the window catches her eye. She feels that she does not need to go in the stores that she has back home.”

The ethnographic research indicates that consumption is very important for cross-cultural visitors. The market place is used as a crucial acculturation device to orientate, differentiate and contrast. It also provides a reasonably open and accessible point into a new cultural environment that can be used to access other, perhaps more ‘closed’ aspects of social life.

CONCLUSION

As Geertz (1973) comments, “Culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviours, institutions or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context”. The consumer behaviour of international visitors is highly implicated in various contexts of culture, each of which is determined and constructed in part by individual consumers themselves. This research has shown that a generic or universal approach to assessing cultural dimensions of consumer behaviour is likely to force commonalities as the expense of identifying discrete differences. International consumers use culture experiences as a mirror in which differences and tensions can be reflected and used to make sense of disorientation.

Researching international consumer behaviour in domestic contexts offers a number of opportunities. It illustrates aspects of UK markets from an outsider’s point of view, many of which are difficult to identify among consumers who are naturalised into UK consumer culture. It also shows that perceived levels of cultural disparity in the market place are not generic but vary according to product categories and buying contexts. Some product categories, such as food, are used as primary markers of cultural differentiation for many visitors to the UK, whereas clothing brands and fashion are used to a lesser extent.

Perhaps most importantly, the ethnoconsumerist approach shows that consumer behaviour is not only something that has to be learnt, but rather it is an important mechanism that visitors use to learn about, and orientate to UK society more generally. Markets have in this respect become a central acculturation device for international visitors, and international consumer behaviour is the means by which visitors begin to understand and participate in cultural life more generally.
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The Phenomenology of a Goal: Consumption Visions Across Consumer Behavior
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ABSTRACT
Mental images of future consumption are a largely ignored and thus understudied aspect of consumer behavior. This oversight is unfortunate given importance of mental imaging in human thought processes (cf. MacInnis and Price 1987; Damasio 1994) and the pervasive frequency of future thought (Brann 1991). In this work, we attempt to rectify that oversight and begin the process of theory building in this area. We term anticipatory mental images of future product use consumption visions and define them as self-referent images or mental simulations of the self-relevant consequences of product consumption and the resulting phenomenological experience (thoughts and emotions) associated with those anticipated consequences. As an initial step, this paper seeks to demonstrate consumption visions. In addition, we hold that the phenomenology or lived-experience of a consumer goal is a consumption vision. If this is the case, we should find examples of goals experienced as personalized consumption visions across the various goal-motivated stages and phases of consumer behavior. In order to demonstrate consumption visions and to investigate this fundamental prediction, we conducted a diary study where 15 consumers recorded the anticipatory consumption images they experienced over the course of a week. As theoretically anticipated, we found evidence in the diary data of consumption visions across consumer behavior from preconsumption problem solving to postconsumption product dispossession. These findings substantiate the existence of consumption visions and highlight their ubiquity and importance as motivators across consumption. We discuss the implications of consumption visions for marketing managers and present future directions for theory building in this area.

References
The Disgust Emotion in Consumer Behavior
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ABSTRACT
This research examines an emotion that consumer researchers mostly have neglected. In particular, we explore the role of disgust in the context of fast-food restaurant advertising. In two parallel studies we learn that TV commercials portraying raw meat in context of finished sandwiches generate greater levels of felt disgust, and, in turn, that this disgust mediates the effect of advertising content on attitudes toward the ad and on intentions to patronize the advertised restaurant. Implications for the role of disgust go beyond the food domain and include sociomoral forms of this negative emotion.
ABSTRACT
This paper is written as an attempt to rejuvenate an old body of literature that, despite its pedigree and scope, has left more questions unanswered than resolved: research on the use of highly attractive spokespeople in advertising. The study presented examines the inherent paradoxes that lie in using slim, beautiful models for advertising a product category with potentially disastrous effects on a ‘real life’ consumer’s appearance: chocolate advertising. Through an exploratory study by means of focus groups and depth-interviews, it is examined whether consumers are aware of these paradoxes and, if they were, how this influences their perception of chocolate advertisements using highly attractive models.

INTRODUCTION
Images of beauty constantly invade our daily lives through adverts on television, in magazines and on larger-than-life outdoor posters. Since Baker and Churchill’s seminal paper in 1977, a large body of research has focused on the possible effects of using highly attractive versus less attractive models in advertisements. Empirical evidence to date however has been mixed in its support for the contention that physical attractiveness of a person pictured in an advertisement serves to increase the effectiveness of the ad. While some research has suggested that attractiveness effects are small and ecologically insignificant (e.g. Caballero et al. 1989; Maddux and Rogers 1980), other studies have shown that physical attractiveness is an important mediator in advertising effectiveness (Chaiken 1979; Brumbaugh 1993; Bower and Landrath 2001).
This study focuses on the use of highly attractive and normally attractive models in chocolate advertisements from the perspective of the female consumer at whom these ads are aimed. For an investigation into consumers’ perceptions of and feelings about attractive models in ads, the chocolate industry has a number of interesting features. Firstly, the confectionery market is one of the few areas of the international food industry to display constant growth in the last decades. Every day consumers indulge in the consumption of chocolate; the average Irish person for example eats 10 kg of chocolate and confectionery each year (Mintel 1998). Media expenditure within the confectionery industry is significant with advertising spend on chocolate totaling €98 million in the United Kingdom for the year ending June 1998. Most importantly however, it is an industry where the use of highly attractive—and generally very slim—models involves some inherent paradoxes of consumption (Mick and Fournier 1998):

Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction
We often consume chocolate to satisfy some need or want, be it simply hunger or, at a psychological level, a craving for comfort. The consumption of chocolate is said to release a feeling of happiness or solace. However, for most of us this consumption does not come guilt-free. Hence, although our consumption of chocolate does lead to satisfying a need or want it will also most probably lead to some degree of dissatisfaction with the very act of consuming (www.bbc.co.uk/science/horizon/latacattran.shtml).

Thinness/Obesity
According to Liebman (2001) chocolates are calorie-condense, packing a lot of calories into a small volume, which may lead to overconsumption and thus to possible weight gain. However the majority of promotional campaigns carried out by chocolate manu-

facturers feature slim models indulging themselves with chocolate, without any apparent effect on their bodies.

Independence/Enslavement
Recent research has shown that the chemical makeup of chocolate could explain why some people believe that they are ‘chocaholics’, that is addicted to chocolate (Roessner 1997). Chocolate advertising targeted at women often portrays the actresses making a conscious choice of indulging themselves with their favorite brand of chocolate; for many real-life consumers, however, this choice may be dictated by their (perceived or real) addiction to the product as a comforter or stimulant.

Marketing Concept/Marketing Practice
The marketing concept espouses the creation of customer satisfaction as the actual goal of marketing (Richins 1991); the use of highly attractive models in advertisements has however been proven to lead to customer dissatisfaction (Harrison et al. 2001; Phau and Lum 2000). Advertisements using highly attractive models can result in consumers’ involving themselves in social comparison, which may lead to negative evaluations of the self (Richins 1991).
Through a three-tiered qualitative investigation, this paper explores whether and to what extent consumers are aware of these paradoxes, and it examines the impact of highly attractive versus normally attractive models in chocolate advertisements on the self-concept of consumers as well as on their intention to purchase. The first section reviews the research on the use of highly attractive versus normally attractive models in advertising and its relationship to the self-concept. The second section presents the research methodology employed and the results arrived at. Section three offers areas for discussion and further research as well as some of the marketing implications arising from the study. The final section provides some concluding comments.

BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE IN ADVERTISEMENTS
Beauty can ensnare the minds and hearts of almost every person (Etcoff 1999). Every day men and women spend large sums of money chasing their image of ideal beauty. But does such a thing as a universal beauty ideal exist or is beauty really in the eye of the beholder? Research has proposed that physiologically, perceptions of beauty are based on pleasant (golden) proportion, which can be represented mathematically in the ratio of 1:1.618 (www.beautyanalysis.com). Indeed, several studies have shown consistency in attractiveness ratings regardless of the judges’ sex, age, geographic location and social economic class (Byrne et al. 1968; Dion et al. 1972; Fisher and Cleveland 1958; Sirgy 1982).
Whether beauty is culturally or physiologically defined, person perception research has shown that physical attractiveness often entails positive inferences about a person’s personality traits, such as warmth, responsiveness, control, social and intellectual ability and expertise (Albright et al.1988; Bordo 1993; Brumbaugh 1993; Dion et al. 1972; Etcoff 1999; Herman et al. 1986). This ‘what is beautiful is good’ hypothesis (Dion et al. 1972) lies at the basis of advertising’s use of highly attractive models. It is assumed that consumers are more likely to be motivated to accept influence from attractive people with their inherent reinforcement value than from unattractive people (Chaiken 1979). Particularly in low involvement situations, the attractive model is assumed to act as a positive
peripheral cue that generates a halo-effect on the attitude object (Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann 1983). It is therefore unsurprising that for a given culture and era, models from one advertisement to another often resemble each other remarkably in their almost flawless beauty, regardless of the product or service being advertised.

Studies examining the effect of highly attractive spokespeople in advertisements however have so far yielded mixed results. Chaiken (1979) and Brumbaugh (1993) found that the physical attractiveness of a communicator-subject positively influences the attitude and behavioral intention toward the communicated message. In a similar vein, Harrison et al. (2001) showed that respondents are more willing to purchase from a more attractive model than from an ordinary model. These results however contrast with Caballero and Solomon (1984) and Caballero et al. (1989) who found that beauty is not a significant factor in inducing behavioral compliance in general. Bower (2001) even detected negative affect induced by highly attractive models in some women. It appears that the use of highly attractive models can be more effective in certain situations than in others, specifically when objective or task related sources are weak (Maddux and Rogers 1980), when a non-established brand is advertised (Phau and Lum 2000), and when the communication topic is emotionally appealing and less of a factual or logical issue (Maddux and Rogers 1980). According to the so-called match up hypothesis, a consumer’s potential to relate to a physically attractive source or believe the advertising claims is also dependent on, firstly, whether an association between the source and the product can be established and secondly, how important such an association is (Till and Busler 2000). If a product category does not require strong object-related source characteristics, consumers tend to resort to peripheral cues such as physical attractiveness of the spokesperson in the formation of their brand attitudes (Phau and Lum 2001). Thus, for low involvement products, the more attractive the model is, the more likely it is that consumers will view the advertisement as persuasive (Maddux and Rogers 1980). Attractiveness effects also appear to vary according to audience rather than message traits; Baker and Churchill (1977) for instance showed that female models featured in advertisements had a stronger and more positive impact on males than on females and vice versa.

It needs to be noted that most of the research investigating the effect of highly attractive models in advertising has contrasted highly attractive spokespersons with unattractive ones, which in the case of advertising is a rather unrealistic undertaking. It is only recently that researchers have started to compare highly attractive models with normally attractive models (for example Bower and Landreth 2001).

HIGHLY ATTRACTIVE MODELS AND THE CONSUMING SELF

In recent years, a few studies have linked the use of attractive models to a consumer’s self-concept. It has been shown that exposure to advertisements can trigger a process of social comparison, where a person evaluates his/herself by comparing themselves to the people represented in the advertisements (Richins 1991). The use of highly attractive models in advertising can lead to negative self-evaluations, insecurity and dissatisfaction on the part of the consumer (Richins 1991). Myers and Biocca (1992) found that idealized images raised comparison standards for attractiveness and increased dissatisfaction with one’s own attractiveness. It seems that the larger the negative discrepancy between the perceived ‘standard’ of attractiveness and the perceived self-performance is, the larger the potential dissatisfaction could be (Richins 1991). This finding is particularly significant for the use of attractive models for target groups who are highly susceptible to social comparison, since stimuli which are threatening to the consumer’s self-concept may be rejected (Zinkhan and Hong 1991).

If one considers the effects of physically attractive spokespersons on the consumer’s self-concept, it is surprising that most of the extant literature on attractiveness effects is limited to product categories that are either beauty-enhancing or beauty-irrelevant. For beauty-enhancing products, attractive spokespersons are credible communicators as they are consistent with the target audience’s ideal self-concept (Zinkhan and Hong 1991). For beauty-irrelevant products such as facial tissues, normally attractive spokespersons such as the ‘girl next door’ seem to have more credibility than highly attractive ones (Caballero and Solomon 1984), probably because they appeal to consumers’ actual selves. However, to date no study known to the authors has investigated products that are potentially detrimental to consumers’ attractiveness and thus form a threat to their selves—products such as chocolates with their inherent paradoxes of consumption. The use of highly attractive models in advertisements for such products may indeed meet resistance or even rejection if the typical target consumer was to find it difficult to compare herself to a size eight model. Thus, chocolates are a product category where the use of highly attractive models could potentially backfire if consumers recognize the inherent paradoxes of using exceptionally beautiful and slim models for promoting a product whose consumption makes the attainment of the very beauty ideal displayed in the ads even more difficult than it already is for the ‘normal’ consumer.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Exploring female consumers’ feelings about and perceptions of highly attractive models used in chocolate advertising in relation to their own actual and ideal selves, this research follows a qualitative research agenda. From the outset, it was decided to limit the investigation to one gender–female consumers—as attractiveness stereotypes have shown to be more important for females than males (Richins 1991; Harrison et al. 2001) and a great deal of chocolate advertising is aimed at women rather than men. Two factors were thought to conceivably influence self-image and perception of advertising images, namely the age of the respondent and their social or living environments. Thus, it was decided to include female participants from two different age groups (20-30 and 40-50) and two different environments (city and rural locations) in the study.

As young women were believed to be more willing to talk about body-image and beauty issues in public than older women, it was decided to run two focus groups with respectively six and seven participants each for the younger age group, one in a city location and one in a rural location. For the older age group, the researchers decided to employ one-to-one semi-structured interviews using the same questioning format as for the focus group in order to reduce inhibitions to talk freely for this group. Six women, three from rural backgrounds and three city-dwelling individuals, were interviewed. The triangulation between focus group results and findings from the one-to-one interviews was also thought to shed light on potential social norms or pressures with regard to the issues investigated.

For both procedures, the researchers decided to use six chocolate advertisements as a trigger for discussion and evaluation; three that used highly attractive models (henceforth HAMs) and three employing normally attractive models (henceforth NAMs). Ten chocolate advertisements of both past and present TV campaigns were pre-selected for the purpose of this study. Close-ups of the models used in the ten adverts were freeze-framed and color-
printed. It was decided not to show consumers the entire advert nor to show a still containing the product in order to avoid any product-related influence.

In order to determine which of the spokespeople in the ads were highly and which were normally attractive, two sets of pre-tests were carried out. In the first pre-test, the ‘truth of consensus’ method was used to determine attractiveness of the ten models. 30 female students were approached on a University campus to view a photograph of the initial ten models and to evaluate them in terms of whether the model was highly or normally attractive. The three models that were ranked the most highly and most ‘normally’ attractive were selected. In the second pre-test the faces of the 10 initial models were measured against the ‘universal beauty mask’ devised by Dr. Stephen Marquardt. Based on the ancient theory of golden proportion, he designed a facial mask for which all features conform to the 1:1.618 golden ratio mentioned in section one (www.beautyanalysis.com). A positive correspondence was found between the models whose faces perfectly/imperfectly fitted the universal beauty mask and those models that were deemed to be highly/normally attractive by the participants. Thus, for the purposes of this study, highly attractive models (HAMs) are models whom the majority of people find attractive (truth of consensus method) and whose face almost perfectly fits the universal beauty mask. Normally attractive models (NAMs) are models who were judged to be of average weight, height and facial beauty by pre-test participants and whose faces only imperfectly match the beauty mask.

Each focus group and individual respondent had the possibility to view the pictures of the models for the duration of the questions asked. 12-16 open-ended questions were asked to the individual respondents, with the first 12 questions also being asked to both focus groups—the remaining four related to issues of self-evaluation and body satisfaction/dissatisfaction, which were omitted for the focus groups as they could have proven to be embarrassing for some research participants in a group context. The 12 core questions were broken down as follows: questions 1 to 3 were general questions including asking respondents their general opinions about the use of models in TV and print advertisements. Questions 4 to 7 focused on the particular still frames used for the investigation and asked respondents to make for example personality judgements based on the models’ appearance. Questions 8 to 10 examined the respondents’ purchase intentions and self-concept and questions 11 and 12 were summary questions. At the beginning of each session it was established whether each of the participants regularly ate chocolate (all of whom did). Each participant was also asked to rate the six models presented. The following section gives an overview of the study results.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The most salient observation of both focus groups and depth interviews was that the respondents viewed the highly attractive models featured in the chocolate advertisements shown as underweight and unrealistic and expressed a preference for seeing more models that reflect the average (chocolate-consuming) consumer. Research participants thought that the models deemed normally attractive could be believed to eat chocolate; however, surprisingly cynical views were voiced in relation to highly attractive models:

“If she did eat chocolate she would probably wash it down with a few laxatives”.

“She might eat it and then throw it back up again afterwards”.

“You can’t look that good and eat chocolate”.

“I wouldn’t say she eats chocolates and probably has never tasted it in her life”.

Not only did HAMs not seem credible as spokespeople for a highly calorific food category, many of the research participants also found it downright ironic to use such skinny and perfect-looking models for a product category that could wreak havoc with their own appearances:

“Like [picking up a picture of a HAM] that’s great if you are trying to sell a car to a man. It’s not going to attract a female, what is it meant to say that I’m gorgeous and slim and therefore eat chocolate?”

Only one respondent felt that she was positively influenced by one of the HAMs, “because I would like to be like her”. All other participants however seemed not able to relate to the HAMs as much as they could to NAMs, who clearly appealed to the ‘actual self’ of consumers:

“You could relate to this lady [a NAM] unlike some of the other models. It addresses the majority, the everyday consumer”.

“Yes, I’d say she’d have a bar of chocolate watching Coronation Street or something like that…Yes, it’s the best one I’ve seen, it’s more realistic. The other ones seem more appropriate for clothes or perfume.”

Being able to relate to the spokesperson of the adverts seemed particularly important to the older age group. It may be that for this age group, aspirations for the ideal (bodily) self have diminished somewhat and that ads appealing to the actual rather than the ideal self are seen as more relevant.

Maybe because participants recognized the inherent irony of using skinny models with flawless skin for advertising a product that is clearly detrimental to people’s exterior and discounted this strategy as nothing more than a marketing ploy, adverts using HAMs did not seem to evoke a feeling of threat to consumers’ actual or ideal self:

“No I don’t compare myself to these models but I compare myself to what I looked like a couple of years ago”.

“I don’t relate to the super-glamorous on any level and therefore they don’t influence me”.

When it came to the personality associated with the different models, most of the NAMs were viewed as friendlier and warmer as compared to some of the HAMs, who were deemed to have “no genuine friends”, “cold and standoffish”, “sour”, “very posh” and even “smug and false looking” and “cunning and manipulative”. In contrast, NAMs again were linked to consumers’ actual selves; they were said to be “happy”, “enjoying themselves” and “friendly”:

[about a NAM] Now she looks more like a chocolate woman. She looks really outgoing.”

[about a NAM] She looks warm and friendly with lots of friends. She looks very homely looking; I’d say she is a good full-time mother”.

Interestingly, despite the fact that respondents more readily identified with normal-looking women and despite the caustic comments made in relation to HAMs’ personalities, the “what is beautiful is good” thesis seemed to hold true to a certain extent. In both age groups, while NAMs were believed to be warmer and to have more friends than HAMs, they also were seen as professionally unsuccessful and sometimes even as “insecure”. HAMs were viewed to be more successful in their relationships with the other sex and in their professions.
So, what seems to be more important for the effectiveness of a chocolate advert, the halo-effect of ‘what is beautiful is good’ or the ability of consumers to identify with a model? When asked about how persuasive respondents thought the ads were, overwhelmingly the most important persuasion criterion for respondents appeared to be whether the model was seen to enjoy the product or not:

“Yes, she looks like she enjoys food.”

“...if you had an ugly person advertising the product and using the product but it looked like they were enjoying themselves, then you are much more likely to buy the product than someone who is gorgeous looking but is all stuck up and dead like some of the earlier models.”

“She just looks happy...Yeah, I would have positive feelings about her.”

“I might try [the brand advertised] because she is enjoying it.”

In this context, it is interesting to note that the Terry’s chocolates advertising campaign currently aired in the UK and in Ireland features TV celebrity and size-16 woman Dawn French emphasizing exactly how much this celebrity enjoys her chocolate—to the point where she refuses to share it with anybody else! While this particular celebrity ad was deemed too untypical to be included in the investigation, all of the respondents were aware of it and often started talking about it without being prompted. Particularly the younger age group found this advert very appealing, as the celebrity endorser is depicted to be happy, friendly and “really enjoying [the chocolate]”. Interestingly, the older age group found Dawn French slightly too much of a reminder of what could happen when somebody overindulges in the product advertised! While Dawn French’s celebrity status and ‘prominent’ body shape may make her a rather uncommon spokesperson, it seems that in general, for both age groups the perceived believability of a model and how much she seems to enjoy the advertised brand were the most determining factors for the effectiveness of a chocolate ad.

**DISCUSSION**

It is old advertising wisdom that the selection of an appropriate model particularly for low involvement products is crucial, as consumers often tend to focus on peripheral cues in such advertisements more than on product arguments (Pett, Cacioppo and Schumann 1983). Chocolates are typically a low-involvement product category that in itself does not require a great amount of ‘expertise’ from the spokesperson used. However, the results of this study indicate that rather than using attractiveness as a peripheral cue to brand attitude formation, consumers are acutely aware of the credibility of the spokesperson in terms of (likely) product experience. It seems that as an everyday product in which consumers indulge, often with an associated bad conscience, chocolates are more related to the actual rather than the ideal self of the consumer. Any depiction of an ‘ideal self’ in the form of a highly attractive spokesperson seems to diminish rather than augment the persuasiveness of the advert, while the portraying of a model the (female) consumer can identify with in their enjoyment of the product seems more effective. Even the display of a ‘worst possible self’ in the form of jolly but fat and greedy celebrity Dawn French who refuses time and time again to share her Terry’s chocolates with others appears to be readily acceptable especially for the younger generation.

Even though this investigation can only be a first step in exploring the relationship between the self-concept and spokesper-son effectiveness in advertising, it may serve as a reminder to advertising managers and chocolate manufacturers that the saying ‘beautiful is good’ does not hold true for all product categories. Older participants in particular reacted more positively to the realistically normal attractive models, while younger participants were willing to accept highly attractive spokeswomen, but were also sensitive to the inherent paradox.

By and large, the paradoxical nature of chocolate consumption, in its evocation of satisfaction/dissatisfaction, thinness/obesity and pleasure/guilt, seems to be a pervasive theme for female chocolate consumers. Any advertising that takes up these themes, with a spokesperson that can personify them in some way, may find a ready audience. To what extent (female) consumers themselves are ‘paradoxical’ in their consumption of chocolates showed a test conducted during the focus groups and interviews. In order to obtain an indication as to whether all the talk about chocolate consumption, its potential link to weight problems and the bony attractiveness of TV advertising models had any impact on consumers’ hunger for the product category, the researchers passed a box of chocolate around before the focus groups/interviews. They took them away, counted the pieces of chocolate eaten and passed them around a second time at the end of the hour-long interview. Even accounting for the fact that research participants (and researchers!) were undoubtedly hungrier after the interview sessions, the fact that four times more chocolates were eaten after the sessions compared to what had been eaten before may indicate that, if received in the right circumstances, any reminder of the joys of chocolate consumption is effective in bringing out the ‘Dawn French’ in women!

**FUTURE RESEARCH**

This paper set out to investigate the use of highly attractive versus normally attractive models in chocolate advertising from the perspective of the (female) consumer. Its exploration of the relationship between advertising spokespersons and consumers’ self-concept added to a stream of research attempting to answer a rather old question from a novel perspective. Indeed, the results of this research indicate that this is a highly promising angle that needs to be explored in more detail and in relation to a wider range of product categories in future studies. The effect of attractive spokespeople in advertising needs to be explored in much more detail in relation to products that are neither ‘beauty-enhancing’ nor ‘beauty-irrelevant’ (Bower and Landreth 2001), but sometimes possibly detrimental to consumers’ attractiveness. In this study, results indicate that the type of model used is rather irrelevant as long as it is apparent that the model is enjoying the product that is ‘bad for you’.

From this perspective, future questioning may need to focus more on non-physical aspects of the spokesperson, such as factors facilitating the identification of consumers with the product endorser. Again, the theory of the self can provide several perspectives to answering these questions. Qualitative research tools are probably more apt at capturing consumers’ readings of ads in relation to their self-concept than the traditional survey-based or experimental research methods employed in this body of marketing literature.

The most important message for academic researchers and marketing managers alike from this research is likely to be the existence of a highly advertising literate ‘postmodern’ consumer who is not ignorant of her own life paradoxes and who appreciates if these are taken up—and even caricatured—in clever advertising.
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ABSTRACT

Public autopsies, flayed and preserved human corpses, contemporary ‘freak’ shows and ‘slasher’ movies are all examples of the ‘grotesque’ in contemporary consumption. This paper looks at the nature of the grotesque in performance, film and art, and discusses the application of Bakhtin’s (1984) theory of carnival and the grotesque body as a framework for understanding some of the more extreme examples of grotesque consumption.

INTRODUCTION

On Wednesday November 20th 2002 the first public autopsy to be held in Britain for 170 years was conducted in front of a live audience of 500, by the German professor, Gunther Von Hagens. Chaos preceded the autopsy as the police tried to control the crowds attempting to get into the venue, and the demand was so great (over 2000) that an extra 150 people were informed outside of whether or not they had been given a seat under a public ballot system. The event was accompanied by government warnings, a police presence, a candle-lit vigil and a film crew from Channel 4 television that recorded and broadcast the proceedings in an unscheduled slot the same night. The programme was watched by 1.2 million viewers.

The spectacle took place a mere stones throw away from the haunts of Jack the Ripper in a Victorian boiler house in London’s east End (Connor, 2002). Von Hagens, wearing blue overalls and a Fedora hat, took nearly two hours to conduct the autopsy on a 72 year old man who had died some six months earlier and had been chemically preserved. The procedure involved the extraction of bodily juices with a ladle, sawing open the cranium and extracting the brains, and removing the internal organs, which were then paraded by an assistant for inspection by the audience. Justification for the ‘performance’ was given as a ‘blow’ for scientific freedom’, the ‘demystification of death’, and ‘education’. However, as one might expect, reactions from the public and the media were divided. For some the professor was vilified as a modern day Frankenstein, indulging in a spectacle of self-publicity (The Times, 21/11/01), his actions described as ‘a travesty of medical science, a grotesque pastiche of a dark, but necessary side of the healers art’ (Blake, 2002). For others, however, he was regarded as a champion of democracy, reclaiming the process from the esoteric, elitist and exclusive medical profession. However, regardless of the ‘moral’ position adopted, the nature of the event and the ‘mediatised’ coverage, which accompanied it, raises questions regarding our consumption of the grotesque.

The concept of the grotesque has held a fascination for artists, writers, literary critics, theologians and cultural anthropologists for centuries. However, only recently have scholars started to explore its significance to contemporary marketing phenomena. Examples that hint at the grotesque include Brown’s (2001) deconstruction of offensive marketing campaigns, Fitchett’s (2002) exploration of ‘Sadism’ in relation to consumer behaviour, and Schroeder and Borgerson’s (2002) analysis of dark desires and fetishism in contemporary advertising. Nonetheless, despite very limited coverage of the subject, the grotesque may well be a useful category for understanding certain types of consumer behaviours, particularly those associated with performance, art, film, and other forms of experiential consumption which are thought to have a ‘dark’ side.

Indeed, to draw on the work of Skrade (1974), works of the grotesque can engage us in such a way that bafflement, mystery and possibility are all experienced. The fusion of organic and inorganic parts, the distortion of natural forms, and the exaggeration of fundamental aspects of life such as birth, sex, death, scatological processes, aging, size and gender, not only surprise and baffle us, they call forth a mixture of feelings, often contradictory, of fear, dread and repulsion, of fascination, amusement and derision, that provides us with an insight into the darker side of human nature. One might argue that it is this ‘darker’ side of human nature that has created a recent wave of controversy over the way in which the ‘grotesque’ has been performed and consumed. This paper looks at the concept of the grotesque body, with a particular emphasis on the grotesque in performance, in film and in art. It then introduces some of the key theoretical propositions regarding the grotesque, in particular the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, which may help us gain a more meaningful insight into the phenomenon in relation to contemporary consumer behaviour.

DEFINING THE GROTESQUE

As Russo (1997) points out, the word ‘grotesque’ itself, conjures up images of the cave, the grotto-esque, low, hidden, earthly, dark, material and visceral. Images that were all evident in much of the early religious art. However, whilst theories of the grotesque were historically confined to the realm of art in relation to ‘unnatural’ depictions, by the end of the nineteenth century, considerations of the grotesque were to be linked with experiences (Wright, 1968; Russo, 1997) and in particular, carnival (Bakhtin, 1984). Essentially, the grotesque lies on the margin. It has existed for centuries on the margins of Western culture and the aesthetic conventions that constitute culture (Harpham, 1982). Grotesques can be recognized by the fact that they do not fit out standard categories of identification and consequently the grotesque is a construction of the existing cultural definitions of beauty and ‘otherness’ (Harpham, 1982; Friedman, 2000).

THE GROTESQUE BODY IN PERFORMANCE

The consumption of the ‘grotesque’ has a long history. One might consider the public executions of Christians in Roman amphitheatres, or the gladiatorial contests to the death, as acts of grotesque entertainment. However, it is really from the medieval period onwards, with its market places populated with dwarves, fools and jesters that attention has turned to the nature of grotesque performance (although that is not to dismiss the collective consumption of other spectacles of grotesqueness, such as attendance at public hangings, beheadings and disembowelments). Nonetheless, it is possibly the ‘freak’ shows of the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries that spring to mind when considering the grotesque in relation to carnival. These included individuals with disabilities who developed skills to attract and entertain a paying public, for which they were often financially well rewarded (Bogdan, 1988). These shows included such acts as Nikolai Kobelkoff, the human ‘trunk’ who was born without arms or legs and Violet and Daisy Hilton, a famous pair of Siamese twins who sang and played music. In addition there were dwarf and midget shows, ‘living skeletons’, ‘Indian rubber men’, and ‘fat ladies’ (Friedler, 1978, Terry and Urla, 1995; Thomson, 1996). Of course one of the best known ‘freaks’ of

Consuming the Grotesque Body
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Victoria Merrick, the ‘elephant man’ whose deformed face and body led him to be exhibited first in a freak show, and then at the Royal London Hospital where he remained until his death at the age of 28.

Whilst freak shows have been banned for some considerable time, their legacy remains and can be found in latter day reinventions such as ‘the circus of horrors’ a collection of performances dedicated to the grotesque. This circus features such offerings as the man who can stretch his skin to unnatural lengths, which are highly reminiscent of the Victorian sideshow. In this postmodern parody, there is a merging of the grotesque (the performance–aimed at shocking), parody (the publicity material which features a skull with a red nose), and carnival (the circus setting). Other contemporary examples can be found in the media, in television programmes that combine humour and the grotesque. For example, one popular British television comedy, ‘The League of Gentlemen’ covers aspects of small town cannibalism, incest, sadomasochistic practices, foul-mouthed priests, and cross-dressing taxi drivers. Even ‘everyday’ TV programmes from reality TV to Jerry Springer, have been accused of pandering to a voyeuristic audience and selecting participants such that they increasingly resemble a freak show. On a more macabre note, publications such as ‘Bizarre’, ‘Jack’, and ‘FHM’, tend towards the salacious and grotesque in their graphic portrayal of real life tragedies such as photographs of the aftermath of the Ukrainian air disaster of 2002. Indeed marketing’s exploitation of the grotesque is highly visible in a number of offensive marketing campaigns (Brown, 2001). However, two areas where the grotesque body is possibly most visible are the realms of film and art.

THE GROTESQUE BODY IN FILM

The grotesque body is manifest in a plethora of films, ranging in extremes from Fellini’s ‘Freaks’ to Clive Barker’s ‘Hellraiser’ (the Red Dwarf) in which a dwarf vies for the love of a non-disabled woman, and Ken Russell’s ‘The Devils’, in which Vanessa Redgrave’s hunch backed nun indulges in sexual fantasies over the local priest. Based on an apparently factual account of a mass demon possession at a French convent, Russell’s film is an example of extreme oppositions in which the carnal abstinence of the nuns is reversed in an outpouring of orgiastic excess which climaxes in the ‘rape of Christ’ a scene which was subsequently cut by the censors.

David Lynch provides a further example of the grotesque body in film with his penetration of the surface of everyday life, revealing in the process the corruption and grotesqueness that lies beneath. In ‘Twin Peaks’ he shows us a complex web of grotesqueness, complete with dwarves, an insane woman who talks to a log, a one armed man, and Laura Palmer, the ‘all American girl’ who harbours a wealth of devious secrets (Summar, 2002). In Tom Shadyac’s ‘Nutty Professor’ and ‘Big Momma’s House’ the issue of abnormal size is explored, while the psychological grotesque is created through the depiction of the psycho-killer most manifest in Hannibal Lecter’s character in ‘Silence of the Lambs’, a film which explores issues of cannibalism and human flaying. David Cronenberg’s film ‘Crash’ vividly deals with the ‘appeal’ (whether sexual or otherwise) for the central character of mutilated road crash victims. The horror genre also provides a wealth of opportunity to explore the depiction of the grotesque body, form Sam Raimi’s cult classic ‘The Evil Dead’ (Summar, 2002), to William Peter Blatty’s ‘The Exorcist’ in which a young girl’s body is transformed into a bloated, vomiting, head swiveling, obscenity spewing monstrosity whilst in the possession of the devil.

Clarke, (1991) argues that audiences are increasingly demanding greater and more explicitly shocking forms to portray the postmodern predicament. However, film remains a relatively recent media for portraying the grotesque body. The arts, and particularly the visual arts have a much older tradition which has experienced a number of transitions throughout history.

THE GROTESQUE BODY IN ART

Howard (1964) suggests that the human eye and man’s imagination have always been fascinated by the bizarre and the unusual and that today’s curiosity about the grotesque can be attributed to the rediscovery of such renowned artists of the grotesque as Bosch, Bruegel, Callott and Goya. Whether this can fully explain the current interest in the grotesque is debatable, however, there is no denying that the grotesque remains a feature of many historical and contemporary representations.

According to Kayser (1963, p2) “grotesque art can be defined as art whose form and subject matter appear to be part of, while contradictory to, the natural, social or personal worlds of which we are part. Its images most often embody distortions, exaggerations, a fusion of incompatible parts in such a fashion that it confronts us as strange and disordered, as a world turned upside down.” Depictions of the grotesque body in art can be traced back to the Roam empire of 100BC, with the discovery of designs portraying beasts fused with human bodies with birdlike wings and fish tails. These were strange and absurd images, suggesting an “otherness” in preposterous form, whilst at the same time effecting in the viewer feelings of fascination, amusement and fear (Wright, 1968; Fieldman, 2000). Following the discovery of these works of art in the 15th century, the term grotesque became the universally accepted category for similar, although not necessarily identical representations of the unusual, the strange, and the bizarre. Many subsequent artists, synonymous with the grotesque, most notably Bosch, with his portrayal of ‘The Garden of Earthly Delights’ and the ‘temptation of Saint Anthony’, incorporated a strong religious and moral symbolism which can also be found in the paintings of Michaelangelo, Raphael, and Dante. However, the grotesque in art was not purely confined to the realm of the sacred, but found new expression in the ‘Romanticism’ of the 19th and 20th century artists and writers (Adams and Yates, 1997). The black and white images of demons and humans depicted by Aubrey Beardsley and the nightmarish expressions of Eduard Munch and Francis Bacon, provide further examples of the grotesque in art. For example, Bacon’s paintings manage to be simultaneously mysterious and suggestive. They engender both curiosity and perplexity and attraction and repulsion. They incorporate incompatible elements where the monstrous and human abound in the imagery (Haphram, 1982).

The grotesque in contemporary art is still evident in art galleries in most major cities today, although its manifestation has taken on a different form, symbolic meaning and representation. One only has to reflect on Damien Hirst’s Turner Prize winning display of a decomposing animal carcass, encased in glass, or Tracey Emin’s ‘unnamed bed’ complete with the aftermath of a drunken, sex fuelled night, or her canvass littered with swear words and obscenities, speaking of her alienation, to recognize these changes. The performance and conceptual artists known as Gilbert and George achieved notoriety with their exhibit of a large photographic collage of various bodily fluids which was described as follows. “The oversized tableaux, whose narrative structure can be read at several levels, treat such taboos as excrement and sperm and stylize these taboos into elements. In their latest work Gilbert
and George are more open than ever about their understanding of the body as a sounding-board for the soul.” (Lehmann Maupin, Sonnabend Gallery, New York, 1996). The enormous 15m x 3m photographic tableaux is entitled ‘Spunk Blood Piss Shit Spit’.

To return, however, to Professor Von Hagens, the perpetrator of the autopsy described in the introduction, who has also master-minded possibly one of the most controversial exhibitions of recent times with his ‘Body Works’ display. This consists of a number of plastinated corpses which has been described as:

“A globe trotting flay and display carnival that has taken 26 preserved corpses and 175 anatomical parts on tour to eight million people in six countries in 37 juggernauts. Once in situ the corpses hang out in a variety of poses with a collective casualness about the dilapidation that makes Gap models look formal. There is a chess player, whose strategy may be kept secret, but whose brain lies revealed, and an anatomical flasher wancing apart his own skin.”

Death and a Salesman, The Times, 21/11/02

This exhibition, which has contributed towards Van Hagens’ reported £45 million fortune, also includes a skinned man sitting astride a skinned horse, with his own brain in his hand, and the body of a young, pregnant woman with her swollen stomach slashed open to reveal an eight month old foetus. One might argue that this takes representation of the body to another level, which raises questions regarding contemporary consumption of the grotesque and the theoretical propositions that might better inform our understanding of it.

CARNIVAL, SPECTACLE, THE GROTESQUE BODY AND THE ‘PUBLIC AUTOPSY’ AND ‘BODY WORKS’ EXHIBITION

The consumption of the grotesque in contemporary art and performance can be analysed in the light of a number of theoretical positions, including those of ‘carnival’, ‘spectacle’ and what Bakhtin (1984) refers to as the ‘grotesque body’. Mikhail Bakhtin, the 20th century Russian philosopher and literary theorist, is considered by many to be one of the key influences on the study of the grotesque (Russo, 1994; Brown, 1998). Indeed his work has been subjected to considerable deconstruction and attention in relation to a wide array of subjects, including art, literature, sociology, and more recently to marketing (see for example Brown’s (1998) analysis of the Moet commercial).

Bakhtin’s (1984) theory of carnival, embedded in the traditions and practices of the medieval carnival and festival, breaks down the distinction between actors and audience and turns the ‘taken for granted’ on its head in a reversal of norms, roles, and expectations. For the duration of the carnival the ‘normal’ world is suspended as the senses are assaulted. Moreover, as Debord (1970) notes, the spectacle that is carnival is not just a collection of images, but represents a social relation among people, mediated by images. Spectacles present themselves to view; there is little hidden. They fill time and space with colourful, intricate and complicated surfaces and above all the spectacle is visual. Liminality, which is often linked to spectacle, is defined by Turner (1995) as a time and place of withdrawal from normal modes of social structures. For Bakhtin, carnival functions as an ideal, an ‘Eden’ a golden age from which we have fallen, however, he is optimistic for reclaiming this ideal in his theory that the grotesque discloses the potentiality of an entirely different world, of another order. The existing world suddenly becomes alien and there is the potential for a golden age, or a carnival of truth. The world is destroyed so that it may be regenerated and renewed. Moreover, carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people, rather they live in it and everyone participates because its very idea embraces everyone. While carnival exists there is no life outside of it, it has a universal spirit. (Bakhtin, 1984, p.49).

Bakhtin’s treatment of Rabelais’ work creates a myth of the people as a whole body. However, outside of carnival, this ‘body’ has been privatized and degraded. Bakhtin describes what he terms the grotesque body. The grotesque body is a human incarnation of carnival, providing a corporeal site for renewal and invigoration through its orifices. The grotesque body is ‘open’ and interactive with the outside world. Openness creates fecundity regenerating the world by creating life—in pregnancy and birth, and also by surrendering it. The carnival or grotesque body is in effect the expression of both scatological and sexual activities. The orifices of the body are the focus of attention and the bodily processes of ‘eating’, ‘spitting’ and ‘copulating’ are all exaggerated. Equally birth and death are treated in an irreverent fashion. In the imaging of the body, body parts are juxtaposed and connected, defying easy recognition and leveling any sense of one part as private or public, good or bad, repulsive or attractive (Bakhtin, 1984; Adams and Yates, 1997). If we take the key concepts of carnival, spectacle and the grotesque body, we can start to define parameters for analyzing both the public autopsy and the ‘body works’ exhibition.

Carnival

The concept of carnival and the carnivalesque is evident in both the body works exhibition and the autopsy. The staged events, the public hysteria, the candle-lit vigil, the presence of the media, the police, the sensational government warnings all combined to create a sense of high theatre, which occupied the minds and thoughts of all involved, even for those who vicariously watched. The ‘theatre’ where the performance took place, located in the area notorious for the ‘Ripper’ killings, ads to the morbid sense of the theatrical, as does the ‘travelling’ circus in which the ‘body works’ are exhibited globally. All this is reminiscent of earlier carnivals, theatrics, the absurd, parody, and challenges to the norm.

Spectacle

Both the body works and the autopsy are highly visual. They rely on the gaze. There is nothing left to the imagination in either. With the autopsy, internal organs were theatrically extracted and paraded on a tray for close inspection by the audience, thus removing the distinction between actor and audience—they participated and became part of the carnival. Each stage of the process was described in macabre detail and the star of the show, dressed to full effect in overalls and fedora hat, acted as the ‘ring master’ carefully orchestrating each stage of the performance. Similarly the body works exhibition is extreme in its graphicness and absurd grotesqueness which acts as a parody of real life. The scenes are all ‘unreal’, but at the same time real. The suspended corpses, staged in extreme imitations of their key defining activities, invite or compel the audience to leave aside normal definitions of the acceptable and step outside of the boundaries of the ‘taken for granted’ everyday.

The grotesque body

The Bakhtinian grotesque body, which is ‘open’ is probably at its extreme in both the autopsy and the body works exhibition. Certainly the body that was dissected was ‘opened’ in its fullest sense. It was a dead body, but one that had been artificially preserved for over six months. It was systematically dissected and cut into. Each organ was extracted, bodily fluids were ladelled out, the body was literally turned inside out, emptied and paraded for public view. Similarly the body works exhibition is a complete grotesque parody of real life. Here the unacceptable becomes
acceptable. Corpses are suspended and frozen in time, continuing their game of chess, riding a horse and so on. They are flayed and stripped of their outer layers to reveal the human form in its most naked and exposed condition. Nothing is kept from the public gaze. Norms are challenged, conventions are flouted and the unexpected becomes the expected in a parody and reversal of human life. Through plastination these mannequin corpses act as a juxtaposition of life and death which perhaps have the effect of reminding us of our own mortality?

QUESTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This paper aimed to explore the nature of contemporary consumption in relation to the grotesque body. We have examined a number of examples which constitute the grotesque, by focusing on the grotesque body in performance, film, and art. The paper concluded with a brief consideration of some of the key theoretical propositions on the grotesque and in particular the work of Bakhtin (1984). Although this discussion is couched very much at an exploratory and largely descriptive level, it does raise some key questions which we consider deserve further investigation. Most fundamentally, and in keeping with the conference theme of change, is the question as to whether we, and today’s consumer culture, have really changed? Has the ‘civilising’ process and the emphasis on political correctness actually eradicated our salacious desire to ‘gaze’ upon the extreme, the outrageous, the forbidden and the grotesque. Are we really any different in our motives and experiences from the collective audience at the public hanging? Or, do we just organise our experience of voyeuristic and macabre spectacles differently? Where once we had to physically attend such events, now we can also watch them on television or view them on video. This leads on to the implications for the role of the media and its impact on our consumption of the grotesque. Television coverage of such events as the autopsy sanitizes the ‘performance’, removing the ‘real’ blood and gore and at the same time removing any moral responsibility we may have for our vicarious voyeurism. It allows us to selectively view the unfolding acts and to disengage at whatever point we wish. This in itself would make an interesting study into the nature of change as we become an increasingly mediated society with the world of the internet at our fingertips. However, possibly the most fundamental question, regards the behaviour of the consumers themselves and the motivations and experiences of consuming the grotesque which would benefit from an empirical investigation drawing upon a range of social and psychological theories. These may evolve from a number of theoretical directions as illustrated by Thompson (1982) in his rather eclectic analysis of the grotesque in the Monty Python films. For example we might consider the grotesque as part of the ‘imagination at play’ (Steig, 1970). Steig likens the imagination at play to that of the behaviour of naughty children who like to play with fire. Consequently, it is hardly ever free of some taint of the forbidden or evil. Put another way, when we contemplate sinless beauty we get serious. Moral fairy tales rarely stimulate the imagination in the same way as the illicit, the uncanny, the abnormal or the supernatural.

In terms of theorizing such reactions, our fascination with the grotesque may be conceptualized as a means of arousing anxiety by giving expression to repressed infantile fantasies which in turn combine as a liberation from fear (Thompson, 1982; Steig, 1970). Drawing upon the work of Lacan into childhood behaviour and images, Thompson suggests that the repulsion/attraction element of the grotesque may be rooted in the paranoid schizoid mother/child relationship which involves love and at the same time a fear of being devoured. The work attempted to understand the mental phenomenon known as ‘images’ which sometimes represent aggressive intentions centering around castration, mutilation, and dislocation; all images directed at the fragmented body. He illustrates this through the example of children between the ages of 2-5 whose ‘play’ behaviour often involves pulling heads off dolls and dislocating limbs; actions which spring spontaneously from the imagination. This is also likened to the images that are presented to the child by adults. For example, the grotesque is often associated with caricature, exaggeration and distortion. It involves amusement, disgust, laughter and horror simultaneously. This caricature which becomes abnormally abnormal, may also be compared to another example of the grotesque: the face that is pulled and distorted to amuse a child. Here delight in novelty can quickly turn to fear of the unfamiliar once a certain degree of unfamiliarity is reached. A child will laugh at a distorted face, but only to a point, after which it will cry in fear. In adults, this may culminate in anger once a certain degree of abnormality is reached and when norms are seriously threatened or attacked. This may be illustrated by the controversy created by such exhibitions as the ‘body works’ which would appear to violate the acceptable norms of what is deemed acceptable. However, this would benefit from a much deeper exploration.

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A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Advertising Appeals in Hong Kong and Korean Television Commercials
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ABSTRACT
This study attempts to investigate similarities and differences in the advertising appeals in Hong Kong and Korean television commercials. Literature review suggests that the differences between the two countries in terms of advertising industry and national culture can be related to the differences in advertising appeals and value portrayal and the hypotheses were developed in terms of two value dichotomy (Western vs. Eastern, utilitarian vs. symbolic) and Hofstede’s cultural dimensions. A sample of 803 prime-time television commercials from the two countries was analyzed using Cheng and Schweitzer’s (1996) framework. Hypotheses testing showed the mixed results. Hong Kong advertising contained more Western values than Korean advertising, while utilitarian and symbolic values were employed in a similar manner in both countries. It was found advertising appeals were related to the two cultural dimensions (uncertainty avoidance and masculinity/femininity) to some extent, while the notion of value paradoxes was found to exist in the television advertising in both countries. This study also confirmed that advertising appeals have much to do with product categories advertised in the two countries.

Reference
ABSTRACT

One often heard remark against postmodern advertising is that it is too complicated or confusing and therefore has to brand poorly. In order to conceptualize ‘postmodern advertising’ the pragmatic concept of Ironic Selling Propositions (ISP) is defined and described as well as a series of sub strategies. Two samples of recent Danish television advertising are compared: one with ISP and one without it. The finding is that on average the ads with ironic strategies brands just as well as the non-ironic ads.

INTRODUCTION

It is has now been almost fifty years of rumors of postmodernism. It has been declared dead several times (Featherstone, 1991) but it refuses to go quietly, and according to Stephen Brown the monster of postmodernism hit the mainstream of marketing research in the summer of 1993 (Brown, 1994). During the mid 1990ies several conceptual papers and books were published to explain the postmodern condition, consumer and text ((Brown, 1995a), (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995), (Firat and Dholakia, 1995) (O’Donohoe, 1997)). So-called postmodern methods of interpretive marketing research opened the polysemic perspectives of what consumers do when confronted with advertising, and are now considered to be conventional methods (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Although much has now been published on the concept of postmodernism, most papers do not look beyond a single interesting case of for example Benetton (the case of postmodern marketing) or egg.com (Proctor et al., 2002).

The paper is trying to look at television ads with the concept of Ironic Selling Propositions, a concept that is proposed and explained in the following. It applies a quantitative effects measure to investigate problems of postmodern communication, thus trying to measure a particular genre of postmodern advertising in a modern perspective. But the most important contribution in the following is probably the attempt at widening the understanding of irony as a central concept in the advertising strategies of the last ten years.

IRONIC MODERNISM OR POSTMODERNISM?

It seems that almost all papers that is set on researching some aspect of what is termed ‘postmodern’ needs a section where postmodernism is defined in a dichotomy as ‘anti-modernism’, more or less. It may be an example of postmodern irony that this is then followed by a disclaimer: this dichotomy is dismissed as simply not possible or the least adequate (Brown, 1995a) (Stromach, 1996). Brown follows this disclaimer with an interesting positive definition:

“...postmodernism is what happens when someone points out that the modernist monarch actually has no clothes.” (Hall, 2000)

What this paper suggests is that the concept of polysemic irony is one important aspect of the postmodern condition. Maybe not the only one, but an important one, one that connects beautifully to all of Browns ‘p-words of postmodernism’:

- Irony, particularly in its unstable form, destabilizes meaning (Booth, 1974) thus creating paradox, profusion and plurivalecence.
- Irony is in many definitions inherently echoic in nature (Sperber and Wilson, 1995) thus also a part of the postmodern pastiche and parody.
- Postmodern irony echoes modernism by implicitly criticizing modern rigidity and authoritarianism, for example through self-conscious ironic use of profanity (Brown and Schau, 2001).
- The irony is employed in marketing in order to make advertising a playful experience, consumed with pleasure (Stern, 1990).
- The Ironic Selling Proposition is then turning marketing into a profligate prevarication of pleasure and phantasmagoria rather than information about products.

It does seem that irony connects well to the postmodern condition and aesthetics. So do we really need all the French philosophy when we have irony? In the discourse of marketing practitioners, irony is sometimes even seen as more or less synonymous to postmodernism (Hall, 2000) which admittedly is stretching the ubiquity of irony beyond the limits of both concepts. Irony, however is part of the aesthetic of postmodernism connecting to the experiences and feelings of the human conditions of late modernity, postmodernism or what we choose to call it.

IRONY?

Most of the scientific papers within psycholinguistics and marketing focus on verbal irony alone, as does most of the literature within the Arts and Humanities. In this paper the concept may refer to all levels of the audio/visual artifacts of TV-advertising, which means that it is possible to speak of irony in a completely nonverbal ad execution.

It must be admitted, that the concept of irony is very elusive and difficult to define in simple terms. The literature on irony is extensive and the concept of irony is so complex that it deserves a much deeper discussion than is possible within this paper. The concept dates back to the ancient discipline of Rhetoric, in which it

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1Admittedly the first uses of the word were very promodern and differs somewhat from the later constructions of the concept (Featherstone, 1991).
2As Brown (Brown, 1995b) points out, this methodology presupposes the autonomous subject thus contrasting the postmodern idea of the decentered subject, and cannot therefore be wholly postmodern.
3Stephen Brown has other interesting compilations of postmodern themes (Brown, 1995a) but space allows no treatment of these.
is classified as a trope (a category that in present terms would be ‘figures of speech’). Irony in the classical definition of Quintillian is simply “an indirect idiomatic expression in which meaning is substituted by its semantic opposite” (Oesterreich 2001). To understand irony, however, more than simple negation is at stake:

“… Irony conveys meaning by indirect reference rather than by direct statement. Irony plays with the possibilities of extreme otherness of speech, of life, or of existence is such. The full range of irony is only intelligible through an awareness of the problematic relationship between the expressed and the intended, between character and statement, and between essence and appearance.” (Oesterreich 2001).

The first problem of irony is to explain how we recognize the subtle disjunction of meanings in ironies. How do we distinguish the ironic from the non-ironic?

In this paper, the concept of irony builds on Wayne C. Booth (Booth, 1974).⁵ Booth compares the initial experience of irony to that of ‘cognitive dissonance’; the experience of incongruent ‘clues’ forces the receiver into a mode of ironic interpretation when dissonance of the ‘straight’ interpretation becomes too great (Booth, 1974). This experience of incongruity may be within the ad itself, the ad and some knowledge or belief or between the ad and some aspect of the context. Booth (1974) formulates this as five types of ‘clues’:

1. Straightforward warnings in the author’s own voice.  
2. Known error proclaimed  
3. Conflicts of facts within the work  
4. Clashes of style  
5. Conflicts of belief

The formulations of the five types are clearly reminiscent of Booth’s orientation towards literature, and even though the first may be uncommon in advertising, they are applicable to advertising. In relation to advertising the ‘clashes of style’ and ‘conflicts of beliefs’ is often confined within the discourse of advertising. As TV-advertising normally has to address mass audiences it must tap into shared knowledge, no—not literature or the bible; other advertising, fashion, TV or other mass culture phenomenon and genres. Thus advertising is forced into echoing advertising (Christensen, 2001). These intertextual references need not be ironic, so how do we discover irony? It is ultimately a question of interpretation, but the interpretation may be discussed in relation to the incongruity and relevance (Sperber and Wilson, 1995). The claims of potential ‘innocent victims’ (persons not discovering the irony) are according to Booth often exaggerated in discussions on irony (Booth, 1974). Many interpretations may be put forth and experienced by real consumers or researchers, but if it is possible to point to Booth’s clues (and the more pragmatic ad-heuristics of ISP below) in the texts (ads) then it may be inferred that the most relevant interpretation is one of irony. Booth is not only trying to build a pragmatic method of recognizing irony in literary criticism, but also describe how it is experienced and recognized by readers in general.

⁴Trope is a Greek word, meaning something like a semantic ‘twist’ or ‘turn’.  
⁵Booth is especially relevant in a pragmatic context such as this, because he is primarily interested in the communicational aspects of irony.

This leads to one last distinction that needs to be mentioned: irony is not metaphor.

Theoretically it may be claimed that metaphor is also a non-literal mode of communication, but the experience of metaphor in advertising is often one of straight non-critical self-appraisal. This is not irony but hyperbole (amplificatio), though it may be used in combination with irony (which could be very ambiguous or even contain a degree of self-criticism).

**POLYSEMIC IRONY**

Irony, according to Booth, is not simply a negation of literal meaning. Booth makes a distinction between stable and unstable irony. Stable irony is a meaning that is initially recognized as ‘unstable’: something not to be taken at face value, but the meaning does stabilize once this is interpreted. It is possible to express this ‘new’ more stable meaning to a reasonably satisfactory degree (or rather: a finite set of possible meanings). The irony of simple negation belongs to this category, but the possibilities are much wider. Irony is unstable when it seems impossible to arrive at a new more stable interpretation of the ironic expression; the possible meanings seem infinite and the only certain thing is the need to reject the face value of the expression. These two types of irony are to be understood as belonging to a continuum, not as exclusive categories. In the work of McQuarrie and Mick (1996) irony is included in their ‘Taxonomy of Rhetorical Figures in Advertising’ in the group of tropes with the highest order of deviation and complexity, the rhetorical operation of destabilization. They do not try do differentiate between a stable or unstable irony, but underline the polysemic: “…The point is not that each message recipient will make all of these inferences but that the advertiser’s choice of a message that signifies the opposite of what it at first appears to signify has a destabilizing effect that liberates a variety of meanings for consideration” (McQuarrie and Mick 1996).

It is important to stress that these definitions of irony puts more emphasis on a polysemic interpretation, which clears the way for a better understanding of the unstable qualities of irony, than the commonly held idea of irony as a negation. It could be hypothesized that this latter simple irony is more often used as a humor technique (Stern, 1990) widening the appeal of the ad, whereas the more unstable examples of irony are probably better suited as a lifestyle strategy addressing more narrow subcultures with a very selective adherence to advertising. It may be questioned whether television is really the right media choice for this, but a word of mouth, ‘trickle down’ effect could sometimes be desired.

**IRONY AS A ‘CRITICAL ECHO’**

Another relevant topic in most theories on irony is the degree of criticism inherent in the use of irony (Booth, 1974; Sigrell, 2001; Sperber and Wilson, 1995).

“The attitude expressed by an ironical utterance is invariably of the rejecting or disapproving kind.” (Sperber and Wilson, 1995) p. 239

As mentioned above, the irony often echoes modern institutions of marketing, containing some degree of parody, explaining why this is often referred to as ‘postmodern’.

When this criticism or ridicule becomes very apparent and direct, one might speak of satire; though satire directed towards specific ads or advertisers is not present in Danish advertising (direct comparison in Denmark is associated with legal problems).
THE CONCEPT OF IRONIC SELLING PROPOSITIONS

The meaning of the term stretches in two directions: a selling proposition pretending not really to be a selling proposition and/or a selling proposition that refers to selling propositions in ironic or sarcastic way (echoing genres of advertising, ad-chlích etc.). This is not the same as using humor or comedy, although combinations are possible. Any occurrence of irony is not necessarily an ISP. The ISP is a strategy involving the author (sender) of the ad and the receiver in a communicative relation involving the intentional use of irony as a (meta) communicative strategy to be recognized and interpreted as some degree of irony (and not necessarily by simple negation).

It is possible to perceive the ISP as criticizing and ridiculing the institutions and conventions of advertising. If so, the irony is manifold: The advertising regains adherence and persuasive potential by ridiculing conventional persuasive techniques, thus apparently transcending trite impersonal commercialism of ‘selling propositions’. In a truly postmodern mindset this is beside the point, what matters is whether the experience ‘feels true’ (Firat, 2001).

What sub-strategies or elements may be used in constructing Ironic Selling Propositions?

The following is an attempt at identifying sub-strategies of the ISP. It is not a classification system with exclusive categories, but an attempt at describing what ISP strategies is evident in a sample of Danish TV ads. The strategies may be combined. As the theory of echoic irony predicts, the strategies are echoing genres and strategies well established in marketing.

As irony is probably one of the most difficult forms of latent content one may wish to classify, it is clear that a simple coding scheme has to be developed. The simple categories of genre (type/format), protagonists and scenarios were chosen because they are simple and evident across the literature for example: (Rossiter and Percy, 1996) (Laskey et al., 1989) (Laskey et al., 1995) (Steward and Furse, 1986).

IRONIC USE OF GENRE

The ironic use of genre has already been mentioned above, but deserves some elaboration. It differs somewhat from the strategies below, in that the irony is often constructed through many subtle or overt references to the genres of advertising, to the genre format as a whole. This is often referred to as a pastiche (Brown, 2001). In the early ISP of 1998, these references are quite overt and stable in their irony. In the Mobilix pre-paid mobile phone ads of 1998, for example, the clearly absurd use of problem/solution format (dog gets caught in bicycle wheel/dog gets cut in two with scissors), all presented very authoritatively by an ‘airhostess’ look-alike in heavy make-up. Recent ironic use of genre is more complex and subtle, using only fragments or combining genres etc. This often means a more unstable form of irony; i.e. how much is ironic, where does irony end?

The ironic use of genre often contains one or more of the strategies below, for example an ironic protagonist.

IRONIC NOSTALGIA

Nostalgia is a traditional element with great ESP potential, but in ISP it is more ambiguous. The ‘straight’ nostalgia is a ‘naïve’ and emotionally involved experience of a longing for the good old days. But the ironic nostalgia plays with the codes, in a more distanced experience. As an ISP it can be slightly humorous as in a pastiche of the 1950s USP-style, or more difficult to place historically as styles blend into bricolage. The ironic nostalgia is comparable to the ‘retro’ trends that were particularly in vogue in the late ‘90s (Brown, 2001), but the ironic nostalgia is a wider concept compared to the more consistent and often stylishly rounded ‘retro’. As Brown puts it: ‘Postmodernism is often more concerned with the past than the present’ (2001), and the irony inherent in this sub-strategy could be seen as an attempt at legitimizing the emotional involvement in the ad for the more self-reflexive audiences. A strategy of “I-know-you-know that this is a bit silly but let’s enjoy it anyway”.

IRONIC NEGATIVE SCENARIO

The use of negative scenarios means situations depicting ‘the problem’ or the absence of the product or service. Traditional marketing literature (Rossiter and Percy, 1996) often warns against a single focus on this, in although it is not that uncommon as it holds creative rewards in the freedom of presentation. Admittedly, it is problematic to differentiate between general exaggeration in advertising and an exaggerated negative scenario that is ironic. In the case of irony, it should be apparent that more is at stake than ‘normal exaggeration’. That the exaggeration is not at all to be taken seriously is too absurd, or subtle cues make the depiction of the negative scenario polysemic and unstable. Examples could be the young man going berserk in a crocket game with the in-laws in an ad for Danica (2001) or the violently naughty boys of the 1998 McDonald campaign trying to bully parents into having their children’s birthday celebrations at MacDonald’s.9

IRONIC POSITIVE SCENARIO

The ironic positive scenario is a natural extension of the negative scenario and in combination; they make up an ironic problem/solution. Ironic positive scenarios seem to be less frequent in isolation. Maybe the reason for this is that showing only the positive effects tend to make the cause of the scenario (the product or service) less clear, with disastrous results for the desired branding effect.

Also, in these positive scenarios, it is somewhat difficult to separate ‘straight’ but exaggerated visualizations of effects of products from what might be termed ironic. One good example of this is the Interflora campaign of 2001, where the effect of giving flowers is visually communicated by showing situations of, for example, a male couch potato who is continuously served beer by his wife or when the sports trophy gets a prime spot on the shelf (the ironic cues are underlined from the completely nonverbal executions, with tension building on the use of sound or music with strong pathos).

6 Apologies must be made to the international audience, that the examples of television ads below may seem a bit difficult to comprehend in full. Better and more complete descriptions would be appropriate, but the limitation in the length of this article makes it impossible.

7 One may argue that exaggeration is simply a genre feature of all advertising that is to be expected, and that negative or positive scenarios are never to be taken literally. In this sense, advertising has always been ‘generically ironic’. Albeit interesting, this view seems in itself exaggerated.

8 In rhetorical theory, this ‘normal exaggeration’ may be referred to in the terms of ‘hyperbole’ or ‘amplification’.

9 The McDonald’s ad was subsequently banned because of the extreme behavior.

10 This campaign was awarded an Arnold prize for its creativity.
IRONIC PROTAGONIST OR ANTAGONIST

An ironic protagonist or antagonist is a spokesperson or main character who appears in a seemingly incongruous or self-contradictory way. This must transcend the conventional use of heroes or anti-heroes in problem/solution formats or the silly stock-characters of comedy. Admittedly, this is again a problem of interpretation.

One such example could be the spot for Diesel Jeans from 1997 “Little Rock, 1873”; utilizing references to the western genre: The ‘successful’ clean-cut hero (wearing Diesel jeans) gets shot in a showdown on the street by a disgusting villain. So, who is the hero?

In a very Danish context, the kitsch spokesperson “Harske Hubbi” (means something like “Stale Hubbi”) is recommending new CD releases in a series of ads for Universal Music under the slogan “quite all right music taste”.11 This campaign really explores the limits of advertising world self-referentiality: “Harske Hubbi” is actually a spin-off character from another series of TV-spots from the telecom company Sonofon that also uses an ironic protagonist, “Polle” through this character borders on the clichés of folk-comedy (“the town fool”).

The antagonist is usually ‘the villain’ of a drama, and in classic advertising a natural place for her him is the negative scenario. An ironic antagonist is a somewhat oxymoronic concept, because the ironic antagonist can easily be confused with an ironic protagonist; the antagonist being ‘ironic’ i.e. ‘not anta’ may seem to equal ‘pro’ However, following the definition of irony above (polysemic rather than just negation), the ironic antagonist becomes ‘much more than antagonist’.

An IKEA ad from 2001 extends the idea of an ironic antagonist all the way to an ironic sender. A fictional society, the JetSetSociety is leading a campaign against IKEA’s ‘Democratic Design’. It is a kind of ‘civil rights movement of the rich’, in which spokesperson Benedictie de Reinsing protests against ‘cheap designer furniture’. In the 2002 IKEA fan club campaign, the focus changes to another ironic society: the IKEA fan club.

IRONIC BRANDING?

The big question about ISP is whether these ironic tendencies of postmodern advertising is really a counter productive fad of creatives trying to outdo each other in absurdity in order to win awards. Often heard cries of postmodern doom claim that it not only harms the individual brand to use these strategies, but it may harm the whole institution of marketing as it corrupts the credibility of advertising and makes it impossible to distinguish the brands as they no longer mean anything (Clancy and Trout, 2002).

“…its very imagery may further confuse an already confused consumer.”(Proctor et al., 2002).

Branding in the more qualitative sense is building and reinforcing the attitudes and emotions held by a consumer towards a given ‘brand’ (symbol of product, service or corporation) at a given time. The nature and quality of these attitudes and emotions are off course crucial. But as a basic measure the ‘branding-potential’ of an ad is the capacity to make the consumer recognize what brand is advertised, and thus connects the ads information and experience to the brand. Much emphasis is laid on this capacity as advertisers often consider the money wasted if the ad-brand connection is not reasonably high by comparative standards.

The common preconceptions of ironic advertising is that the branding effect is seriously impaired as it is confusing the consumers, even though the possible creativity and ‘odd-ness’ in the execution may lead to better ad-recall.

In other words the hypothesized effects are worse branding but possibly better ad-recall.

In order to test this hypothesis data from two Danish advertising and marketing papers were classified using the ISP categories above, and the sample split in two: one with ISP and one without.

THE SAMPLE

The sample is taken from the weekly post-tests of TV-ads published by the Danish business papers Borsen and Markedsføring. In the sample are 77 ad tests from Borsen and 58 ad tests from Markedsfoering, most are from the year 2001 but a few are from early in 2002. The sampling of the ads were not done by specific criteria, but in Markedsføring it is stated that ‘the ads are not the best or most popular’ rather it is suggested that ‘a full scope’ of variety of ads is sought in the sampling (Graversen, 2001). Total sample is 135 ad tests.

DATA COLLECTION

The data were collected as telephone surveys where the respondents were read a short description of the ad to be tested. If the respondent is then able to identify the featured brand this is noted as ‘branding score’. Subsequently it is asked whether the respondent remembers the ad, if so this is noted as ad-recall. The surveys were done for each ad at different time for each campaign.

In the Borsen sample the number of respondents for each ad ranges from 465 to 1024, and for Markedsføring the number of respondents for each ad are fixed at 1015.

From the surveys were computed an average score in percentages of respondents recalling the brand from the ad or just the ad.

CODING STRATEGY

As irony is a latent content that is very difficult to code, the whole sample was double coded by two coders. The ads were coded along the ISP strategies described above and then collapsed into two categories of either no ISP or containing one or more of the ISP strategies, resulting in two categories of non-ironic or ironic. Coding the ads resulted in an 83% agreement between the coders, and the remaining ads were coded after discussion and agreement between the coders. This percentage should be considered in relation to the complexity of the content coded (Potter and Levine-Donnerstein, 1999).

CODING TEST

To test whether a larger population of non-expert coders would experience the ads as ‘ironic’, four ads of the ads coded as ISP and four ads coded as Non-ISP were randomly chosen from the ad-sample. The respondents were two groups of students, one from Copenhagen Business School (44 respondends), one from University of Copenhagen (21 respondents). None of the students had been formally trained in literary analysis or theories on irony. They were asked to rate the 8 ads with ten adjectives on a scale from 1-5. One of the adjectives was ‘ironic’. The respondents were instructed to let their first impression guide them in the rating of the ads, and that it was a simple exercise in how TV-ads may be experienced (as a whole–not focusing attention on irony). Both groups of respondents rated the four ISP ads significantly higher on irony than the four Non-ISP ads (T-test: p=0.0064 and p=0.0088).

11The full connotations of this slogan cannot really be translated from the Danish dialect of Fyn.
RESULTS

It is clear from table 1 that the hypothesis of worse branding scores of ads with ISP strategies has to be rejected. The mean percentage of consumers connecting the brand to the ad is actually slightly higher for ISP ads, though this is not significant. Several tests of significance were made, ranging from basic t-test to more advanced tests taking the great variance in the data into account.

The second part of the hypothesis, that ironic ads are better remembered, must also be rejected according to these data.

The conclusion from these results must be that there could not be measured any significant differences in the two samples along the measured variables.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The findings presented in this paper are congruent with those of McQuarrie and Mick (1992, 1996, 1999), McQuarrie and Micks results on the effects of resonance and rhetorical figures do not differentiate between effects of irony and effects of metaphor or pun. The present study has tried to single out the effects of irony, and stress the importance of this ancient concept as an advertising strategy in recent Danish television advertising. The use of ISP is probably not just a Danish phenomenon, but relevant in northern Europe or urban cultures of most of the developed world.

There are many more complicated problems related to the use of ISP strategies. In the surveys above it cannot be determined qualitatively what these strategies actually do to a consumers feelings or attitudes to a brand.

It is likely that as anything else ISP may be executed poorly or with skilful creativity. However, in the study above, this should even out. It seems then, that for what it is worth, this study shows that ironic advertising brands just as well as traditional non-ironic advertising.

Further content analyses of the traditional elements such as pack shots etc. in the ads would be interesting to investigate whether longer exposure of logos and brands are actually what is the relevant parameter through both samples. It could be very relevant that the way some of the ads utilize ISP, advertisers makes it possible to have consumers adhere to chocolate bars talking intricate puns for 30 seconds, which is in fact 30 seconds of pack shot.

The use of a modern framework to investigate a potentially postmodern phenomenon might seem contradictory to some. It could also be viewed as simply refuting modernist critique within the modern framework.

It should be also considered whether simplistic effects variables such as the ones used in the surveys above actually makes much sense in relation to TV-advertising, postmodern or not. Nonetheless these reductionistic survey methods (pre-)occupy many practitioners, understandably as they are caught up in the everyday race to justify marketing practices. But as Hall points out, we should probably test brand experiences, not the ads that may work fine even if consumer cannot recall ads, brands or attitudes on cue in telephone surveys (Hall, 2002).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Non-ISP</td>
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<td>59%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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Emergent Advertising Appeals in the Weeks after September 11, 2001
Charles A. McMellon, Hofstra University, USA
Mary Long, Pace University, USA

ABSTRACT

In the days following September 11, 2001 advertisers appeared to be confused. At the same time some were scrambling to remove their advertising from the media, others were placing advertising. This paper examines the advertising that directly or indirectly reflects the horrific events of 9/11/01. Our analysis of the advertising shows that four categories of advertising appeals emerged that suggest a picture of evolving attitudes and motives. The four types are: (1) condolence, (2) informational, (3) inspirational, and (4) commercial. We discuss the use of patriotic icons and the possible meanings of the advertising. In addition, motivations behind this advertiser behavior are discussed using social psychology theory.
Advertising Effectiveness in Different Cultures: Results of an Experiment Analyzing the Effects of Individualistic and Collectivistic Advertising on Germans and Chinese
Sandra Diehl, Saarland University, Germany
Ralf Terlutter, Saarland University, Germany
Peter Weinberg, Saarland University, Germany

ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study is to obtain further insight into the effective use of advertising in Germany and China. This article attempts to determine whether print advertisements are more successful when they make use of individualistic versus collectivistic values, or whether it is possible to apply the same advertising techniques in both cultures. The authors conducted an experiment in which a print ad focussing on individualistic values was compared to another print ad emphasizing collectivistic values. The subsequent evaluations among German and Chinese subjects of the two ads were then recorded. Results clearly indicate that an individualistic appeal is more effective when communicating with the individualistic German audience. However, the Chinese subjects did not evaluate the collectivistic ad more positively than the individualistic ad. Therefore, when appealing to a collectivistic audience, either a collectivistic or an individualistic appeal can be used. Hence, in both Germany and China, a standardized advertising campaign capitalizing on individualistic values seems plausible.

PROBLEM FORMULATION AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
Due to the recent opening of China in the late seventies and the initiation of economic reforms, China has become an attractive market with growing demand. Today, the People’s Republic of China has about 1.2 Billion inhabitants whose average income per capita has raised from about 200 Euro in 1979 to about 1100 Euro in 2001 (Germany 2001: 16500 Euro).

The Chinese market plays an important role for German companies, in that Germany is China’s most important European trade partner (German Federal Agency of Foreign Trade, 2002). As China has now become a member of the WTO, it is expected that the Chinese market will further develop (German Federal Agency of Foreign Trade, 2002).

Though it is difficult to obtain detailed information on the Chinese advertising market, the study conducted by Yin (1999) indicates that German companies are involved in a major part of all foreign advertising within China.

Due to the present and prospectively growing importance of the Chinese market, information on the effective use of advertising media in China is essential. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to obtain more insight into the appropriate use of advertising media in China. In conjunction with an experiment, this article attempts to reveal whether it is more effective to differentiate print ads that are used in Germany and China, or whether it is possible to use a more standardized approach.

STANDARDIZATION VERSUS DIFFERENTIATION OF ADVERTISING
Due to the ever increasing international business activities of many companies of the consumer goods industry, the analysis of international advertising continues to gain a growing importance (e.g. Belch/Belch, 2001; Luna/Gupta, 2001). Standardized means of advertising are, according to Dmoch (1999), means of advertising which have in different cultures exactly the same design except for the translation of the text/slogan. Differentiated means of advertising are means of advertising which take cultural particularities of the cultures/countries, in which they are used, into consideration. Therefore they differ in their content or design (e.g. by adaptation of the visual elements, variation of the slogan etc.).

Both strategies have been controversially discussed since the beginning of the fifties and have dominated during different periods of international advertising research (e.g. Agrawal, 1995). The main advantage in using standardized advertising is its financial aspect. Furthermore the standardization of advertising makes it easier to build up an internationally uniform image of a company (e.g. Dmoch, 1999; Levitt, 1983). On the other hand there is also research work emphasizing the heterogeneity of the markets and of the consumer needs, which takes a critical attitude toward the standardization of marketing instruments (e.g. Maxwell, 2001; Rawwas, 2001; Craig/Douglas, 2001; Gürhan-Canli/Maheswaran, 2000; Mescal, 2000; Huff/Alden, 1998; Douglas/Craig, 1997).

Concerning advertising, the studies of e.g. Cho et al. (1999), Taylor et al. (1997), Cheng/Schweitzer (1996), Harris (1994) or Kanso (1992) can be referenced. In the following, culture specific factors are analyzed, which are important for a differentiation of advertising.

DIFFERENTIATED ADVERTISING DUE TO CULTURAL DIFFERENCES
Culture-Determining Factors
When using differentiated advertising, one must analyze which cultural factors between different societies make different approaches in advertising necessary, and on which of these factors this differentiation should be based. In addition, it is important to check how the cultural differences, which have to be taken into consideration, can then be transferred in form and content to the advertisements. Variables which play an important role in the cross-cultural consumer research are the values of a culture. Values are considered to be the core of a culture (Luna/Gupta, 2001; Hofstede, 1980; 2001). Cultural values determine the perception, the predispositions and the behavior of the members of a society (Kroeber-Riel/Weinberg, 1999; Markus/Kitayama, 1991).

By analyzing values which are characteristic for many cultures, approaches have developed which try to depict culture in a holistic way, and which have identified different dimensions (e.g. Hofstede, e.g. 1980, 2001; Schwartz, e.g. 1994, 1999, Triandis, e.g. 1989).

Beyond these basic approaches are numerous studies, selecting single specific dimensions (often based upon the above mentioned approaches) for analysis. These with relevance to advertising are e.g. materialism (Belk/Bryce, 1986), utilitarian vs. hedonistic values (Tse et al., 1989), ethnocentrism (Jo, 1989), time orientation (Cho et al., 1999), relationship with nature (Cho et al., 1999), etc.

One dimension, which has been especially suited for analyzing cultural differences in many areas, is the aspect of collectivism/individualism (see for an overview e.g. Kim et al. 1994b; Triandis/Gelfand, 1998). The dimension of individualism/collectivism has
also already been analyzed within the context of international advertising (e.g. Cho et al., 1999; Taylor et al., 1997; Albers-Miller, 1996; Han/Shavitt, 1994; Taylor et al., 1994; Zandpour et al., 1994; McCarty/Hattwick, 1992).

The individualism/collectivism dimension relates to how one values the individual relative to the group (Triandis, 1994; Hofstede, 1980). Cultures are called individualistic, when the interests of the individual are superior to the interests of the group. In these societies it is expected that the individual cares for himself and for his immediate family. The relationships between members of individualistic cultures are less knit than in collectivistic cultures. If personal goals are in conflict with goals of the group, in general the interest of the individual is placed over the interest of the group (Triandis, 2002; Kim et al. 1994a).

Collectivism is a social pattern that consists of individuals closely tied together, who consider themselves as a part of one or several groups (family, tribe, nation) (Triandis, 2002). In collectivistic societies the individual is integrated by birth into strong, closed “we-groups”. These “we-groups” protect the individual, but also require loyalty to the group. If personal and collectivistic goals are in conflict, the goals of the individual are subordinated to those of the collective (Triandis, 2002; Kim et al. 1994a).

The dimension individualism/collectivism describes a cultural aspect which is based on aggregated data of the entire culture. On an individual level, this does not exclude the ability of a person to show (depending on the situation) both individualistic and collectivistic characteristics (Triandis 1994; Sinha/Tripathi 1994; Leung/Bond, 1989). Then, when speaking on a cultural level, a collectivistic culture is one in which collectivistic values predominate despite the occasional existence of individualistic tendencies.

Comparing China and Germany on the individualism/collectivism scale, it is obvious that China can be considered a more collectivistic society (e.g. Triandis; 1994; Gannon, 1994) and Germany a more individualistic society (e.g. Gannon, 1994). Hofstede (1980) ascertained for Hong Kong (25) and Taiwan (17) low levels of individualism; for the rest of the People’s Republic of China he did not supply values. For Germany a much higher level for the individualism aspect was found (67). According to the partial re-analysis of Hofstede’s study by Fernandez et al. (1997), Germany still proves to be an individualistic nation and China a collectivistic nation.

**Research Methods for the Analysis of Cultural Differences in Advertising**

In trying to classify the research work dealing with cultural differences in advertising, two research directions can be identified: (1) content analysis, and (2) studies empirically testing the advertising effectiveness.

1. Most of the research work in this field consists of studies which analyze, by content analysis, whether or not varying cultures actually display differences in advertising. In general these studies are based on cultural dimensions agreed on in literature. These studies check the degree of similarity in form and content of the different advertisements with regard to the a priori selected cultural aspects (e.g. Cho et al. 1999; Cheng/Schweitzer, 1996; Bradley et al., 1994; Biswas et al., 1992).

A content analysis is suited to analyze which forms and contents are used in the advertisements (what is offered to the recipients), and allows, above all, for conclusions about the advertising practice. However, a content analysis does not supply information about the forms and contents recipients would prefer, nor how effective the different advertising campaigns are (see also Taylor et al., 1997).

2. The second form of research consists of studies that empirically analyze the effectiveness of differentiated advertisements in diverse cultures. This kind of study enables the researcher to draw conclusions on consumer preferences for certain kinds of advertisements. Our study can be categorized within this research field.

We measured the advertising effectiveness by the attitude toward the ad which is a primarily affective response to the ad (MacKenzie et al., 1986) and by the ad believability which refers to the perceived truthfulness of the ad and is a more cognitive response (Grewal et al., 1997).

**Literature Review of Empirical Results of the Analysis of Cultural Differences in the Dimension Individualism/Collectivism within Advertising**

The influence of the dimension individualism/collectivism can be found in the form and content of advertisements. Advertising in individualistic countries emphasizes values such as non-conformity, uniqueness, achievement, recognition and benefit for the individual and his/her personal goals. Advertising in collectivistic countries emphasizes values such as the position of the individual in the group, family security, conformity to social norms, responsibility, benefit for the group and goal groups (Cho et al., 1999; Cheng/Schweitzer, 1996, Han/Shavitt, 1994; Mueller, 1987; Belk/Bryce, 1986).

The following presents selected results for the analysis and effectiveness of intercultural advertising regarding the dimension individualism/collectivism. The results of the previous studies dealing with advertising in collectivistic and individualistic countries are ambiguous.

1. **Results of content analyses.** Han (1990) cited by Triandis (1994, p. 42) compared advertising in Korea, which can be considered a collectivistic country, and in the U.S., which can be considered an individualistic country (Hofstede, 1980). He found that Korean advertising utilizes more collectivistic themes and American advertising more individualistic themes.

Cho et al. (1999) analyzed TV commercials in the U.S. and Korea. They found that in American commercials a greater amount of individualistic themes were present (e.g. featuring a person enjoying being unique, addressing benefits to oneself, featuring a person doing something by oneself) than in the Korean commercials. Against the expectations of Cho et al. (1999) however, the Korean commercials did not contain a greater number of collectivistic elements (e.g. a conversation among people in harmony with each other, featuring people working together) than the American commercials. According to Cho et al. (1999) these results indicate, that East Asian advertising is becoming similar in form and content to the Western style of advertising.

Cheng/Schweitzer (1996) found between the U.S. and China similar results as Cho et al. (1999). They analyzed 1,105 Chinese and American TV commercials, which they classified into 32 value groups. In the Chinese commercials they identified modernity, youth, family, technology and tradition as dominating values. In the American commercials they identified above all enjoyment, modernity, individualism, economy and youth. The value collectivism, which was defined by Cheng/Schweitzer (1996) as being an ad in which „individuals are depicted as integral parts of the group” did not occur more often in the content analysis of Chinese advertising than in the U.S. advertising.
2. Studies analyzing the advertising effectiveness. Zhang/Gelb (1996) found, by empirically comparing the effectiveness of advertisements in China and the U.S., that the attitudes toward the ad and the brand were more positive when the advertising message emphasized individualistic values. In China they were both higher, when collectivistic values were used in the advertising.

Han/Shavitt (1994) proved that in the U.S. advertisements emphasizing individualistic values were more persuasive, whereas in Korea ads emphasizing family or in-group benefits were more persuasive.

In a study of Gregory and Munch (1997) in Mexico (a collectivistic country, Hofstede, 1980) it was proven, that advertisements representing norms and roles that are consistent with the collectivistic (family) orientation of the collectivistic country, are more persuasive.

In summary, the results found in individualistic countries are clear: different content analyses displayed that individualistic appeals predominate in advertising, and the studies on advertising effectiveness showed that individualistic appeals are more effective than collectivistic appeals. For subjects of an individualistic culture it can be assumed that advertising which addresses individualistic values is preferred over advertising which emphasizes collectivistic values. Furthermore, it can be assumed that subjects of these cultures rate the individualistic advertising better than subjects of a collectivistic country do. Hence the following hypotheses can be deduced:

- H1: German consumers like individualistic advertising more than collectivistic advertising.
- H2: German consumers like individualistic advertising more than Chinese consumers like it.
- H3: German consumers believe individualistic advertising more than collectivistic advertising.
- H4: German consumers believe individualistic advertising more than Chinese consumers do.

The results for collectivistic societies are less clear than the results for individualistic cultures. Different content analyses revealed that in collectivistic nations a collectivistic appeal does not predominate. Studies on advertising effectiveness, however, usually showed that a collectivistic appeal is more effective than an individualistic appeal. In this aspect advertising practice does not reflect the scientific results on advertising effectiveness.

When analyzing advertising effectiveness, it can be assumed that advertisements in collectivistic countries which depict collectivistic values are more positively evaluated than advertising that shows individualistic values. Furthermore, it can be expected that collectivistic advertising is preferred by subjects from a collectivistic nation as opposed to subjects from an individualistic country. Hence the following hypotheses can be derived:

- H5: Chinese consumers like collectivistic advertising more than individualistic advertising.
- H6: Chinese consumers like collectivistic advertising more than German consumers like it.
- H7: Chinese consumers believe collectivistic advertising more than individualistic advertising.
- H8: Chinese consumers believe collectivistic advertising more than German consumers do.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY
A total of 80 subjects (40 Chinese and 40 Germans) took part in an experiment that was conducted in spring 2002. Of the initial 80, one German and three Chinese subjects had to be taken out of the analysis due to incomplete or contradicting answers, resulting in 76 subjects altogether.

The subjects were students at two different universities of a mid-size town in Germany, studying in a variety of different fields. The Chinese subjects were all born and raised in the People’s Republic of China and came to Germany for the first time in order to study, in which it was ensured that the subjects were socialized in China. Subjects ranged from 19 to 32 years old, at an average of 24 years of age. 55% were male, 45% female. The Chinese subjects had been in Germany for an average of 2.2 years (minimum 0.7 and maximum 8 years). Only five subjects had been in Germany for more than 3 years.

The use of a student sample is often criticized (Wells, 1993; Winer, 1999). However, following Lynch (1999, p.370), a student sample should not be rejected per se. It is rather a question of whether the student sample is atypical on the constructs in question (compared to “real” people).

In our experiment, the results of the manipulation check (see below) using the Cultural Orientation Scale indicate that the students are true representatives of their specific cultures. Consequently, the intended manipulation of the independent variable was successful. However, it has to be kept in mind that there might be an influence of the student sample with regard to the fact that a clothing ad was chosen, as students are said to have a stronger need for peer approval (Sears, 1986, p.521). We do not expect important differences between the student sample and a “real” people sample in other external variables that might influence the experiment (such as advertising experience). Stevenson/Bruner/Kumar (2000) and Bruner/Kumar (2000) recently compared a student sample with a nonstudent sample in their research on web commercials and received mostly consistent results (the differences they found were attributable to web experience, students were more used to the web).

Summarizing, in our experiment, we do not expect the student sample to be atypical compared to a nonstudent sample with regard to the constructs used in the experiment. Therefore, we consider the results to be valid. However, further research should replicate the experiment with a nonstudent sample.

For the experiment, two different advertisements for a particular business suit were created. A print ad for clothing was chosen for several reasons. First of all clothing is considered a culture-bound good, unlike e.g. electronic devices, household appliances, etc. (Holzmueller/Schuh, 1995). It has a role-defining function in society and is often used to communicate specific values and specific lifestyles (Manrai et al., 2001). Therefore, throughout the world, clothing is typically of great importance for the individual. Hence, clothing is an appropriate product area to analyze, in order to determine whether there are differences in advertising effectiveness in Germany and China.

To avoid the influence of a well-known brand name that can have a major influence on the evaluation of print ads (Yin, 1999), the brand name was artificial (“Franco”). A pre-test showed that the brand name was neutral in the clothing trade in Germany as well as in China. The two different print ads had the following design:

(1) Individualistic ad version: In the first advertisement individualistic values predominated. The ad showed one single male person, and communicated the benefit of the suit for the individual. Following Cheng/Schweitzer’s definition (1996, p.29), individualism in advertising means that “the emphasis here is on the self-sufficiency and self-reliance of an individual, or on the individual as being distinct and unlike others”. In the ad, a slogan was integrated that emphasized distinction from others and thereby fostered individualism:
To feel like a king in a suit by Franco. The print ad was created in both a German and a Chinese version, differing only in the translation of the brand name and the slogan. As defined at the beginning of this article, this can be considered a standardized print ad. In order to ensure the validity of the translation, several native Chinese speakers with strong German language abilities were asked to translate the slogan into Chinese. To further validate the correct translation, two other native Chinese speakers then re-translated the slogan into German.

(2) Collectivistic ad version: In the second advertisement, collectivistic values predominated, in which a man wearing a “Franco” suit was shown standing among members of his reference group (2 persons: 1 male, 1 female). Following Cheng/Schweitzer (1996, p.29) “the emphasis here is on the individual in relation to others typically in his/her reference group. Individuals are depicted as integral parts of the group”. As a business suit was the focus product, the reference group consisted of colleagues. The collectivistic character of the ad was emphasized by the slogan “Friends and family are enthusiastic when you wear a suit by Franco”. Family is one of the most important values in China (Redding/Wong, 1993) and is often addressed directly in Chinese advertising (Cheng/ Schweitzer, 1996). Like the first advertisement, a German and a Chinese version were created, differing only by the translation of the brand name and the slogan.

Western models were selected for the ads as one of the main goals of the study was to test whether or not German ads can be used in a standardized manner in China. As there are quite a large number of western models in Asia, it can be assumed that Chinese subjects are used to western models in advertising. A closer look at the overall average evaluation of all ads (collectivistic and individualistic ads) showed that German and Chinese subjects did not show significant differences in the attitude toward the ad (F=1.245; p=.266) and believability (F=.007; p=.935). If western models were not acceptable to Chinese people, the occurrence of a less favorable evaluation among the Chinese subjects would have been expected. Therefore, these arguments justify the selection of western models. Figure 1 shows the first ad (individualistic). Figure 2 shows the second ad (collectivistic).

Manipulation checks: A pre-test validated the manipulation of the two ads. A different sample of n=25 students were asked to decide which of the two ads communicates individualism and which one communicates collectivism. 24 students (96%) classified the two ads as was expected.

To make sure, that the subjects were true representatives of their respective cultures, the German and Chinese subjects were tested that they differed in their individualistic and collectivistic values using the Cultural Orientation Scale (Bierbrauer et al., 1994). Results showed that the Chinese subjects were significantly more collectivistic than the German subjects (F=13.197; p=.001; Note: The 13 normative and the 13 evaluative aspects of the scale were each reduced using Principal Component Analysis. First, the factor means were calculated using the weighted factor loadings of each factor. The resulting factor means were added to the total mean.)

The questionnaire was standardized and the subjects evaluated the two different ads (individualistic vs. collectivistic) in a rotating sequence. The subjects from China were shown the Chinese versions, the subjects from Germany evaluated the German versions.

Studies have shown that consumers usually pay attention to a print ad for only about two seconds on average (Kroeber-Riel/Esch, 2000, p.13). For this reason, the subjects were only allowed to view the ads for two seconds. Between the evaluation periods of the two different ads, the subjects were asked to answer several questions, which lasted on average about 3 to 5 minutes.

The attitude toward the ad was measured with two specific questions (How much did you like the ad?; How pleasant did you find the ad?). Subjects answered on a 5 point rating scale, ranging from 1=“not at all” to 5=“very much”. Exploratory principal component analysis revealed that both items loaded on one factor (criterion: eigenvalue>1). The attitude toward the ad was calculated as the mean of both items, weighted by the factor loadings. Believ-
ability was measured by a single item (How believable do you evaluate the ad?, 5 point rating scale).

RESULTS

In order to test the hypotheses, ANOVAs were conducted. The independent variables were the ad version (individualistic vs. collectivistic) and the subjects’ nationality (Chinese vs. German). Dependent variables were the attitude toward the ad and the believability of the ad.

Table 1 shows the results of the ANOVA containing the factors ad version and nationality and the dependent variable attitude toward the ad.

Table 1 exhibits, that neither the ad version (individualistic vs. collectivistic) nor the nationality (Chinese vs. German) alone had a significant influence on the attitude toward the ads. The interaction effect (ad version x nationality), however, was significant (F=5.297; p=.023). This means that only the ad version and the nationality together had a significant influence on the attitude toward the ads. A closer look at the interaction effect revealed (Table 2) that German subjects liked the individualistic ad significantly more than the collectivistic ad (F=5.947; p=.017). Therefore, H 1 was confirmed by the data. The data also confirmed H 2 as the German subjects liked the individualistic ad significantly more than the Chinese subjects did (F=5.135; p=.026).

However, the results did not support H 5 and H 6. The Chinese subjects did not like the collectivistic ad more than the individualistic ad (F=1.038; p=.312), and they did not like the collectivistic ad more than the Germans did (F=6.909; p=.409).

Table 3 shows the results of the ANOVA analyzing the main effects and the interaction effect of the factors ad version and nationality on the dependent variable believability. Neither the ad version nor the nationality alone influenced the ad believability significantly. However, the interaction effect (print ad version x nationality) was again highly significant (F=11.441; p=.001).

Table 4 reveals that the German subjects rated the believability of the individualistic ad significantly higher than that of the collectivistic ad (F=10.430; p=.002). Therefore, H 3 was supported by the data. Furthermore, the German subjects found the individualistic ad to be significantly more believable than the Chinese subjects did (F=5.681; p=.020), thereby confirming H 4.

The results also showed that the subjects from China did not rate the collectivistic ad significantly higher than the individualistic

<table>
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<th>F-Value</th>
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<td>Nationality</td>
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<td>.266</td>
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<td>Interaction effect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Print ad version x nationality</td>
<td>5.297</td>
<td>.023*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05; **p<.01; two-tailed
ad (F=1.921; p=.170), which consequently resulted in a rejection of H7. However, the Chinese subjects rated the collectivistic ad higher than the Germans did (F=5.773; p=.019). Thus, H8 was confirmed by the data.

**IMPLICATIONS**

The purpose of this study was to get more insight in the adequate use of advertising in Germany and China. It was tested whether it is more effective to localize print ads on the dimension individualism/collectivism, which is considered as a core cultural dimension in inter-cultural research, or whether it is possible to use a standardized approach. It was of special interest as to whether German companies can make use of a standardized communication approach when communicating to both German and Chinese people, especially whether they can use the same ad both in Germany and in China (with only the text being translated).

With regard to the variables attitude toward the ad and believability, Germans prefer the individualistic ad to the collectivistic ad. Consequently, an ad that is used in the individualistic country of Germany should address individualistic values rather than collectivistic values.

With regard to Chinese people, the results are not as clear as they are for German people. No significant differences in the variables attitude toward the ad and believability were found between individualistic ads and collectivistic ads. This implies that, when communicating to a Chinese audience, ads can be used that address either individualistic or collectivistic values. According to the results of this study, it is highly possible to capitalize on individualistic values in China for advertising purposes.

Summarizing: In Germany, one should use an advertisement emphasizing individualistic values. In China, the same ad can be marketed. This means for a German company that a standardization strategy using individualistic values seems to be possible. Table 5 summarizes the results and implications.

**REFERENCES**


**TABLE 2**

Mean Values of the Variable Attitude toward the Ad Dependent on the Factors Print Ad Version and Nationality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Mean Value</th>
<th>F-Value (German vs. Chinese)</th>
<th>Sig.-F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>3.55 (n=78)</td>
<td>1.245</td>
<td>.266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>3.41 (n=74)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivistic</td>
<td>3.36 (n=39)</td>
<td>.690</td>
<td>.409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualistic</td>
<td>3.73 (n=39)</td>
<td>5.947</td>
<td>.017*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-Value (coll. vs. ind.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.-F</td>
<td>.026*</td>
<td>.312</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 5 point rating scale, ranging from 1 (low) to 5 (high)
*p<.05; **p<.01; two-tailed

**TABLE 3**

Results of the ANOVA with the Dependent Variable Believability: Main Effects and Interaction Effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effects</th>
<th>F-Value</th>
<th>Sig. F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main effects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print ad version</td>
<td>2.941</td>
<td>.088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction effect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print ad version x nationality</td>
<td>11.441</td>
<td>.001**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05; **p<.01; two-tailed
TABLE 4
Mean Values of the Variable Believability Dependent on the Factors Print Ad Version and Nationality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Value</th>
<th>F-Value (German vs. Chinese)</th>
<th>Sig.-F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print ad version</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both versions</td>
<td>3.27 (n=78)</td>
<td>3.26 (n=74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivistic</td>
<td>2.90 (n=39)</td>
<td>3.38 (n=37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualistic</td>
<td>3.64 (n=39)</td>
<td>3.14 (n=37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-Value (coll. vs. ind.)</td>
<td>10.430</td>
<td>1.921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.-F</td>
<td>.002**</td>
<td>.170</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 5 point rating scale, ranging from 1 (low) to 5 (high)  
*p<.05; **p<.01; two-tailed

TABLE 5
Summary of the Results on the Effectiveness of Individualistic versus Collectivistic Print Ads for German and Chinese People and Implications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Attitude toward the Ad</th>
<th>Believability</th>
<th>Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany (German consumers)</td>
<td>I&gt;C</td>
<td>I&gt;C</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (Chinese consumers)</td>
<td>I=C</td>
<td>I=C</td>
<td>I or C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: I=individualistic print ad version, C=collectivistic print ad version, >indicates superiority


Zandpour, Fred; Campos, Veronica; Catalano, Joelle; Chang, Cypress; Cho, Young D.; Hoobyar, Renee; Jiang, Shu-Fang; Lin, Man-Chi; Madrid, Stan; Scheideler, Holly; Osborn, Susan T. (1994): Global Reach and Local Touch: Achieving Cultural Fitness in TV Advertising, in: Journal of Advertising Research, September/October, 35-63.

“All Changed, Changed Utterly?” – Kids as Consumers and the Case of Character Toys
David Marshall, University of Edinburgh, UK

ABSTRACT
This paper looks at current perspectives on children as consumers and considers the idea that children are passive, powerless, naïve and easily duped. Reporting on some exploratory research with young children aged between 6 and 8 it suggests that this view may be somewhat outdated, at least in regard to children’s use of character toys.

INTRODUCTION
‘Insides the minds of children is a world of attitudes, knowledge, perceptions and motives that are woven together in ways that we still do not understand very well’ (McNeal 1992).

Today children represent important consumers both in their capacity to influence purchases indirectly and directly as purchasers in their own right. Yet, to date, there has been relatively little research into children as consumers. This paper revisits some of the literature on children as consumers. It reports on a small research study on character toys that suggests why we need to reconsider how we treat these young consumers.

PESTER POWER: CHILDREN AS CONSUMERS
McNeal asserts that ‘for children to be considered consumers, from a marketer’s standpoint, they must have wants, money to spend and there must be enough of them to make marketing worthwhile’ (1992:4). He conceptualises the children in terms of influencers, primary purchasers, and future consumers and estimates that as influencers they can affect up to 80% of toy purchases (McNeal 1992, Villwock 1997). There is limited evidence of young children (under eight) as primary purchasers although it has been estimated that they spend up to one billion pounds of their own money—not all on toys! (see Villwock 1997).

Even when children make purchase decisions with money they control, which McNeal estimates amounts to around $6 billion for the under twelve’s in the US, they do not act independently of peers, parents, siblings or of market influences. Income, spending and the proportion of income spent increases when children start school (McNeal 1992). Most of the attention has focused on what has been termed ‘Pester Power’. Influences include active (suggesting, asking, demanding, whining), passive (parents know what their children like) and collegial (parent consultation) demands (Wyckham and Collins-Dodd 1997). This is prevalent in a number of product categories such as frozen novelties and processed fruit snacks (from McNeal) cereals, fast food and sneakers (Guber and Berry 1993). The Advertising Association has produced a guide on ‘Pester Power’ in a bid to help parents deal with their children’s demands.

Yet research has shown that Pester Power is as common among light/non-television viewers as it is from heavy viewers and more likely to reflect peer influence than television viewing (Buss 1999). One suspects the key lies in what is viewed as opposed to simply level of exposure.

NEWLY EXALTED CONSUMERS
In Miller’s (1998) excellent treatise on shopping in Britain he alludes to the societal shift in emphasis towards children. He refers to the ‘devoted mother’ centred on the idea of agapic love in a post feminist era and the rise of the infant as a substitute for the partner as an object of devotion. This is apparent in the extent to which shopping is centred on the infant and what clothing, food and other items children can (and cannot) consume. Consumption in some ways complements the biological link between the mother and child — ‘as the child develops the mother’s enemy is held to be materialism in the form of anything from television advertisements to indulgent relatives which would seduce the child into independent desires that cannot be fulfilled by the mother. As such materialism itself becomes the instrument by which the child develops its autonomy in the teeth of any narcissistic attempt to retain the infant as the mere continuation of the identity of it’s parents’ (Miller 1998: 124-125).

The main issue here is the extent to which children have been exalted as consumers and integrated both directly and indirectly into the consumption process. Despite this we remain ignorant of their consumption practise and much of the basis of our understanding assumes a somewhat passive and easily exploited group.

PASSIVE CONSUMERS?
Childhood continues to be defined by powerlessness and dependence on adults for direction and guidance (Kline 1993) and children are often treated as passive, naïve and easily duped by television and advertising. Passivity implies consumers lacking assertive skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to function as consumers in the marketplace (Ward 1974). This view prevails when it comes to children and there is a strong protectionist lobby that challenges what, they believe, amounts to manipulation of children as consumers. This is not without good basis and Tomkins (2002) counters the two main arguments put forward by industry.

On the first, that children can distinguish between advertising and content, he notes it does not follow that advertising is ineffective in persuading children, or their parents, to part with their cash. One assumes that is why companies continue to target children. On the second, that advertising revenue provides funding for television programming, he suggests this is not a sufficiently good reason to condone it. Moreover he argues that children need to be protected from advertising in the same way that they need to be protected against exposure to tobacco, hard liquor and sex, all of which are legally available (although not to them!). Concerns over the vulnerability of children to commercial manipulation reflects the significant growth in marketing to children through a wide variety of communication media that now extends far beyond television and comics to include communication via licensing, the cinema, internet, national curriculum schools packages, product placements, and van livery (Watts 1999, McNeal 1992, Kline 1993).

Much has been made of the cognitive and motor development in young consumers, and while Piaget’s (1951) theory has been subject to considerable criticism, it continues to feature in the debate about children as consumers. The four stages of cognitive development are sensorimotor (0-2 years), pre-operational (3-7) where children cannot distinguish between fantasy and reality, concrete operational (8-11) when the ability to distinguish between advertising and programming intent, and formal-operational (11-16) when they develop comprehension skills. The development depends on the child’s level of intelligence, culture and class but in the later stages children develop the ability to comprehend, conceptualise and think abstractly. Emergent theories outline the developmental stages and discuss the implications for marketing to children (Roedder-John 1999). Roedder-John proposes three stages of information processing namely limited, cued and strategic processors based on the child’s ability to both store and retrieve information. Much of this work centres on the child’s ability to
recognise persuasive intent and develop critical facilities to deal with advertising yet there is no exploration of how children view advertising and what they see as the rationale for this promotional activity (Lawlor and Prothero 2002).

The debate about children has focused on their engagement with marketing communications, and ability to understand and comprehend the commercial messages (Preston 2000, Young 2000, Bergler 1999). Lawlor and Prothero (2002), in their literature review, identify the ability to distinguish between advertising and programming and the child’s facility for comprehending advertising as the main focus of research in this area. Research on how children use advertising has shown that they do not simply absorb messages with naïve credulity but find advertisements entertaining, recognising the link between the product and the entertainment (Cullingford 1984). It seems that children will not like something just because they see it on television. They appear to use advertising as a source of product information, although research among 6-12 year olds (the core market for character toys is 5-9) showed that they often needed to be prompted to recall the information (Roedder-John 1999, 1981, Piaget 1951). Children are quick to reject adverts that do not work for them in many cases actually filtering out complete ads (Buss 1999). A new perspective is emerging of children as active and discriminating, if somewhat ‘fickle’ consumers (Seiter 1993) with a degree of advertising ‘literacy’ (Palmer 1986).

Yet outside of this we know relatively little about the world of the child as a consumer, or at least a user of consumption goods. The investigation seems to stop at the point of sale. Irrespective of the role of advertising what do children make of the toys they buy, or request, or get given? How do they use these toys in their play, and in the case of character toys based on comic, or cartoon, or film characters how are the designated roles (re) created in play? It is the relationship between the commercial activity, advertising and programming, and play that is perhaps most interesting from a consumption perspective. The meanings ascribed to toys in play are dependent on more than simply advertising. It is what kids do with toys that are perhaps of most interest as this is where the consumption value lies, and this determines the nature of their engagement. Ultimately it is the actual experience with the toys that determines the consumption experience (and, whether that Christmas gift becomes abandoned after the festive excitement has died down?)

This paper offers an alternative perspective on children as consumers and one, hopefully, that is more respectful of their capabilities in the consumption arena and more reverent with regard to their role as consumers.

**LITTLE USERS**

Arguably, we know very little about children as consumers, or at least what we know alludes to this notion of children as passive, inactive, powerless assigned to the user category dependent on others to buy and purchase on their behalf (Seth 2002). Of course this assumes a lack of economic independence, limited influence over the decision process and most importantly an inability to fully comprehend the nature of the task. Yet, how we regard children in their capacity as consumers depends to some degree on their opportunity for consumption engagement. This idea of children as users presumes dependence on others and as noted access to resources change as children get older. One has to question who is sanctioning and supporting the growth in consumption in this sector. Perhaps we, as parents, guardians, grandparents are all caught up in this desire to consume, bitten by the lure of the material and reflecting and generating similar desires in our off spring. A recent British television documentary on kids revealed an interesting insight into the relationship between consumption practises of children, and their parents! Children (perhaps like pets—another main group of users) seem to reflect their parents (or owners) character. The rise in retro marketing (Brown 2001) is fuelled by parental nostalgia, or missed opportunities, for Barbie dolls, Action Man figures, The Wombles, Bill and Ben, and other characters from our past. How many fathers will buy Scalextrix for their children to relive their own misspent youth? One of the great weaknesses in the ‘children are vulnerable’ argument is the failure to recognise that kids may be adept consumers particularly with new non-retro products. The growth in computer games and electronic toys reveal a new generation who are more skilled at using these and much more knowledgeable than their parents.

**CONSUMING AND LEARNING**

Piaget (1951) emphasised the importance of symbolic play in cognitive development and much of the concern surrounding toys relates to question of whether they change the balance between ‘assimilation’, translated as creative discovery, and ‘imitation’ which Piaget saw as an important aspect of learning. The question is whether television restricts or limits the play ‘script’. Sutton-Smith (1981) believes that in the end it is the children who have ‘agency’ and control the toys. Carlson-Page and Levin (1987) found little evidence of assimilation and much evidence of imitation in their research into war-toys. This signals a potential problem for Kline (1993) who found over half of the children, in his study of over two hundred 6-8 year olds, used television characters or script structures in their play. Although in the main these characters were being incorporated into general play rather than being simply reproduced. Erickson (1950) claims that children use toys for creative ritualisation, victorious self-images, and killing off the weak guys. These are precisely the roles that many of the licensed character toys are used for according to Seiter (1993). She argues that cartoon based toys actually encourage children to make up stories and encourage co-operative play, more so than abstract toys. Seiter draws on research by Greenfield et. al. (1990) and James and McCain (1982) to refute the claim that character toys stifle creativity and claims that ‘commercial television programmes—toy-based or not—enhance creative ability in young children, and the fact that they do so helps explain the popularity with children of toys based on cartoon characters’ (Seiter 1993: 190).

In terms of their cognitive development children 2-7 years of age have knowledge about products but not how to use that knowledge, instead they focus on physical aspects one at a time and display inconsistent preferences (Bahn 1986). Children between the ages of 6-12 children, when prompted, employ storage and retrieval strategies, not found in younger children (Roedder-John 1981). It is children under seven years of age that are considered to be most vulnerable to advertising but as Kline (1993) found most of the 6-8 year olds in his study could clearly distinguish between reality and fantasy. Cognitive skills are believed to be a function of experience and interest and research has shown that matching brands to product categories, as a consequence of observing and learning directly from parents, siblings and peers. Van Auken and Lonial (1985) examining children’s beliefs in characters concluded that confusion between reality/non-reality was only found in children under five and suggested that children ‘may not be as easily exploitable as detractors of children’s advertising would have the discipline believe’. Moreover, children do not simply absorb messages with naïve credulity (Cullingford 1984).

Seiter (1993) sees toys as part of popular consumer culture and is interested in their role in social interaction. She prefers to see
children as active and discriminating, if somewhat ‘fickle’, consumers who can distinguish between television programmes and advertising. They understand the selling intent and techniques of advertising. She takes a much less deterministic view of the role of television and rather than focus on what children do not know about advertising she suggests that we examine what they do know. Moreover in recognising the importance of social context and the impact of peers and parents on children’s desires, she puts forward a convincing argument against the negative impact of television drawing on Palmer’s (1986) observational study on how kids interact with television. Palmer describes children as a ‘lively’ audience ‘because it was found that in their own talking and playing about the set, and in their viewing behaviour, children are not passive respondents. Rather, they were engaged in the human task of giving their own lives structure and meaning, using whatever was at hand to do so, within the bounds of their physical and social development. ‘Lively’ refers to children’s conscious choice of favourite programs and to their activities in front of the TV set. Both of these demonstrate a relationship with television based on the ability to make decisions about the salience of programs and the competing appeal of other activities’ (Palmer 1986: 139)

METHODS

This study used qualitative focus groups (Gunter and Furnham 1998) with children aged six to eight in order to understand the role of character toys in their consumption practices. This was an attempt to look at how children use and relate to character toys, what influences their choice and whether they are being duped (Marshall and Ffelan 1999). A qualitative approach was adopted due to the exploratory nature of the research and the anticipated difficulties of administering standard questionnaires to this age group where reading, comprehension and writing skills are not fully developed (Piaget 1957). A total of twelve groups were carried out in three schools in Edinburgh, Scotland at the beginning of 1997 after requesting permission from the school head, individual teachers and the children’s parents. Given the exploratory nature of the work a convenience sample was considered appropriate although it is not possible to extrapolate these findings to a broader population beyond this sample of children. The main objective was to try to understand if character toys featured in their consumption and how these children related to character toys. Focus groups were conducted on the school premises and all children in the appointed class were invited to participate. Final selection required parental approval and was made with assistance from the teachers. In order to ensure some homogeneity in the groups, and in recognition of age and gender differences (Guber and Berry 1993), separate groups were conducted for boys and girls and for six, seven and eight year olds. These comprised eight children, and groups lasted approximately 40 minutes, although in one case the discussion ran for up to one and a half-hours. Groups included a number of projective techniques such as a collage board, a picture drawing exercise, role-play game and a secret ballot. These projective techniques were designed to access information that is not readily accessible with standard question and answer methods. (Schlackman 1989, Sampson 1986, Erreaut 2002). Finally each child was asked to complete a simple questionnaire that addressed their exposure to, liking and ownership of characters from a variety of cartoons and films. The discussion guide was designed to ensure that the each focus group followed a similar structure.

FINDING VOICE: THE ROLE OF CHARACTER TOYS

The discussion covered an array of toys and games that the children had received at Christmas. The gender differences were apparent. Boys discussed bicycles, computer games, and football gear while the girls talked about books, perfume sets and dolls. Moreover, character toys such as Buzz Lightyear, Street Sharks and Action man were firm favourites among the boys while girls talked about Barbie, My little Pony and Doodle Bear. The collage board prompted discussion of various character toys and most children recognised the characters from television programmes or movies they had seen. Older children, eight years and above, were more discriminating in terms of what they watched. One child did not have a television at home and showed little interest in the collage material. Besides television programmes most children claimed to have seen characters in movies at the cinema, or on home video, in catalogues or toyshops. This link between exposure to media and character recognition is interesting. The children had clearly formed ideas about certain characters based on exposure to programmes and their character knowledge was impressive but, as suggested earlier, they displayed a limited capacity for storage and retrieval of information unless prompted. Talking about favourite characters elicited a response from other children who had the same toys. Older children clearly distinguished between the characters they saw on television and toys or merchandise on sale in the shops. Simply seeing a character on television was insufficient to guarantee a sale as one eight-year boy commented ‘on TV they (character toys) look all good and when they’re off TV they fall apart’. These boys were not fooled by the promotion but had clear ideas about marketing ‘gimmicks’. Irrespective of whether they truly understand this concept or are simply repeating what they have been told, it is sufficient to warrant some caution on their part.

The question of whether children can distinguish between fantasy and reality is best illustrated in the finding that the children found it highly amusing that Buzz Lightyear a main character in the Disney movie ‘Toy Story’ blatantly failed to acknowledge that he was a toy for most of the movie. While they suspend their own beliefs, that toys cannot come to life, to enjoy the movie they find it amusing that the character could not distinguish between fantasy—he is The (real) Buzz Lightyear, ‘defender of the universe’ and reality—he is just another mass produced toy. Children could clearly discriminate between what they saw on the screen (or in the advertising) and the reality represented by the actual toys. ‘Buzz can’t really fly’ reflects both an understanding of the characters failure to acknowledge his own wherewithal and the limitations of the toys. Moreover, watching the characters on television programmes or on film did not guarantee that children would purchase or request the toys nor did owning the toy predispose the children to the television programmes or advertising. One seven year old has seen advertising for Cabbage Patch Dolls but was disappointed when she saw them in the store, describing them as ‘hideous’. In another case a young girl expressed her dislike for Barbie advertising despite owning the product.

The focus groups revealed that kids were both well informed and knowledgeable when it came to talking about their toys. Character toys played an important role in their consumption activities, by virtue of their level of awareness, knowledge, allegiance to certain character toys and ownership. Many of the children took pride in their collection of character toys, as one eight year old commented ‘Street sharks! I’ve got them all apart from Moby and I like them because they’re cool’. Although that allegiance may be somewhat short lived reflecting the fickle nature of these young consumers. The secret ballot of favourite cartoon characters reflected this, despite the lack of secrecy due to children shouting out their favourite characters. One group of boys felt that Power Rangers were no longer ‘cool’ . Notwithstanding this, children talked enthusiastically about character toys and were clearly engaged in all aspects of the character merchandising from
ingly, many of the girls felt that there were fewer characters directed not passive consumers of these characters and their plots. Interest-
that their adaptations allow for creativity and prove that children are simply reproduce existing characters however, it could be argued
respect it could be argued that this is stifling creativity as children creations are clearly influenced by existing characters. In one
is innate or reflects social conditioning is unclear but many of the while the boys opted for monsters, and
ent as
communicate as humans (Furbie!). Their creations were as differ-
if killed could be brought back to life, or dolls that could act and
toy spider that had to compete a life threatening assault course and
constraint by these reference characters and the roles attributed to
concern over young children being manipulated by the media and advertisers, this exploratory research suggests that these children make a clear distinction between the fantasy of the screen and the adventures and exploits in their own play. Rather than limiting creative imagination new meanings emerge, roles are re-negotiated, and scripts re-written. These children de-construct and re-construct the characters in play. Moreover, what is deemed ‘cool’ appears to have more to do with peer pressure. It is appealing to suggest that this is being driven by advertising and marketing but it may be that what happens in the playground, or at home is much more influential. It would appear from the existing data and this work that kids are faddish and their attention span short when it comes to toys. What they latch onto is the ‘flavour of the month’ in a sort of spurious loyalty which alters according to what happens to be latest trend. Either way these children have a clearly formed set of opinions about what they like. In this respect they are not simply a soft target for marketing companies but discerning young consumers.

Unfortunately, we know relatively little about the process by which they come to establish these preferences and the role of marketing in this process. This research suggests that peer influence may hold the key as kids socialise in the playground, in the classroom and at home. Stories are shared, claims are made and the latest fads become a must. The most recent fad in Scotland was for ‘Beyblades’, a Japanese battling spinning top based on a British cartoon shown on cable television. Sales soared and children queued or waited for new shipments with 1000 units selling out in less than 48hours. This all happened without any significant mar-
eting push, and the products have sold well in Japan and America before hitting the UK (SOS 2002). Yeats might not have been amazed by the spinning top, but shocked at the consumption practices of today’s children and the sheer abundance of materialism. As Seiter (1993) notes the ‘A distinctive, peer orientated consumer culture now intervenes in the relationship of parents and children, and that intervention begins as early as two years of age’ (1993: 193). Much of the conflict is between mass-market licensed toys and, what have been identified as ‘educational’ toys. The commodification often offends in its treatment of children as consumers, and economic targets, and in the attempt to by-pass parental approval. What we need to look at, however, is consump-
tion through the eyes of these children, and while continuing to protect them from the ‘perils’ of the market place, give them more respect as consumers and stop patronising them. This is equally offensive.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sarah Fielan worked on this project as an undergraduate student and undertook the focus groups. She has pursued her interest with Lego, 4-Kids Entertainment and more recently with Kellogg’s. Thanks to two anonymous reviewers for helpful com-
ments on the initial submission.

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425
ABSTRACT
The paper presents research on Danish children’s use of the Internet. Data from 2000 to 2002 shows that the level of Internet use is stable but high compared to other European countries. Today, nearly all children have access to a computer at home. Games are the most popular activity to use the computer for (more boys than girls enjoy this activity) followed by Internet surfing. Girls seem to be more interested in searching for information in books and printed material than on the Internet. Approximately 40% are active on the Internet and the most popular activity is surfing for fun, sending e-mails, gathering information for schoolwork and visiting chat rooms.

INTRODUCTION
This paper will present findings related to Danish children’s use of the Internet. The focus will be on where they use the Internet, for what purpose, how much time they spend daily and gender differences. Furthermore, we will be focusing on the generation perspective. The background for the project is the fact that children increasingly seem to use the Internet for different purposes such as e-mails, chat, exploration, schoolwork as well as buying services and products.

The paper will present European and Danish findings. Although they are not obviously comparable, hopefully these findings will provide an outline of the state of art regarding research on children and the Internet. The Danish results are based on qualitative and quantitative data from 1998-2002 (Christensen & Tufte 2001; Drotter 2001; Hansen et al. 2002).

WHAT IS THE INTERNET?
The Internet is a global high-speed network consisting of a set of network computers, which is simply a vast number of interlinked computer networks around the world. During the last decade, an explosion of the Internet has occurred all over the world. As a matter of fact, the Internet has been available since the early 1960s when it was developed for military purposes. However, it was not until the 1990s when a new generation of software—the World Wide Web (WWW) browsers—was developed that the Internet became widespread. The Internet offers an enormous amount of information, which according to the American researchers Victor C. Strasburger and Barbara J. Wilson (2002) could be described as follows:

- The World Wide Web, which combines visuals/sound/text together in a manner that allows linkages across many sites that are related to a particular topic. These topics obviously can be those related to sex, violence, drugs, or any other content for which we have concerns. (Strasburger & Wilson 2002)

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH
The media play an important role in the daily life of children all over the world, although there are differences depending on where the children live. The Internet is the newest member of the global family of media technology. Compared to other media, the Internet is highly interactive. Unlike traditional media, the Internet allows children and adolescents access to different kinds of content. A specific characteristic is that this can be done in privacy, without the knowledge of the child’s parents. In the U.S., access to and use of the Internet is growing rapidly. A 1999 survey of teenagers’ use of the Internet reveals that 82% use the Internet, and that 62% confirmed that their parents know little or nothing about the websites they visit (Strasburger & Wilson 2002).

They also indicated that when making decisions the most influential sources of information are the media, which means that the children receive far more information from the media than from their parents and schools. This phenomenon has been called “the parallel school of media” and relates to the fact that children and adolescents spend several hours daily consuming media culture, through which they learn a lot of things that are not taught in school (Tufte 1995).

Not surprisingly, according to Sonia Livingstone, most research regarding children and the Internet has been carried out in North America: “Broadly speaking, North American research—constituting the majority of empirical studies—is particularly strong on quantitative research, conducting rather few qualitative projects … By contrast, the smaller body of European research tends to be spread evenly across qualitative and quantitative approaches” (Livingstone 2003). In the following, we shall present some European findings.

In Germany, not much research on children’s use of the Internet has appeared so far. However, in 1998 a survey was carried out showing that less than 1% of all children aged 6-13 used the Internet. Another survey, carried out in 1997 with children and young people between the age of 12 and 17, showed that the largest section of child and adolescent users were aged 14-16. However, they did not use it frequently—only half of the “on-liners” were regularly on the Internet. It was found that children mostly use the Internet for electronic messages (e-mails), listening to sound and video files, for chatting and playing on the Net (Gehle 1999). Consequently, in conclusion of German children’s use of the Internet at that time—in 1998 the following could be stated: “Online media such as the Internet harbour tremendous opportunities and can enrich children’s everyday media use. Does this mean serious competition for the classical media such as television, radio and video games? The role that the Internet plays now and will play in the future in the kids’ media programme is still the subject of considerable speculation in Germany.” (Gehle 1999)

A French study (Bevort & Bréda 2001) showed that only 28% of young people use the Internet and that 30% of them have only
used it once or twice. The study compared the use at home and in
school. It turned out that at home the Internet is used for entertainment
purposes, whereas in school it is mainly used for schoolwork. The report distinguished between two groups of users:

- Light users or those who do not use the Internet at all
  (mainly below the age of 15 years—and female)
- Heavy users between 15-17 years—and male.

(Bevort & Brèda 2001)

A recent comparative study including 12 European countries (Livingstone & Bovill 2001) showed that there are rather large differences between the countries of Europe. Countries such as Spain, Italy and France have a strong focus on national television and relatively low figures in new media technologies (including computer and Internet access). The second group is made up of Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, and Israel, all of which provide a multi-channel environment, but use new technologies moderately. The United Kingdom is treated as a group on its own because it, contrary to the pattern observed elsewhere, combines a heavy orientation toward television with rather high figures for new
technologies. The fourth group consists of the Nordic countries and the Netherlands, all of which are seen as pioneers in new media technologies. (Livingstone & Bovill 2001)

Since this paper focuses mainly on Danish children’s use of the Internet, we will present some recent Danish findings. A number of studies have shown that there is a great deal of media hardware in children’s rooms, which is also confirmed by the findings of the Danish researcher Kirsten Drotter, who was the Danish partner in the above mentioned comparative European study. Her survey covers 6-16 year-olds.

60% of Danish children have a TV in their room, and although they also use the computer, television is still the most used medium scoring 2 1/2 hour per day on average. They listen to music 87 minutes per day, play computer games for 59 minutes and spend 16 minutes on the Internet. Drotter provides some interesting perspectives on the relationship between access to and use of media. Regarding traditional media, there is a rather high level of accordance between for instance access to and use of TV (98% have access to TV and 99% use it). The same goes for CD, video and telephone, whereas the situation is different in relation to the Internet. 25% have access to the Internet at home, and 45% use it. This means that they also use it in other locations. (Drotter 2001). Similar trends can be observed from the five-year study regarding families’ use of the media, which was completed in 2002. It is a media ethnographic study, following 12 families (through observations, interviews). The study shows that a “normal” Danish family often has 3-4 TV-sets, 2-3 VCR’s, 2-3 computers etc. During the four-year period, new acquisitions were playstation, mobile phone, and an upgrade of the access to the Internet (Christensen & Tufte 2001). Families with children are to a greater extent than other families “early adaptors” of the Internet. Today (March 2003), 80% of Danish households with children have access to the Internet (Zinkernagel, 2003)

Gender differences

That there are gender differences in the use of media is well known to many people; this fact is emphasized by Drotter, who found that the gender difference in media use is striking and goes beyond age and social background. This is especially true for computer games as 9-16 year old boys spend 4 times as long on the games as the girls. The girls, on the other hand, use the computers for schoolwork more than the boys. Girls read more books than boys, and in relation to the Internet 52% of the boys and 49% of the girls use the Internet, i.e. almost equal percentages, but boys and girls use it for different purposes. The girls mostly use the Internet for surfing, chat and e-mail, whereas the boys use it for seeking information, production of websites and downloading of software. Similar trends can be observed in a survey made by the Swedish media researcher Cecilia von Feilitzen of 15-24 year-olds’ use of the Internet: “Both boys and girls were of the opinion that television was the most important medium for entertainment/pleasure. As to knowledge and information, the boys gave priority to the Internet in the first place and television in the second. The girls chose books first and television second.” (Feilitzen 2002)

A generation gap?

As stated above, the children often have more confidence in learning through media than through school and their parents (Christensen & Tufte 2001). The American media researcher, Don Tapscott (1998), has called the new generation “The Net Generation”. The term refers to the generation “who, in 1999, will be between the ages of two and twenty-one, not just those who are active on the Internet” (Tapscott 1998). Characteristic for their media use is that they are active and competent persons who make choices—which make them attractive as consumers. This point of view may be true and is very much in accordance with theories about today’s competent child. Parents often list education as their main reason for buying a computer and having Internet access at home, and the different family members use it in different ways:

Interviewer: " Do you think that it is a generation problem in most families that they [children] can do so much (as to media)?”

Dad: “You should not look at it as a problem before it turns into one. I don’t use it for the same purpose as the children and I guess most adults use it today. By now, I think that there are only a few adults who cannot use it moderately”

Interviewer: “What we have come upon is the fact that adults are more occupied with all the things the children can do than what they can do themselves”

Dad: "I am envious of them for the many things they can do faster than I can”…

(Conversation with a dad who has three sons aged 8-16)

One of Tapscott’s points is also that the Net Generation is a media literate generation. Maybe this is not absolutely true. They are familiar with the technology, they are able to help the teachers in the classroom with the computer and the parents at home programming the video, but they are not media literate when it comes to analysing the different aspects of the new media landscape, and they do not know much about media history, media economy etc. It seems as though parents and teachers sometimes overestimate the children’s insight into the new media.

Grown-ups are impressed because the children are surfing and playing on the Internet, but they are often in need of guidance in relation to finding relevant information. What they get are often fragmented pieces of random information. The role of the grown-up, whether a teacher or a parent, is to guide and explain. So, on the technical side, we have a generation gap, where the Net generation is competent, but from a cultural and learning point of view, the grown-ups are the competent ones. Bridging the two gaps should be made a goal in relation to the Internet; an aspect that ought to be focused on in relation to media literacy in schools.

CONCERNS ABOUT THE INTERNET

As demonstrated, the Internet is increasing in popularity. However, there are a few concerns related to its use that need to be addressed. One of the concerns is the lack of parent control. On the
one hand, many parents are impressed by all the information the children can receive. On the other hand, they are worried about access to adult sites and violence on the Internet.

"I am not allowed to use my dad’s computer too much. They are afraid that I might chat with some sort of strange person. Even when I tell them that I don’t, they don’t believe me” (Interview with a 12 year-old girl)

Another concern is the commercialisation of the Internet. There are many child-oriented sites with advertisements, and it can often be difficult to distinguish between information and advertisements. The children’s websites are often blurred. As many studies have shown, the younger the children are, the more difficult it is for them to distinguish between information and advertising, and the more they are influenced.

As an example of a relevant study in relation to this, we can mention a Norwegian survey, which was conducted in 2000 in order to gain insight into 12-year-olds’ knowledge and understanding of different kinds of commercials on the Internet. The motivation for the project was that SIFO (The National Institute for Consumer Research in Norway) saw the Internet as a technology opening up for more marketing—also to children. “Visual presentation, entertainment and information are examples of important factors in developing Internet commercials. Supposedly, such elements will make it more difficult, especially for children, to recognise the commercial message and the commercial sender” (Kjørstad 2000). The survey is a study of 12 year-old-children’s understanding of different forms of advertising on the Internet, based on qualitative interviews.

The result of the study showed that, generally, children have a positive attitude to commercial advertising on the Internet and think that they recognise most types of commercials that appear there. However, there are three types of Internet commercials that seem to be difficult for the children to recognise. These are sponsorships, newsletters and chat-commercials. Regarding chat-commercials, for instance, they do not think it is acceptable to interrupt what they consider to be a private conversation. “The children understand the purpose of this kind of marketing, but they will probably have problems recognising it because of the fact that it is exposed in a medium in which they do not expect to find commercials. Most children are very negative towards this kind of marketing” (Kjørstad 2000).

| TABLE 1 |
| Locations where the 8-12 year-olds use the computer |
|          | 2000  | 2001  | 2002  |
| At home  | 89.2  | 89.0  | 91.4  |
| In school| 73.9  | 73.4  | 70.1  |
| With friends | 48.4  | 51.4  | 43.6  |
| The library | 21.4  | 19.0  | 18.1  |
| Youth clubs | 10.1  | 10.5  | 9.7   |

Source: Gallup/TNS’ annual children/youth media index 2000-2002

DANISH CHILDREN’S USE OF THE INTERNET

The findings that are presented relate to the project “Danish Children as Consumers”. The data is from Gallup Denmark/Taylor Nelson Sofres annual children/youth media index 2000-2002. The data collected consisted of 2830 interviews carried out among 5-18 year-olds in 2000, but in this paper we have chosen to focus only on the 8-12 year-olds.

In 2002, 94.5% of the 8-12 year-olds had a computer at home. To relate the use of the Internet to other forms of use, it is interesting to look at where and for what purpose the children use the computer.

As Table 1 shows, the most popular place to use the computer for the 8-12 year-olds is at home. 91.4% used the computer at home in 2002. In school is the second most popular place to use the computer, with 70.1% in 2002. The third most popular place is with friends (43.6%), followed by the library (18.1%) and finally youth clubs (9.7%). It is interesting that the ranking of favourite location has not changed from 2000-2002. At home is still the most popular place to use the computer. It is also interesting that over the three-year period the percentages of 8-12 year-olds who use the computer in different locations have more or less remained at the same level.

The Internet is increasingly being used by the children in school. However, it seems that some of the children do not trust all the information they receive and thus prefer books. In this respect, as already mentioned, there is a gender difference; girls are more oriented towards books, whereas boys often prefer the Internet.

"...when we had to prepare a project, we were told that we shouldn’t trust the Internet 100%. We were also to contact people that knew something about it... I have found a lot of information, including some that was false. I really don’t trust the Internet. In my e-mail I get newsletters where I can win a trip or get a trip for a small amount of money—I don’t trust that. I feel like it is some kind of scam.”

Interviewer: “Don’t you think it is problematic when you prepare projects to go on the Internet to get information?”

Girl: “It is, but I almost never do, only if I need some specific information. Otherwise I find some people and interview them or get books about it.”

Interviewer: “Have you bought anything over the Internet?”

Girl: “No, I am too afraid”.

(Interview with 12-year old girl)

In the following, we will present some more information about what the 8-12 year-olds use the computer for.
They primarily use the computer for games. 91.1% mentioned this in the survey. There is a majority of boys using the computer for games. In 2002, 92.8% of the boys used the computer for games, but only 89.3% of the girls. This gap of 3.5% between the boys and girls has been reduced over the last three years. In 2000, the gap was at 6.1% and in 2001 at 6.6%. This could imply that girls’ interests in games are increasing. It is not possible to determine exactly which games have caused this added interest. The Internet is the second most used activity on the computer. 43.8% of 8-12 year-olds used the Internet in 2002. However, the computer is also used for schoolwork (37.7%) and for play-and-learning programmes (35.6%). Here, it is also interesting to note that the level of 8-12 year-olds using the computer for different activities is steady. Only schoolwork seems to have gradually decreased from 2000 till 2002. From 41.8% in 2002 to 40.0% in 2001 and 37.7% in 2002.

What does the data show about their use of the Internet? – What has highest priority? First and foremost, they surf for fun – 37.6% in 2000, unfortunately we are not able to tell from the data what kind of surfing they do. Secondly, they send e-mails (27.2% in 2000), and thirdly they use the Internet to search for information for schoolwork (16.0% in 2000). As a fourth point, 13.3% in 2000 participated in chat rooms. Once again, we cannot tell which chat-rooms they visit.

How do they find the websites?
Interestingly, mostly friends tell them about the different sites they find interesting (28.4% in 2000). Secondly, 23.1% of the respondents indicated that they explore the Internet themselves, 12.3% indicated that they hear about the websites “from other sources”, 11.4% reported they learn about sites from commercials and finally 8.3% stated they got their information from siblings.

The development from 2000-2002 shows

- a steady level, but high percentage of children using the Internet
- gender differences in the use of the Internet (especially in relation to chat and games)
- downloading from the Internet is increasing.

The 8-12 year-olds’ downloads of various things from the Internet are increasing, but only among a minority of the total users. For example, on a scale from daily or almost daily to 1-5 times half-yearly, approximately 10% downloaded music from the Internet in 2002, approx. 13% programmes/files, approx. 17% pictures and approx. 7% wallpaper/screensavers. There is a legal aspect to the downloading of files and music, which both children and adolescents are aware of, but do not want to discuss:

Interviewer: “You download from the Net–can you do it with the computer you have down there?”
Boy: “Yes–it is very slow, so I do it mostly at one of my friend’s places”
Interviewer: “How long does it take to download?”
Boy: “It depends on the Internet connection”
Interviewer: “What about this?”
Boy: “I don’t know, maybe 20 minutes or so”
Interviewer: “It really depends on how big the computer is?”
Boy: “And it also depends on where you download to. For example if it is another person that has it on his computer”
Interviewer: “But is that legal?”
Boy: “Some are ok…..”

(Interview with 15-year old boy)

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES
When comparing the Danish survey with other surveys from different countries, there seems to be a few differences as well as similarities. Denmark has a rather high level of Internet access compared to some of the other European countries. This means that Danish children and adolescents are more familiar with the computer and the Internet to a higher extent than peers in some other countries. However, their use of the Internet is very similar to findings from other studies. They use the Internet to surf for fun, e-mails, searching for information for schoolwork and participating in chat rooms. Few, but an increasing number, are also downloading various things from the Internet.

Another aspect, which is very much in accordance with other surveys, is the gender differences. Boys are more oriented towards games than girls, and girls seem to be more interested in seeking information in books and printed material than consulting the Internet. However, some of this may change in the future, depending on the development of games for girls, which seems to be the object of some attention.

In conclusion, we have gained some knowledge about children’s use of the Internet. As already mentioned, there are differences among different countries depending on, for instance, the degree of penetration of the Internet in the particular country. While it is a common trend that children and adolescents are “early adopters” of the Internet (Rogers 1995). Most of the research carried out so far has been focused on the time spent on the Internet, on the behaviour of the children and their preferences in relation to the use of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Computer activities the 8-12 year-olds use the computer for</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>91.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School work</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play and learning programmes</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gallup/TNS’ annual children/youth media index 2000-2002
Internet. What is needed, however, are longitudinal and qualitative studies that would provide a deeper insight into the change in behaviour and preferences in relation to children’s use of new technology. Research into content such as, for instance, content analyses of the websites preferred by the children would also be beneficial. Such studies might provide a more realistic picture of the opportunities and dangers that are often associated with the use of the Internet.

Finally, a few words about the role of the educational system in relation to children and young people’s use of the Internet. As previously stated, there is a generation gap at play in relation to knowledge of the Internet. How is it possible to develop educational packages and teaching in relation to this new phenomenon when the pupils know more than the teachers?

In an attempt to solve this problem and develop teaching material for the Internet, the European Commission has made funds available for projects such as Educaunet and SAFT (Safety and Awareness for Tweens). Educaunet is a critical education programme for young people. It aims at helping children and adolescents to develop an autonomous, responsible attitude in their use of the Internet. The SAFT project’s objective is to raise awareness for the potential of the Internet and its dangers to young people and kids. The focus is on how to teach children and teenagers to be responsible Internet users and to diminish risky behaviour in these groups. There is no doubt that a new concept of what media literacy ought to be in the future is very important due to the rapidly changing media technology and media content. The children need tools to qualify them to navigate in the new exiting media landscape.

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Communication and Marketing in a Mobilized World: Diary Research on “Generation Txt”

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ABSTRACT
These few words attempt to understand why young people send each other text messages. The paper presents a textual analysis of the function, form and flow of text traffic produced and consumed by 105 young people. Over a weeklong period they kept qualitative diaries, dubbed ‘text-books’, detailing their incoming and outgoing tally of texts. It is proposed that the themes of efficiency, discretion, crudity, frankness, and novelty collectively conspire to make texting an attractive proposition to young people. The paper concludes by sounding a note of caution to marketers eager to embrace the medium of SMS marketing.

INBOX

Widespread mobile idolatry has spawned an associated obsession: text messaging. From the unfortunate pedestrians who met their end to the stranded adventurers who lives were saved (Ahmed 2002); from students who cheat in exams to employers who dismiss employees (Clark 2001); from a weapon of mass seduction (Benson 2000) to a new health threat–text message injury (Powell 2002)–from new opportunities for marketers to new tools for consumers (Doyle 2001), text messages are beeping and vibrating their way into our cultural conscience. They are reengineering the way we interact, date, socialise and communicate. In this “mobilized world” (Lindgren et al. 2002) it is virtually impossible to venture anywhere–the cinema, the supermarket, the gym, the restaurant–without hearing the unmistakable beep-beep that signals, “1 message received”.

Remarkably, the verb text, meaning to create and send text messages using a mobile phone’s keypad only sprung into existence in the last few years, though it is already so ingrained in our culture that it seems as if it has been around for ages. SMS (Short Message Service) text messaging was first developed in 1991 for GSM (Global System for Mobile Telephony) digital mobile phones. The consumer-led phenomenon that prompts this study transpired in 1999 when mobile providers finally permitted users to send each other messages across different networks. Common in Europe and Asia, but not as yet in America, text message devices have the capacity to handle text using the number keys to type letters. Messages can be up to 160 characters in length, while some people text into three separate messages. This is popular with many users, yet because three messages are sent rather than one, it costs three times as much.

Not that the major mobile providers–02 (formerly Cellnet), T-mobile (formerly One-to-One) Orange and Vodafone–complained. The rise and rise of texting (and consequently our mobile phone bills) has rapidly become big business for them. It now accounts for approximately one fifth of their revenues (Giussani 2001). In January 1999, during the first month of the UK, launch 40 million text messages were sent. Since then the ever-escalating monthly total has almost quadrupled and is estimated to now be in the region of 1.5 billion (Arlidge 2002). Worldwide, adoption is no less impressive where one billion text messages are sent every day. Putting this into perspective, this equates to about 40 messages per month for every person on the planet, including those that do not have a mobile phone. According to the Guardian (2001), it took less than three years for text messaging to achieve the market penetration that it took email twenty years to acquire.

It might be intimated from this paper’s marketing slant, and the evident success of text messaging in general, that mighty marketing moguls orchestrated its ascent into the vanguard of culture, but the tools and techniques of marketing were conspicuous by their absence. Texting was not highlighted in market research; nor was it developed in conjunction with new product development; nor did it appear in billboard ads resembling Vodafone’s current offering, When Talking Simply Isn’t Possible–Text, or Orange’s, Touch Someone with a Text; nor was it unleashed via a word of mouth campaign (Wilson 1991) or what sad surfers today call a “viral marketing campaign” (Godin and Gladwell 2002). The surprising truth is that texting was developed almost entirely by accident. Its anonymous architects, while working on the GSM protocol, noticed spare capacity in the system, so they added the texting facility as an afterthought, in case somebody somewhere someday might find it useful (Giussani 2001).

In the beginning, mobile providers, to be certain, while not exactly disgruntled were largely indifferent to the foresight of their engineers. They held little store in the usefulness of this new teletext technology. They did not envisage the realization of Gladwell’s (2001) tipping point thesis, whereby the auspicious alignment of social behaviour, ideas and trends cross a threshold, tip and spread like wildfire. At the outset they didn’t even charge consumers for the service, calculating that its main utility lay in delivering modest subscriber information, such as free voicemail notification. If they attributed it with any revenue potential, it was as an extension of paging for busy professionals (Calcutt 2001). Minor product innovations–predictive text input, the inclusion of dictionaries and the development of an Internet-based SMS capability–have since made the technology slightly more palatable. Nonetheless, the act of texting remains awkward, unless you number among the young texters who have inculcated the skill so effectively that some can type thirty words a minute (Clark 2001).

While the mobile phone providers were pursuing grander ambitions, pouring billions of pounds into WAP technology (deemed a financial failure) and third-generation technologies (yet to show a return), young people quietly and unexpectedly hijacked the text message medium. They became known as ‘generation txt’, christened so by numerous commentators quick to note the parallel between texting and the “thumb culture” (Kushner 2002) of computer games that indoctrinates all Gameboys and Lara Croft girls. Quick also to note their familiarity with other textually mediated forms of communication–email, chat-rooms and instant messaging. Speculative figures suggest that at least 77% of them own a mobile phone and regularly participate in the back and forth banter of texting (Mintel 2001).

Unsurprisingly, in the way of all cultural phenomena, texting finds itself central to a number of contentious, contemporary debates. The first, disseminated by newspaper puns, The Joy of Text (Benson 2000), A Little Bit of Textual Chemistry (Pituck 2001) and The Good Txt Guide (Precision Marketing 2001), suggests that young people use texting primarily to connect with members of the opposite sex. A second debate discusses whether texting presents a threat to literacy, whether it depresses language skills and is reducing “our beloved tongue”, as Haines (2002: 1) argues, “to a series of abbreviations, acronyms and emoticons meaningless to anyone over 25.” A third debate implicates texting, alongside...
email, in the decimation of everyday face-to-face communication. McCromack (2001:xix) outlines the general argument, claiming that people are often tempted to hide behind technologies like texting, so much so that “soon they won’t even feel the need for human contact.” Speculations such as these, however, are mostly of an anecdotal nature. Often they are just opinion pieces that muster little in the way of empirical support. While there are studies of relevance to texting in the areas of language and linguistics (Coates 1986; Johnson and Meinhof 1997), the sociology of communication (Hutchby 2000; Fox 2001), and the emerging realm of cyber communications (Springer 1996; Danet 2001), these studies do not address the nuances that are particular to texting, nor are they mindful of commercial or marketing considerations. This study then, seeks to redress this gap in the literature, by exploring the themes that makes texting such a “killer app” (Downes et al. 1998) among young consumers and in doing so to shed light on the debates in which texting is implicated.

STUDY BACKGROUND
To this end, this exploratory study is dependent on a qualitative methodology frequently employed for explorative purposes in marketing and consumer research—the diary method (see Weeks et al. 1987; Hart et al. 1999). The diary method is appropriate for this project since its goal is to entextualise text messages verbatim and to understand these messages within the context of a phenomenological narrative that describes the lived experience of those consumers. The primary research was gathered from 105 undergraduates business studies students located at a UK university. They were requested to keep a weeklong diary detailing all incoming and outgoing text traffic: comment on the emotional reaction invoked; and elaborate on the circumstances of time, place and person. It is acknowledged that the use of the dreaded student sample is a practise increasingly scorned (James and Sonner 2001), but since this age group reside at the epicentre of texting culture this study can hardly be criticised for utilising a resource simply because it is close to hand.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS
“Where r u?” “R u ok?” Within the collated diaries, simple messages such as these are common. Nonetheless, there is also a very mixed bag of messages that pertain, as human communication tends to do, to every subject imaginable. Such is the breadth of the subject scope that categorizing these messages is extremely difficult. Tentatively, therefore, this analysis offers the following general categories into which most text messages can be allocated: romance, forwards, social arrangements, general chat, work and travel. Discussing each of the above categories would be an interesting exercise, but due to space limitations the primary issue under investigation in this paper will be confined to the motivating factors that led young consumers to rapidly assimilate texting into the texture of their lives. A series of themes are repeated in the diaries that help explain why this is the case. Recent interpretive marketing research on consumer value gives some initial handles on these themes. Theoretically, a framework, such as, Holbrook’s (1999) Taxonomy of Consumer Value, could encapsulate these themes, but on examination the lexicon of this nomenclature proved to be too prescriptive and tightly constrained for the purposes of this study. The derived themes of efficiency, discretion, crudity, frankness, and novelty thus fall iteratively from the diaries (see table 1).

### Efficiency
Texters appear to be particularly attracted by the virtues of efficiency that texting offers. Efficiency, in the context of this paper, explicates how texting can be utilized effectively as a form of communication that affords minimum effort and expense. For pedagogic purposes it is sub-divided into the following themes: value-for-money, convenience, and immediacy—each of which will be considered in turn.

#### Value-for-Money
Diarists agree that texting is a “cheap” form of communication. Many of those contracted to mobile phone providers, receive free text message bundles of around 100-200 per month. Others, notably, those who use the pay-as-you-go service are charged for each text message that they send. While the cost of sending a text message varies between mobile phone providers, on average it costs about 12 pence. Compared to the cost of conveying a simple message in a phone call, at peak time, when it costs 50p a minute and the value of texting becomes all too apparent. This also helps explain the strategy employed by many, of texting during on-peak times and phoning off-peak. Analysts sometimes downplay economic attributes like value-for-money in favour of elaborate sociological explanations. Important, though these are, the fact remains that young people do not have huge amounts of disposable income and many text message because it represents good value-for-money relative to other forms of communication.

#### Convenience
A second corollary of efficiency is captured in the notion of convenience. Diarists enjoy the utility of texting at any time, certain in the knowledge that if the text arrives when the recipient is indisposed, say while asleep, the little flashing envelope icon will remain on display until the message is either opened or erased. Not only can texts be sent at any time, but they can also, excepting signal availability, be sent from any location. This desire to always be accessible is very important to the cohorts in this study. As one diarist wrote: “If I send a text message and don’t get a response right away then I can get quite anxious.” The diaries reveal that messages are often sent while in transit, walking somewhere, travelling on a bus, train or car; while out and about in bowling alleys, nightclub and pubs; and while engaged in multitasking activities such as driving a car, watching TV, talking to friends, and even, mischievously during lectures with the mobile switched to silent. Although, strictly speaking, perhaps undergraduates engaged in the latter activity are not actually multitasking.

#### Immediacy
Another aspect of efficiency that proved attractive to the diarists is the immediacy of text messaging. Although there are occasional reports of text messages being lost in the electronic ether of digital telecommunication, generally when a text message is sent it is a fairly safe bet that the intended recipient will be able to read it almost instantaneously, providing their mobile is to hand, and it is not a rare bottleneck period (e.g. midnight on Christmas Eve or New Years Eve) when text message traffic is so heavy that it can be significantly delayed. The theme of immediacy is marked among those who like to alert their friends to the fact that they have an interesting item of gossip, but save the details until a later phone call or meeting. For example, a diarist sent the following message to her friend: “Clare has really lost the plot this time. She’s freakin’ us all out!” The text, in effect, acts as a teaser, a foregoing trailer for juicy gossip that will be imparted at a later time. Immediacy is also important to those who like to keep their communicative acts short and sweet. Texting facilitates this by cutting straight to the heart of...
the matter without the mandatory requirement to pepper conversa-
tion with the small talk that usually accompanies voice-to-voice
communication. With texting typical conversational ‘How’s-your-
father?’ pleasantries are rendered redundant. Texting alleviates the
‘yadda-yadda-yadda’ of everyday conversation and cuts straight to
the point.

**Immediacy** helps texters avoid the minutiae of a lengthy
conversation. Nonetheless, the **immediacy** of texting does not
always seem apparent. Consider this five-text exchange:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:45</td>
<td>Did you just drive past Oxford road?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>Yes I did an hour ago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30</td>
<td>I was stood outside the phone shop did you not see me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:35</td>
<td>No I didn’t see you, what time were you there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:45</td>
<td>I was there at 2:45 when I came out of the gym, nevermind I’ll see you later.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This prolonged and labour-intensive communicative act would
surely have been better enacted on the phone. Many diarists admit
that texting can be a slow-going, time-consuming activity. For
instance, at the end of another five-text exchange one student
claimed to be, “frustrated at the way it was dragging on and on,
when I had work to be doing. Things to do and people to see” (Male
19). When the exchange did finally draw to a conclusion he felt
nothing but relief and determined to avoid the situation from
recurring by switching off his mobile.

**Discretion**

Other forms of mobile communication may share the utility of
efficiency, but the following theme, **discretion**, is one that texting
can claim as its very own. Texting by its very nature is discrete,
taking place as it often does below desks and underneath the surface
of the immediate world. For instance, an observer might understand
what is being communicated or who is being contacted. For an observer the same
mystery surrounds messages received. The smile a text provokes is
the only hint an onlooker gets as to the text’s content. Hence, a
significant attribute of texting is that it can be enacted in public
while remain essentially private. Of course, there are extroverts (or
cell-yellers is the American term) to whom this attribute would

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**TABLE 1**

**Consumer Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Consumer Illustration (context and diary citation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Efficiency:</strong></td>
<td>Efficiency can be divided into the sub-themes: value-for-money, convenience, and immediacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Value-for-money:</strong></td>
<td>Typical illustrations of this sub-theme include: “costs the same off peak as on peak,” “it is much cheaper to text than to phone” “generally the preferred means of communication on week days when you need to pay extra for phone calls” “I get bundles of free text messages”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Convenience:</strong></td>
<td>Illustrations of the sub-theme are common, “If they are not answering their phone, they’ll get the info as soon as they return”, while many students claim that they, “can text from anywhere”. This is borne out by the manifold venues cited while in transit, out-and-about or purely multi-tasking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Immediacy:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Immediacy</strong> can be derived from many textual comments, “Cannot be bothered chatting,” “Quick method of sending a little message without having to get into a big conversation” And in the text messages themselves while announcing simple nuggets of information like “I can in Bar 38 with Duncan u get a free drink” or for asking simple questions that require simple answers “Where r u? Did you get that job at HMV?” “It’s not like email you know its going to get there right away”; “It’s fun, fast and hassle-free”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discretion:</strong></td>
<td>Discreetness is widely apparent: “Doesn’t disturb people in awkward places like lectures”; “not as intrusive as calling especially if contacting someone who’s in class or at work. It’s like portable mini email.” For instance, in the public space of a train one student without fear of public embarrassment was able to confess via text, “Oh shit. I’m on the wrong train. Give me a ring. The next stop is Milton Keynes and I’m going to Telford”; or another who silently declares, “I’m in the ‘silent level’ of the library. It’s, erm, silent. A friend of mine has just got a job on canal street, the bitch!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crudity:</strong></td>
<td>The theme of crudity is demonstrated in the narrative of the diaries “Texting is good because it’s not good. It’s a bit rough and a bit awkward, but that’s why I like it. I can’t really explain it” (Male 19). The theme also extends to the content of many of the messages. Sexual innuendo, badly drawn pictures of intimate body parts, dirty jokes are all common in the extreme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frankness:</strong></td>
<td>Illustrations of this theme abound, “Good morning ___! If the sun doesn’t shine, all I have to do is think about you and my day will be filled with your radiant smile,” “Sarah, my dear. How are u? I cry myself to sleep every nite cos I am so lonely!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Novelty:</strong></td>
<td>Diarists articulate this theme in various ways: “All my friends are doing it”; “It’s novel”; “It’s new”; “It’s more fun than email”; “It’s just what we do these days”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
prove an anathema. These people engage in what has been christened ‘stage phoning’; a deeply sad activity for deeply sad individuals who publicly perform loud theatrical conversations on their mobiles in the mistaken belief that those who witness their antics will be impressed (Fox 2001).

Discretion is apparent in a host of other ways as well. The brevity of texting permits people to be elusive about their location, the company they keep and the activities they indulge in. It allows them to evade issues they would rather not discuss. One of the diarists explains, “texting is great because I can let my dad know I’m okay without telling him precisely where I am, who I am with or what I am doing” (Female 19). Texting also encourages the telling of barefaced lies since the recipient cannot scrutinize or interrogate a text message in the same way that one can with face-to-face or voice-to-voice communication. One diarist confessed that he escaped a prearranged date by fibbing that he had “been involved in a car accident and was a bit shook-up and didn’t really feel like attending” (Male 20). Though no direct evidence could be found in the diaries, it is also conceivable that texting could be used to conduct clandestine affairs. Ever-present is the danger, however, that a curious or suspicious partner might intercept these messages. Of course, for thrill-seeking consumers who like to live dangerously, who revel in the thought of being caught, perhaps texting’s transgressive undertones are its most winning feature. But hush-hush, don’t tell anyone. Keep it on the q.t.

Crude

For the technologically challenged, especially those whose formative years predate the “era of technologized interaction” (Hutchby 2001: 192), texting’s poor interface presents grounds for concern, but for the young it is a cause for celebration. They revel in the beguiling crudity of the interface. A diarist comments, “Texting is good because it’s not good. It’s a bit rough and a bit awkward, but that’s why I like it. I can’t really explain it” (Male 19). Perhaps this penchant for the non-slick aesthetic of texting is in keeping with the self-consciously low-production values that are all the rage in music, film and design. The theme of crudity extends to the content of many of the messages. Sexual innuendo, badly drawn pictures of intimate body parts, dirty jokes are all common in the extreme. Texting has become the new graffiti for hormone-laden teenagers who often compose these loaded messages from beneath bed sheets.

Frankness

A widely noted theme that emerges from the diaries is that the sentiments expressed in a text message are sometimes difficult if not impossible to articulate in a face-to-face communicative act. Consider the following examples:

Softly the leaves of memories fall. Slowly I’ll pick and gather them all. Coz 2day, 2moro and till my life is through, I’ll always cherish having a friend like you!!

(Female 21)

Yor my fnd till d Da I die, d da I lose u iz d da ill cry. Yor d(:)
dat wZ sent 2 me & will b n m hart always cos u mean d wrld to me. (Translation: You’re my friend till the day I die, the day I lose you is the day I’ll cry. You’re the angel that was sent to me and will be in my heart always because you mean the world to me.)

(Female 20)

Were it not for texting, and other text-mediated forms of communication, such honest, open, poetic sentiment might ever remain unarticulated. Texting provides a way, not only for tongue-tied adolescents, but for everyone, to speak without speaking, to spare red-faced blushes or at least contain them to the privacy of one’s own company, especially if said sentiments are unreciprocated or outright rejected. Consider this bout of text tennis between two monstrously in love teenagers:

Can’t believe I’m up before you! Did you have a nice sleepy? I did but I have woken up and my throats feeling worse, need some more medicine. Just gonna have a shower and get ready to go. I love you and look forward to hearing from you when you eventually wake up sleepy head! Love from Jade xxx

I just got up 10 minutes ago munchkIn, I was just about to text you. Thought I deserved a bit of a lie in today, I’m gonna do an essay later though. You normally feel worse in the morning when you are ill. Why are you getting ready for Uni already, it’s only just gone 9:30? You don’t have to be in for hours? I did have quite a nice sleepy baby thank you. Wish I was as sleepy next to my baby though. I love you so much Jade. I wish we could be together all the time. Keep texting when you can. Billy x

Your texts all got clogged up. The last one just came through! I had a shower because I thought it may make me feel a bit better, but I’m back in bed now doing some work, needless to say the shower didn’t help! I wish I was all cosy in my bed at home or in yours, or just near to someone who can look after me! I know you would if we were together. I love you munchkin, Jade xxx

Baby just make sure you have space for 3 texts in your inbox then it shouldn’t get all clogged up. I would properly look after you my Jaidie if I was there. That’s what my baby needs to be looked after by someone who cares. I love you so much 4eva xxx. P.S. We’re gonna get married when we are older! xx

Schmaltz

Though it may be, texting is fundamental to their relationship. They use it as a means to communicate very powerful emotions. It encourages them to be candid, frank, informal and cute: intentions can be declared and invitations offered, all without risk of embarrassment.

Novelty

Diarists also acknowledge the novelty nature of text messaging. As all neophiliac teenagers concur; “you can’t not have a mobile phone; and you can’t not text” (Male 19). The implicit implication, of course, is that people being sheeple, sorry people, cannot help but be swayed into “buying things” for the sake of novelty, and to conform with the ever shifting norms of fashion (Thompson et al 1994). Of course, possessing the product is never really enough for once acquired, the competitive focus turns to mastery of the product. If the evidence of this study is anything to go by, young people can be ridiculously competitive with one another as regards ‘important’ issues, such as: how many text messages they send?—and how cool their stored messages are? It is notable too that almost universally diarists claim to receive more messages than they send. 99.9 per cent of those who kept diaries claim to be regular texters sending on average 25 per week, although it could be added that this distribution curve is widely skewed on either side, towards both frequent and infrequent texters. Nonetheless, only one diarist claimed, “Sorry, I just don’t do text messaging”; and even he qualified this statement with the concession, “unless it is absolutely necessary” (Male 20).
As was hoped, these findings lend some ammunition to adduce some conclusions about the previously identified debates. The first such debate concerns texting’s primary utility to teenagers. According to the newspapers, texting is used overwhelmingly by teenagers to satisfy their sexual mores and participate in the mandatory matchmaking game called ‘Hooking Up’ (Wolfe 2000). It is true that the themes of discretion and frankness can enhance a texter’s love life; nonetheless, texting predominant use lies elsewhere. In this study texting’s main utility is to connect with members of the same rather than the opposite sex. Contrary to media reports, sending a text message is concerned with much more than mere sexual gratification. More often it is about connecting with friends. Inane, frivolous, unnecessary, though it may seem, but often texting is simply about illuminating the life of a friend with a ‘nice’ message or alternatively in seeking self-comfort when life goes awry. Many of the diarists use texting to strengthen the solidarity of their friendships by sharing the content of a text message with them. It might be forwarded to each of their mobiles and made the focus of conversation around the pub table or wherever the social swarm forms. A groupthink on the text might occur and judgement passed on the absent sender. This might seem a galling prospect for the message writer, but they need never know that such appraisal took place, and at least they don’t have to be there when the verdict is cast. A groupthink can also help formulate an appropriate response to the text in question. Some will even judge a fledgling relationship almost entirely on a person’s grammar and their use or misuse of ‘smiley faces’. Several, in the corpus we examined, confess that oftentimes they are happy to let friends type their responses for them, so long as they retain power of veto. Texting thus facilitates friendship in many ways, and it does so, to paraphrase Cicero, by doubling joy and dividing grief.

The second debate concerns the popular mythology that text messaging is detrimental to the future of language, that English spelling is kattastroffik, that children can’t write or speak properly any more, that the meanings of words should not be allowed to vary or change, and that bad grammar is slovenly. The alternative stance to which this paper subscribes is that texting enables a dramatic expansion in the range and variety of language, and is providing unprecedented opportunities for personal creativity. Behold the ingenuity of the diarists messages:

```
i hUJoH O5 W1 35V37d 3W d73H Can you crack the code? No?... Okay. Go back and turn the phone upside down!
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The trivia of texting is brimful of wordplay that is by turns inscrutable, outrageously rude or richly syrupy, but always creative. Undoubtedly it enables a dramatic expansion in the range and variety of language, and provides unprecedented opportunity for personal creativity. Nor is creativity produced solely by the sender for the reader’s role can also be highly creative since the ‘gaps’ and ‘indeterminacies’ of any given text message can demand truly creative reading. The brevity, for instance, of a text message often means that meaning must be extrapolated, imagined and creatively constructed. Of course, a postmodern analysis that treats cultural artefacts as texts and understands that our relationship with them is contextually grounded, unstable, ambiguous and subject to endless reinterpretation underpins this insight (Brown 1998).

The third debate centring on texting’s capacity—alongside other text mediated forms of communication—to replace face-to-face communication is also disputed by this paper. The diary data suggests that far from replacing other forms of communication, texting actually complements them. Hence the observed behaviours to: communicate by text during the day when it is too expensive to call; to text from a nightclub where loud music prohibits other forms of communication; to share the content of a text message with friends; to text simply to arrange a convenient time to call or to meet one another. It is doubtful, therefore, whether texting could ever replace other forms of communication. In fact, if anything, it helps develop social and communication skills across all of the communication mediums by allowing communication to occur with more people and more often than was possible before the advent of mobile phones.

An understanding of the criticisms made against texting should be tempered by the knowledge that reactionary voices have always revolted against new forms of textual communication. When the telegraph was introduced more than a century ago there was a predictable outcry that telegraph writers who omitted prepositions and articles would do the same in their written language. Yet people did not forget how to write full, punctuated sentences and the English language did not experience a meltdown. The same will be said of text messaging. Isn’t it true that we endlessly hear “save our children” diatribes: teenagers live on a diet of junkfood and sugar, they are lazy good-for-nothings, they have unprotected sex, they drink too much alcohol, they increasingly take drugs and that that texting will be the ruination of their lives?—and yet each year they manage to get better exam results than the previous year’s cohort.

**OUTBOX**

This paper identified and explored the themes of efficiency, frankness, discretion, crudity and novelty that collectively conspire to make texting appealing to young people. The diary findings stimulated some discussion on the controversies that encircle texting, and generally, it was concluded, that texting need not be regarded unfavourably. On the contrary, texting can be creative and cool and encourage playfulness with language. Yet there still remains considerable scope for further research. Some of the issues that need to be investigated include: how multimedia messaging will impact consumers? Will it open up the way for yet more experimentation, mixing narrative and visuals? Or will it be ignored? Recent reports suggest that most consumers have no plans to upgrade their mobiles to take advantage of 3G technologies. Will texting’s impending launch on landlines and televisions affect consumers? How are older people using this technology?

It was also noted that capitalising on the texting phenomenon is fast becoming a major marketing priority. Conferences on Mobile Marketing Strategies (2002), the proliferation of web resources (see www.160characters.org) and the burgeoning literature on Mobile Marketing attest to its growing importance (Hiag 2002; Lindgren et al. 2002). Explicitly within this marketing literature, and elsewhere, it is firmly believed that the new communication technologies, such as text messaging, offer unprecedented opportunities for organizations to establish real dialogues between themselves and their customers (Cartellieri et al. 1997; Hoffman and Novak 1996).

Consumers, however, beg to differ. The rising tide of text spam is becoming an increasing irritant to them. This study suggests that consumers are uninterested in reciprocating relationships with marketers via text. Those few diarists that detail receiving text messages from marketers regard it as a form of textpolitation. They report that dealing with marketing text messages is a cold experience. They are not warm. They have no heart. They neither understand, nor care about consumers. Whereas, one-to-one messages between consumers are brimful of emotion, they may be amusing or satirical or irritating or mildly inflammatory, but still they are warm and they keep us communicating with one another about the things that matter most. It is the consumers who own the broadcast rights to this channel and anyone who seeks to gate-
crasher this channel will be given the cold shoulder. Marketers would do well to search for the holy grail of marketing communication elsewhere.

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Turning Silver Into Gold: The Impact of Situational Influences on the Retail Patronage Behaviors of Senior Citizens
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Lenita Davis, University of Alabama, USA
Jim McCabe, Arizona State University West, USA

ABSTRACT
Retailers and consumer researchers can benefit from better understanding the retail patronage behaviors of senior citizens because of the size, growth and buying power of the senior segment. This paper, which is rooted in grounded methods, identifies a set of behaviors, which are influenced by “situation,” and explains how these behaviors impact seniors’ retail patronage. The paper concludes with suggestions of ways retailers can utilize the findings to better meet the needs of senior shoppers.
ABSTRACT

The relationship between values and consumer behavior has been a central theme in many studies in recent years. Kahle (1983) sees values as guidelines for desirable and enduring end-states, which affect attitudes and behaviors. Values are stable, abstract cognitions; they provide people with structure, organization, and purpose for interactions with their environments (Kahle 1996). Furthermore, values provide purpose and motivation for one’s actions. Numerous studies have documented the link between values and attitudes and behaviors. For example, they influence leadership, sports participation, gift giving, and role relaxation tendencies, among others. Previous operationalizations of the List of Values (LOV) have resulted in highly skewed distributions, limiting their potential explanatory power. Consequently, further development is required to provide more balanced measures of the LOV. This paper reports the results of two Israeli studies, designed to test two additional approaches to LOV measurement. In all cases, age and gender’s relationships with the LOV, commonly used to predict the importance of values, were examined for each of the three operationalizations. Additionally, we tested the relationships between the LOV and role relaxation tendencies, an outcome construct used in previous research. In summary, we find that one of the two new operationalizations of LOV outperforms the standard measurement approach, while the second approach did not. Our findings and their implications are discussed and areas of future research are indicated.

INTRODUCTION

Personal values have been studied for many years. Four conceptualizations of values have dominated the literature: the List of Values (LOV; Kahle 1983), the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS; Rokeach 1968, 1973), Values and Life Style (VALS), and Activi- ties, Interests, and Opinions (AIO; Plummer 1974). The LOV seems to have been the most popular in marketing research. It was developed as an alternative to Rokeach’s value inventory because the terminal values identified by Rokeach were too abstract and difficult to apply to marketing situations (Assael 1998). It includes nine values with more direct marketing applications: 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. Respondents are asked to rate the importance of these values in their daily life. The scale is introduced by: “The following is a list of things that some people look for or want out of life. Sometimes you find that you have to give up a little of something important because something else is most important to you. Please rate the following on how important it is to you in your daily life.” In such research, single values have been studied in some cases, whereas in other cases, they have been combined into dimensions (Keng and Yang 1993; Razzaque 1995; Tai and Tam 1996). While values and demographics influence consumption (McCarty and Shrum 1993), most previous work viewed demographics as values’ antecedents (Kahle 1996; Keng and Yang 1993; Lascu, Manrai, and Manrai 1996; Razzaque 1995).

Recently, studies have utilized the LOV to examine values from a global perspective and have explored inter- and intranational differences. Kahle (1996) compared value distributions in seven countries. Rose and Shoham (2000) compared value differences of mothers in the US and Japan. Kropp, Jones, Rose, Shoham, Florenthal, and Cho (2000) compared value importance ratings in Australia, the US, Canada, and Israel.

Unfortunately, the LOV suffer from a methodological drawback—the distribution of responses has tended to be highly skewed. In other words, mean importance ratings for the nine values in the LOV tended to average between 6.0 and 8.0 on 9-point scales. For example, mean importance ratings were 6.0-7.9, 6.0-7.6, 5.9-7.6, and 6.3-8.0 for Australians, Americans, Canadians, and Israelis, respectively (Kropp et. al. 2000). Consequently, the potential of predictors of values’ importance (e.g., demographics) to explain the low variance in importance is low. Conversely, the potential explanatory role of values as predictors of numerous outcomes is reduced. This problem of variance restriction has been noted in other research areas in marketing, such as satisfaction (Peterson and Wilson 1992) and service quality (Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml 1993).

Our two studies were designed to address this shortcoming in previous research. Specifically, one study examined the commonly used approach to measure the importance of values, using a scale of 1 to 9; as well as a second approach, using the same nine items, but introduced by a different introductory question and utilizing a scale from 0 to 10. Both approaches were used within one sample. Respondents provided item ratings twice, each time in a different context. In the second study, we used two smaller sub-samples. One provided importance ratings in the standard approach, whereas the second provided importance ratings on differently anchored scales (details provided in a later section).

The studies were conducted in Israel, a Western-oriented country, which has undergone many changes over the last decade. First, the local economy has shifted from a more centrally planned economy to a more competitive one. Second, there has been an ongoing peace process with neighboring countries and the Palestinians (though not in the last two years). Both have made Israel a desirable market for global firms—McDonald’s, Office Depot, Toys-R-Us and Burger King exemplify recent entrants to Israel. Thus, research on values in Israel is important as a basis around which multinational firms can design and improve their marketing strategies, including positioning, segmentation, and advertising. Better measures of values’ importance can help global firms to identify differences between Israeli consumers and consumers in other markets. This would lead to more accurate adjustments in global marketing strategies to Israeli consumers. Additionally, accurate measures should allow for a better value-based segmentation of the Israeli population.

In sum, our study contributes to values’ research in two ways. Substantially, it adds to the limited body of research on antecedents and consequences of values in Israel, utilizing three different measurement approaches to advance our knowledge of the cross cultural impact of LOV. Methodologically, we test these three approaches in an effort to identify which of the three provides the most psychometrically sound results, thus advancing the general measurement of the LOV construct.

THEORY

Personal Values

The importance of personal values has long been recognized. As early as 1979, Williams theorized that values affect consumers’
judgments, preferences, and choices. We define a value as “a centrally held, enduring belief which guides actions and judgments across specific situations and beyond immediate goals to more ultimate end-states of existence” (Rokeach 1968, p. 161). As consumers internalize values, “they become unconscious and conscious criteria in guiding behavior” (Lascu et al. 1996, p. 148).

Values’ impact on behavior has been established in many studies (for a review, see Kahle, Rose, and Shoham 2000). Becker and Conner (1981) reported that values affect consumers’ tendency to be exposed to mass media. Specifically, Beatty et al. (1985) linked values with television programs’ preferences. In a different domain, Rose et al. (1994) documented that values influence buying preferences for fashion products (see also Shoham and Florenthal 2001). Given their impact on consumer behavior, values have been popular as bases for segmentation, positioning, and promotion (Lascu et al. 1996).

Cumulatively, previous studies have suggested a causal pattern from Values to Attitudes to Behavior (Homer & Kahle 1988). We do not argue that global values alone can predict behavior; rather, similar to Kahle (1996, p. 136), we view values as “anchors or cognitive sources.” In short, values are the basis upon which attitudes are built, leading to behavioral and consumption outcomes (Kahle 1996).

### Measuring Values

Previous literature used four values’ operationalizations, Rokeach (1973) developed the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) with 18 instrumental and 18 terminal values. Instrumental values determine desirable behavior; terminal values define desirable end-states. In practice, the administration of RVS requires respondents to rank all values’ pairs, a daunting task for respondents. Substantively, some RVS values, such as “a world at peace” are not directly relevant to the study of consumer behavior (Kahle 1996). These shortcomings explain why the RVS has not been used often in consumer behavior research.

AIO (Activities, Interests, and Opinions) was designed to operationalize consumers’ lifestyles. It concentrates on activities—how people spend time and money; interests—what they see as important in their surrounding environment; and opinions—what they feel about themselves and their world (Tai and Tam 1996). AIO suffers from several weaknesses. First, its scope is narrow; it excludes some values and subsequent attitudes. Additionally, since the AIO includes many statements, it is difficult to administer (Tai and Tam 1996). Moreover, no standard instrument exists to operationalize the AIO—users select AIO statements from an inventory of about 300 statements, thus exacerbating the methodological issue.

VALS (Values and Life Style) has been used as an alternative to RVS. Theoretically, it is based on Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy of needs and on social character. Operationally, it uses 34 demographic and attitudinal measures to classify respondents into one of nine lifestyle categories, which provide a distinct profile of people in each category (Kahle 1996; Kahle, Beatty, and Homer 1986). VALS and LOV (discussed below) evolved from Maslow’s theory. Thus, the two approaches overlap. For example, an “achiever” in VALS would probably assign a high level of importance to LOV’s “sense of accomplishment”.

Kahle developed a fourth operationalization, the LOV (Beatty et al. 1985; Kahle 1983). Based on Maslow’s needs’ hierarchy (1954), the LOV incorporates elements of social adaptation theory (Kahle 1983). Kahle saw values (1996, p. 135) as the “most abstract type of social cognition that people use to store and guide general responses to classes of stimuli.” The LOV includes nine items: 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, operationalized by Likert scales. As noted, distributions of responses to the LOV tend to be skewed (Kahle 1996), which makes the determination of the values’ hierarchy difficult (Razzaque 1995). However, the LOV has several advantages over VALS. First, it enables a separation of the impact of demographics and values on behavior (Kahle et al. 1986). In contrast, demographics are part of the measurement method in VALS (Novak and MacEvoy 1990). Second, administration of the LOV is easier (Kahle et al. 1986). Third, whereas VALS is culturally biased toward the USA, the LOV is not (Kahle 1996), making the LOV less sensitive to cross-cultural variations. Kahle et al. (1986) and Novak and MacEvoy (1990) compared the two methods and found the LOV to be superior to VALS.

Therefore, we chose to use the LOV in our study for three reasons. First, the LOV is standardized and can be compared cross-culturally. Second, it has demonstrated validity and reliability in cross-cultural studies (Beatty et al. 1985; Grunert, Grunert, and Beatty 1989; Kahle 1996). Third, the LOV is short, making it easy to administer (Razzaque 1995).

### Values and Demographics

Values and demographics are useful in predicting consumer behavior; therefore, both are useful segmentation bases (Kahle 1996; Lascu et al. 1996; McCarty and Shrum 1993). Since values and demographics are instrumental in developing marketing strategies, both should be studied simultaneously. A number of studies have examined the relationships between age, gender, and values. Lascu et al. (1996) reported that values’ importance varies with age. Similarly, Keng and Yang (1993) showed that age and gender affected values of Taiwanese consumers. For example, consumers over 30 years old valued security more, whereas consumers between the ages 19 and 29 valued self-respect and being well respected more. Similar findings have been reported in Bangladesh (Razzaque 1995). Value differences were observed across numerous demographics (e.g., age and gender). To illustrate, highly educated, older male managers with a high income, valued sense of accomplishment, self-fulfillment, and self respect more than other respondents did. Finally, Polish consumers’ age was correlated significantly with instrumental values (Lascu et al. 1996). Accordingly:

$H_1$: Values’ importance differs by age.

### Values and Role-Relaxation Tendencies

The term role-relaxation was coined by Chris Riley, a director of Wieden & Kennedy Advertising (Kahle 1995). Role-relaxed consumers decide how to act and what to buy while remaining intentionally oblivious to social demands (Kahle and Shoham 1995). It is closely related to consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence (CSII)—role-relaxed consumers should be less susceptible to such influence. First introduced by Kahle (1995), role-relaxation is a relatively new concept. Kahle and Shoham (1995) examined the relationship between role-relaxation, values, and consumption in the US. Role-relaxed consumers, who are affluent and self-confident, tend to emphasize functional over social product attributes (Kahle 1995).

Kahle (1995) argued that the more role-relaxed the consumer, the higher the assigned importance of self-respect compared to that of being well respected because role-relaxed consumers are less dependent on others for approval or guidance compared to low role-relaxed consumers. Kahle and Shoham (1995) reported negative relationships between the importance of four social values (being...
well respected, beauty, competitiveness, and excitement) and role-relaxation tendencies.

Thus, the three social LOV values (being well respected, warm relationship with others, and sense of belonging) should explain role-relaxed behavior and CSII. The more important these values are to individuals, the less role-relaxed and the more CSII they should be. Conversely, the three internal values (self-respect, sense of accomplishment, and self-fulfillment) should be related positively with role-relaxation and negatively with CSII. In sum:

\[ H_3: \text{The higher the importance of social values—being well respected, warm relationship with others, and sense of belonging—the lower the role-relaxation and the higher the CSII.} \]

We note here that how values’ importance is measured should affect the strength (but not the direction) of the relationships discussed in the three research hypotheses. We explore this issue in subsequent sections of the paper, which describe our two studies.

**METHODOLOGY—STUDIES 1 AND 2**

**Sample Characteristics—Study 1**

Data for the first study were collected from a convenience sample of 82 students in an Israeli university. Given the methodological goals of the study, as well as their roles as consumers, students were seen as acceptable respondents. All 82 agreed to participate and provided complete questionnaires with the original and a revised version of the LOV (discussed below).

There were more male (59.8%) than female respondents (40.2%) in the sample. This was not surprising given the engineering orientation of the university, and closely matched the overall gender distribution of the university. The average age of the respondents was 25.1 (s. d. = 2.1), with the range being 21-31.

**Sample Characteristics—Study 2**

Data for the second study were collected from a convenience sample of 80 Israeli consumers, recruited in community and shopping centers. All agreed to participate and provided complete questionnaires. About half (36) responded to the original LOV version while the second half (44) responded to a different version of the LOV (discussed below).

The sample included 40 males and 40 females. Average age of the respondents was 31.2 (s. d. = 11.2), ranging between 19 and 63. Education-wise, 30% completed at least some high school and 70% completed at least some college education. Since the two forms of the questionnaires were distributed randomly, we did not expect the sub-groups to differ on age and education. However, we tested for possible cross-group differences. Neither education-based chi-square (\( \chi^2_{\text{education}} = 3.96; 2 \text{ degrees of freedom; } p = 0.10 \)) nor age-based F (F = 0.01; 1 degree of freedom; p = 0.10) were significant, thus suggesting sub-group equivalency.

**Measures for the Two Studies**

The role-relaxation scale was designed in English (Kahle and Shoham 1995). In developing an equivalent Hebrew version, we used the back-translation method. One bilingual individual translated the scale to Hebrew. Another individual, blind to the original, back-translated the scale. Then, a third bilingual individual compared the original and back-translated English versions. Adjustments were made by consultation of the three individuals. The same procedure was used for the consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence (CSII) scale (Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel 1989). In an effort to enhance the response rate we did not include the CSII scale in this study.

The LOV was translated using a similar procedure. The Hebrew version has been used in a number of Israeli studies (e.g., Shoham, Florenthal, Kropp, and Rose 1997). We used the original Hebrew version for the actual LOV items in both studies. However, in each of the three versions of the LOV, either the introductory passage and anchor words or the scale end-points differed. In study 1, we used the standard version of the LOV, introduced by: “People tell us that different things are important to them in their daily lives. We’d like to know how important each of the items listed below is to you in your daily life.” A scale of 1 (important to me) and 9 (extremely important to me) anchored each value. In a later section of the questionnaire, we introduced a different version of the LOV, utilizing the same items, but introduced by: “People tell us that different things are important to them in their daily lives. We’d like to know how important each of the items listed below is to you in your daily life. Unlike the first question on this issue, please rate how often you think about each of the following.” Thus, the second version captures a “share-of-thoughts” facet of the importance of values as opposed to the original version. Additionally, we attempted to increase variance by using values of 0 (almost never) and 10 (constantly) to anchor each item value.

In Study 2, about half of the consumers responded to the original version of the LOV, anchored by 1 (important to me) to 9 (extremely important to me). The other half responded to the same introductory passage but rated the importance of each value on scales ranging from –5 (important to me) to +5 (extremely important to me). In Study 1 the scales were changed slightly thus altering the mindset of the respondent and the frame of reference for the scales, thus allowing us to utilize the entire sample to test both versions. In Study 2, the frame of reference remains constant, with only the actual scaling changed, thus necessitating the use of a split sample to test both versions.

Tables 1-2 include descriptive statistics for the scales and LOV items in Studies 1 and 2. Notably, the CSII scale includes two sub-dimensions (normative and informational influences), which are listed separately in both Tables. The Tables also include reliability coefficients (\( \alpha \)) for multi-item scales and skew statistics for the LOV.

**RESULTS AND ANALYSIS—STUDY 1**

**Skew Statistics**

As can be seen in Table 1, the share-of-thoughts-based LOV had better skew statistics. Whereas five of the six LOV skew statistics in the traditional LOV exceeded the cut-off rate of ±1, suggesting departure from normality, only one exceeded this rate in the new version. This provides an initial confirmation for the superiority of the revised approach over the standard approach. Below, we compare the nomological validity of the two approaches by examining the impact of demographic variables on values’ importance and the impact of values’ importance on role relaxation and CSII.

**Demographics and the LOV**

To identify significant differences in value importance across age and gender, we used 12 ANOVA models. In each, the standardized LOV measure served as the dependent variable and age and gender as independent variable (Table 3). Two models in the standard approach (for sense of belonging and warm relationships with others) and one in the share-of-thoughts approach (for warm relationships with others) had significant main effects. Whereas
females valued *sense of belonging* more than males did (under the standard approach), older consumers valued *warm relationships with others* more than younger consumers (in both approaches). These findings provide modest support for H1-2 and for the superiority of the traditional LOV over the share-of-thoughts LOV based on the main effects only. However, this superiority disappears when we take into account the interaction between age and gender. When including the interaction between age and gender in the models (not reported to conserve space), the results for *sense of belonging* and *warm relationships with others* were significant (*p* < 0.05) under both approaches. The substantive results remained the same—older respondents and females rated these values as more important than younger respondents and males did. Additionally, the impact of age was stronger for females than for males.

In sum, the data in Study 1 provide modest support to H1-2. They leave the issue of nomological superiority of the LOV as an outcome of demographics unresolved.

**LOV, Role-Relaxation, and CSII**

We tested H3 by examining the correlation coefficients between the importance of the six values and between role-relaxation and CSII. Given the directional hypothesis, we used one-tailed tests. Under the traditional approach to measuring the LOV, all correlation coefficients were lower than 0.171. None of the 18 correlation coefficients (between the six values, role-relaxation, and the two components of CSII) was significant; only one was marginally significant (*sense of belonging* and informational CSII). In contrast, under the share-of-thoughts approach, two coefficients (normative CSII and *being well respected* —0.21—and informational CSII and *warm relationships with others* —0.35) were significant and two were marginally significant (informational CSII with *self-fulfillment* —0.14—and role-relaxation with *self respect* —0.14).

Given the coding used, these findings provide some support to H3. In line with H3, people who value *being well respected* tend to be more normatively susceptible to interpersonal influence. People who value *warm relationships with others* and *self-fulfillment* tend to be more information-based susceptible to interpersonal influence. The former is as hypothesized; the latter is contrary to expectations. Finally, supporting H3, those who value *self respect* tend to be more role-relaxed than those who value it less.

In sum, the data support H3. They suggest that the share-of-thought approach to measure the LOV is operationally and nomologically superior to the traditional LOV.
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS—STUDY 2

Skew Statistics

The traditional LOV had better skew statistics than the ±5-anchored LOV (Table 2). Whereas two LOV skew statistics in the traditional LOV exceeded the cut-off rate of ±1, suggesting departure from normality, five of the six exceeded it in the ±5-anchored LOV. This provides an initial confirmation for the superiority of the traditional approach over the ±5-anchored LOV approach. Below, we compare the nomological validity of the two approaches by examining the impact of demographics on values’ importance, as well as the impact of values’ importance on role-relaxation.

Demographics and the LOV

We used 12 ANOVA models to identify significant differences in values’ importance across age and gender. The standardized LOV measures served as the dependent variables and age and gender served as the independent variables (Table 4).

The main effects of two models in the standard approach (for self-fulfillment and self-respect) were significant (p<0.05). Females and older consumers valued self-fulfillment and self-respect more than males and younger consumers did. None of the main effects in the six models utilizing the ±5-anchored LOV approach were significant. These findings provide further support for H1-2. They also provide support for the superiority of the traditional LOV over the ±5-anchored LOV approach. When we tested 12 models with the interaction of age by gender, there was no difference in the conclusions and this advantage remained substantively identical.

In sum, the data in Study 2 provide further support to H1-2. They suggest that the traditional LOV approach might be nomologically superior to the ±5-anchored approach in terms of values as an outcome of demographics.
LOV and Role-Relaxation

We tested H3 by examining the correlation coefficients between the importance of the six values in each approach and between role-relaxation. Under both approaches to measuring the LOV, not one of the twelve correlation coefficients (between the six values—measured twice in the two sub-samples—and the role relaxation scale) was significant.

In sum, the data in Study 2 provide no support to H3. Neither the ±5-anchored LOV nor the traditional LOV appear to be nomologically superior as predictors of role-relaxation.

DISCUSSION

Substantive Findings

Our results about higher values’ importance for females parallel the results reported in Taiwan (Keng and Yang 1993) and the US (Kahle 1996). Sense of belonging, warm relationships with others, self-fulfillment, and self-respect were more important to Israeli females than to Israeli males. As noted by Florenthal, Treister, and Shoham (1999), warm relationships with others might well be the global female value, the most important value to women all over the world. However, there also appears to be a gender bias in value importance—females tend to assign a higher level of importance to all nine values in the LOV compared to males.

With respect to the impact of age, our studies reveal that as consumers mature, they assign a higher level of importance to values under all operationalizations. Specifically, we find that older consumers in Israel see sense of belonging, warm relationships with others, self-fulfillment, and self-respect as more important than younger consumers do.

We examined the impact of values on two outcome constructs (role-relaxation and a two-dimensional CSII). Recall that people who value being well respected tend to be more normatively susceptible to interpersonal influence. Additionally, those who value self-respect tend to be more role-relaxed than those who value it less—in line with H3. Moreover, as hypothesized, people who value warm relationships with others tend to be more information-based susceptible to interpersonal influence. These findings suggest that as social/external values gain importance, they become manifest in and have an impact on the social end of the continuum for both role-relaxation and susceptibility to interpersonal influence. These findings substantiate Kahle (1995), who theorized that role-relaxed and low CSII consumers are less dependent on others for approval or guidance compared to low role-relaxed and high CSII consumers. This line of reasoning implies that social values, which, by definition, depend on significant others to be realized, would result in low levels of role-relaxation and high values of SCII, as was found here.

In contrast, we find that, contrary to expectations, high importance for self-fulfillment tends to be associated with high information-based susceptibility to interpersonal influence. In explaining this finding, we note that it only holds for the informational, but not the normative component of CSII. It might be that the information provided by others is necessary actualization of self-fulfillment. In other words, to the extent that self-fulfillment is based, in part, on purchase and consumption of certain products and services, high self-fulfillment importance might force consumers to seek information from knowledgeable others. This natural reliance on word of mouth would help explain the unexpected result.

Methodological Findings

Why did the relationships materialize for only a subset of the values in the LOV both as dependent and independent variables in our models? Notably, Florenthal, Treister, and Shoham (1999) and Kahle and Shoham (1995) have observed similar patterns in their Israeli and US studies, respectively. In these previous studies, as in ours, only some of the values in the LOV were significantly predicted by demographics and significantly affected role-relaxation. Below, we discuss these findings in the context of our methodological aims.

Recall that we measured the LOV using three different operationalizations. In study 1, we used the standard version of the LOV, measured on nine-point scales (1=important to me to 9=extremely important to me). We used a different introductory paragraph and different scale anchors, which were designed to capture a “share-of-thoughts” facet of the importance of values. We attempted to space out responses by using 11-point scales (0=almost never to 10=constantly) for each value, instead of the original 9-point scale. In Study 2, half responded to the standard version of the LOV, identical to that used in Study 1. The other half responded to the same introductory passage but rated the importance of each of the nine values on scales ranging from –5 (important to me) to +5 (extremely important to me).

These new approaches were designed to provide better measures for the importance of values compared to the traditional approach. Notably, using the traditional introductory paragraph with different anchors (-5 to +5) resulted in a less satisfactory set of distributions for the nine values. Skew statistics were higher than for the traditional LOV. Furthermore, values in this new measurement approach were not as good nomologically—fewer values were significantly predicted by age and gender compared to the traditional approach. Moreover, fewer values were significant predictors of role-relaxation and CSII relative to the traditional approach. One possible explanation for the ineffectiveness of the new scale may be the difference between the word anchors and the scale numbers. While it is possible to rate importance, from important to very important, on a scale from 1 to 9 (original scale), there might be a perceptual problem rating important as a 5. These new approaches were designed to provide better measures for the importance of values compared to the traditional approach. Notably, using the traditional introductory paragraph with different anchors (-5 to +5) resulted in a less satisfactory set of distributions for the nine values. Skew statistics were higher than for the traditional LOV. Furthermore, values in this new measurement approach were not as good nomologically—fewer values were significantly predicted by age and gender compared to the traditional approach. Moreover, fewer values were significant predictors of role-relaxation and CSII relative to the traditional approach. One possible explanation for the ineffectiveness of the new scale may be the difference between the word anchors and the scale numbers. While it is possible to rate importance, from important to very important, on a scale from 1 to 9 (original scale), there might be a perceptual problem rating important as a 5. Since the negative number does not imply importance. Thus, this new approach should not be used in future values’ research.

In contrast, the “share-of-thoughts” introductory paragraph, followed by the traditional, 9-point scales, appears to outperform the “daily life” introductory paragraph. Its skew statistics were lower. In fact, only one of the six distributions for items of the LOV departed significantly from normality, a marked improvement over the traditional LOV. Additionally, for the most part, this new approach resulted in stronger demographics-based predictions for values and in values being a stronger determinant of role-relaxation. Thus, the “share-of-thoughts” approach shows promise and deserves consideration in future research.

Yet, even with this improvement, not all values were predicted by demographics and not all values affected role relaxation and CSII. This was the basis for the question posed in the first paragraph of this section of the paper. We now discuss this by examining the “share-of-thoughts” findings, which, as noted, were the most promising.

As seen in Table 1, the means for the values under the “share-of-thoughts” approach were similar or slightly lower than for the traditional approach. When tested for mean differences, only one value (sense of belonging) was significantly different (and lower). Thus, the new approach did not change the means. However, the standard deviations for the six values under the new approach were consistently higher than under the traditional approach. The new approach resulted in more spaced out responses, but the differences are still modest. Thus, not all hypothesized relationships materialized because the new approach, while a step in the right direction,
still does not go far enough. Additional research is needed to improve and refine the “share-of-thoughts” approach to arrive at more balanced LOV distributions.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

We begin by examining the Israel-specific implications of our findings. First, older (versus younger) Israeli consumers place more importance on sense of belonging, warm relationships with others, self-fulfillment, and self-respect. The marketing mix should reflect these emphases when targeting the older Israeli consumers. For example, advertising to older consumers should emphasize elements of group activity, because warm relationships with others and sense of belonging are more important to such consumers. More generally, advertising targeted to different age groups should account for these differences as well.

Second, females (versus males) place more importance on sense of belonging, warm relationships with others, self-respect, and self-fulfillment. These should be reflected in the marketing mix. When designing an image for feminine products, marketers should stress these values. Even for family products, managers should take into account the values that are important to females. Numerous studies have examined family decision-making (e.g., Davis and Rigaux 1974). Specifically, Shoham, Rose, Botstein, and Pinzi (1996) studied family decision-making in Israel and reported that most decisions, for most products and decision phases, were female- or equal-dominant. Thus, since the four values are more important for females then for males, they can be used for targeting and positioning. The value warm relationships with others, which we refer to as “the global” female value, is probably the most useful in designing promotion and advertising for female-dominant products.

Combining these insights with the reported impact of social values on role-relaxation and CSII suggests that both outcomes can be stressed in message design. Executions depicting group settings may be especially effective for advertisements that emphasize social/external values such as being well respected.

Regarding cross-cultural implications, marketers should consider differences in value importance in the design of strategies and the decision whether to standardize or adapt them. Importantly, warm relationships with others are more important to females than to males regardless of culture. It was found to be very important to females in Israel, Taiwan, and the US. Thus, standardizing advertising messages to females by emphasizing warm relationships with others appears to be robust to the cultural context of the campaign.

We set two goals for this study, namely to add to the limited body of research on antecedents and consequences of values in Israel and to improve on the psychometric properties of the LOV. Both of these goals have been attained within the limits of this study.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study has several limitations. Respondents came from convenience samples. Additionally, the samples did not account for Israeli sub-cultures. For example, Arabs were not fully represented in Studies 1 and 2, although they are an important segment in Israel, accounting for about 10% of the population. Consequently, future research is needed with more representative samples of Israel’s diverse sub-cultures.

Moreover, future research should compare different sub-cultures in Israel to identify differences and similarities in value preferences. These should be studied in the context of differential effects on consumption behavior. Another interesting direction for future research may involve a comparison of values’ differences between Israeli consumers and consumers in neighboring Arab countries. Such research should be valuable to global firms as the Middle-East becomes more attractive as a market because of increasing standards of living and the reduction in political instability. Further research is also needed to improve on the psychometric properties of the LOV scale. While this study showed one possible solution, additional efforts are needed.

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes why Rasch Modelling is a valuable alternative to Classical Test Theory (CTT) when developing a scale to measure Affective Response to Consumption, an extension for satisfaction (Ganglmair and Lawson 2002). Selected characteristics related to item selection and reliability issues in CTT and Rasch Modelling are discussed. While features of CTT frequently lead to scales that measure a point on the dimension of interest, Rasch Models require the inclusion of items that tap different intensity levels, and thereby help to overcome shortcomings in current measurement, particularly regarding negative skewness and limited discrimination.

INTRODUCTION

Affective Response to Consumption (ARC) is an extension to satisfaction that has been developed after extensive literature research into the role of satisfaction in marketing, and the recognition of problems inherent in current measurement of satisfaction (Ganglmair 2001; Ganglmair and Lawson 2002).

While Classical Test Theory (CTT) is the unchallenged theory behind scale development in marketing, Rasch Modelling (Rasch 1960), although extensively used in educational measurement and other social sciences, has been almost entirely ignored. Rasch Modelling offers an alternative theory for constructing measurement that is based on a strict mathematical formula. It combines the ordering features of Guttman scaling with a more realistic probabilistic framework (Bond and Fox 2001). This paper compares a number of characteristics of both approaches to measurement, particularly those related to item generation and reliability. Rasch Modelling puts particular emphasis on covering the entire continuum and requires the inclusion of items with different intensity to achieve acceptable measures (Wright and Stone 1979). This feature is considered particularly useful for developing a measurement for ARC, as the concept is designed to cover the entire width of possible responses to an experience, particularly at the highest, positive end of the scale.

HISTORIC CONCEPTUALISATION OF SATISFACTION

In order to clarify the background under which ARC was developed, it is important to look at the historic development of satisfaction in marketing. Satisfaction is a key building block “in marketing philosophy, theory and practice” (Babin and Griffin 1998 p. 127), and can be regarded as a cornerstone in the marketing concept (Peterson and Wilson 1992). However, specific research interest in the area is relatively new. The beginning of the 20th century was mainly concerned with getting goods to the market and most writing was done in the area of distribution (Erevelles and Lockshin 1991). Satisfaction received only very limited attention. One of the first times satisfaction is mentioned in a marketing text was by Percival White, published in 1927. He states the need for market research in the area of customer satisfaction. Although satisfaction gained some importance during the Great Depression in the 1930s, the time after the Second World War can be seen as a time of increased consumer awareness and a shift towards consumer satisfaction (Erevelles and Lockshin 1991). The earliest significant satisfaction research was not until Cardozo’s classic article in 1965. From then on, customer satisfaction grew rapidly to become the cornerstone of marketing (Peterson and Wilson 1992), and a fundamental aspect of the marketing concept (Erevelles and Lockshin 1991), with tens of thousands of articles written on the topic, especially in the 1980s and early 1990s (Peterson and Wilson 1992).

Historically, satisfaction was viewed as a cognitive concept (Erevelles and Lockshin 1991; Hunt 1977; Westbrook 1987). It has been widely regarded as the product (outcome) of the expectation-disconfirmation comparison mentioned by Anderson in 1973 but widely introduced by Oliver in 1980. A majority of research uses variations of Oliver’s (1980) model and focuses on theoretical determinants of satisfaction. Halstead, Hartman and Schmidt (1994) state that modifications mainly add new predictor variables to provide greater explanatory power.

The expectation-disconfirmation research paradigm was still and is so dominant in satisfaction research that a special session, titled Is Satisfaction Research Dead?, at the Conference of Advances in Consumer Research in 2000, questioned the usefulness of further exploration of this out-researched comparison paradigm (Shiv and Soman 2000).

CONCEPTUALISATION OF AFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO CONSUMPTION

In the second half of the 1990s, affect and the potential role of emotions, became recognised as more important in marketing (Bagozzi, Gopinath and Nyer 1999; Erevelles 1998) and satisfaction research slowly started to investigate the possibility of an affective side of satisfaction. Satisfaction itself is still regarded as cognitive, but is viewed as being influenced by affective variables (e.g. Dupe-Rioux 1990; Evrard and Aurier 1994; Mano and Oliver 1993; Oliver 1989, 1992, 1994; Westbrook 1987; Westbrook and Oliver 1991; Wirtz, Mattila and Tan 2000).

Recently, a stream of research emerged that questions the strict distinction between satisfaction and other positive emotions altogether (e.g. Arnould and Price 1993; Bagozzi et al. 1999; Fournier et al. 1999; Fournier and Mick 1999; Giese and Cote 2000). These studies found that people do not use satisfaction in order to express the outcome of an experience (Fisher et al. 1999; Fournier and Mick 1999; Giese and Cote 1999). Instead, satisfaction is exchanged for stronger emotional terms like happy (Giese and Cote 1999) and people express their level of satisfaction only if they are explicitly asked to do so (Fisher et al. 1994). In a paper on The Role of Emotions in Marketing, Bagozzi et al. (1999) express their doubts about the strict distinction between satisfaction and other emotions when they state that: “… it is unclear whether satisfaction is phenomenologically distinct from many other positive emotions. The centrality of satisfaction in marketing studies is perhaps more due to being the first emotion to receive scrutiny in postpurchase behaviour research than to constituting a unique, fundamental construct in and of itself” (p. 201). Furthermore, the strict distinction between satisfaction and other positive emotions fails to appear in one of marketing’s most important parent discipline—psychology (Shep, Gardener and Garrett 1988; Shaver et al. 1987; Storm and Storm 1987).

ARC has been conceptualised in line with this research (Ganglmair and Lawson 2002). It is an emotional continuum that
does not rely on a single term (or a small number of terms) to express the outcome of an experience, but shifts the focus to a multitude of positive emotions. The relatively weak word satisfaction can be complemented by words that describe much stronger emotional states found in post-purchase/post-experience situations.

Thus in line with Bagozzi et al., ARC conceptualises satisfaction as one of many positive emotions. It thereby extends current theories of satisfaction by including terms that people use when they talk about their experiences: e.g. happy, pleased (Fisher Gardial et al. 1994, Giese and Cote 2000), and by including stronger terms than the ones currently used. Inclusion of strongly positive words is considered necessary, as satisfaction scales regularly produce negative skewness and discriminate only weakly between respondents (Peterson and Wilson 1992).

Scales currently used to measure satisfaction that include more than one emotion (e.g. Delighted-Terrible scale (Andrew and Withey 1976)) have not been developed explicitly in a marketing context. The content of variations of emotion scales that were developed in psychology (e.g. Differential Emotions Scales (Izard 1977) or Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance scale (Mehrabian and Russel 1974)) is also suboptimal in a consumption context (Richins, 1997). While Richins’ (1997) Consumption Emotion Set (CES) aims to cover the entire space of emotions experienced during consumption including fear, ARC originates from the term satisfaction and puts the emphasis solely on emotions that reflect favourable/unfavourable responses to consumption experiences.

ARC is only concerned with the single dimension of emotions that relates to consumption. While the existence of mixed emotions is not denied, a recent study shows that they are the exception, rather than the norm (Larsen, McGraw and Cacioppo, 2001). In a marketing context, Mackoy and Spreng (1995) also found only weak evidence for different dimensions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and question whether people truly think about the same things when they answer two-dimensional questions.

In ongoing research, the first author has generated an extensive item pool (715 words). As this original list was composed of a large variety of terms gained from extensive literature search (studies in marketing and psychology, as well as three thesauri), some of which where clearly not suitable, three judges with qualifications in English were asked to select items that an average New Zealander could appropriately use as a possible response to the question: How do you feel about your experience with this excursion train ride. The judges chose 29 items for inclusion in a scale to measure ARC and rated the items on a five-point scale from strongly negative to strongly positive. Interestingly, all terms suggested by the literature e.g. satisfied, happy, pleased or delighted are rated on the same intensity level, namely positive. The scale to measure ARC will also include a number of items that are rated strongly positive e.g. enthralled, fantastic, and superb in order to ensure sufficient discrimination and avoid negative skewness.

PROBLEMS WITH CURRENT SATISFACTION MEASUREMENT

With ARC being conceptualised as an extension of satisfaction, it is important to look at scales currently used to measure satisfaction to overcome present shortcomings and limitations. Measurement of satisfaction and satisfaction scale development has gained only limited attention (Babin and Griffen 1998). Studies published by Oliver and Westbrook more than 20 years ago, are still the most cited sources for scales ((Oliver 1980, 1981; Westbrook 1980; Westbrook and Oliver 1981) c.f. Babin and Griffen 1998). The lack of measurement research is not confined to satisfaction, but is a characteristic of marketing in general, although it is supposed to be a fundamental activity of social science (DeVellis 1991). As early as 1967 Hughes titled an article Measurement, the Neglected Half of Marketing Theory (c.f. Parameswaran et al. 1979, p. 18) and Jacoby (1978) mentioned about ten years later that “…most of our measures are only measures because someone says that they are, not because they have been shown to satisfy standard measurement criteria” (p.91). In spite of this early criticism and calls for further investigations into the topic, basic measurement issues are still widely neglected in marketing.

Peterson and Wilson (1992) are two of only a few researchers who investigated problems inherent in measuring satisfaction. In their article Measuring Customer Satisfaction: Fact and Artefact Peterson and Wilson (1992) discuss a striking characteristic of satisfaction measurement: “Virtually all self-reports of customer satisfaction possess a distribution in which a majority of the responses indicate that customers are satisfied. … Moreover, the modal response to a satisfaction question is typically the most positive response allowed” (Peterson and Wilson 1992, p.62). The ceiling effect limits the suitability of commonly used data analysis techniques and reduces the possibility of uncovering group differences (Diener and Fujita 1995). Although observations of the phenomenon are discussed in several articles (Diener 1984; La Barbara and Mazursky 1983; Oliver 1981; Westbrook 1980), negatively skewed distribution in consumer satisfaction has been frequently overlooked (Peterson and Wilson 1992). A number of possible explanations for the special characteristic of satisfaction have been investigated but none of them seem to be conclusive and sufficient (Diener and Fujita 1995; Peterson and Wilson 1992).

It is therefore surprising that, while thousands of articles have been written investigating variables that influence satisfaction (Halstead et al. 1994), only a few articles focusing specifically on measurement have appeared in top marketing journals (Babin and Griffin 1998).

RASCH MODELLING

In line with general social sciences, the Classical Test Theory (CTT) has been the leading measurement paradigm in marketing (Embreton 1996; Hambleton 1991; Salzberger, Sinkovics and Schlegelmilch 1999). Extensive discussions of the classic approach can be found in Lord and Novick (1968) or Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). In marketing, the most influential paper for scale development based on CTT is Churchill’s (1979) classical piece, A Paradigm for Developing Better Measures of Marketing Constructs that has become the standard work when developing new measurement instruments.

However, George Rasch (1960) developed an alternative approach to measurement. Originally intended for educational measurement, Rasch Modelling follows mathematical and scientific rules of measurement and aims at introducing rigid rules of measurement—similar to physics—into social sciences (Wright 1997). Rasch Modelling specifies what data has to look like to constitute measurement, while leaving the question of whether measurement is accomplished to empiricism (Salzberger et al. 1999).

Although it measures an abstract construct (latent trait), the model has the same measurement properties as a ruler. Its mathematical characteristics allow a transformation from binary or ordinal answer patterns, as they are commonly observed in marketing surveys (e.g. Likert type data), into measures on an equal-interval scale (Peck 2000). The mathematical model is based “on a probabilistic relation between any item’s difficulty and any person’s ability” (Bond and Fox 2001, p.199). Rasch belongs to the family of logit models and its basic formula for binary data can be shown as:
These aspects are considered important for explaining respect to item selection and reliability issues under the heading of one-parameter IRT (Embretson 1996; Embretson and Reise 2000; Hambleton 1991; van der Linden and Hambleton 1999).

Item Response Theorists frequently discuss Rasch Models with the construct in question (Steinberg and Thissen 1996). High alpha values might therefore be indicative of an inferior rather than superior quality of the scale e.g. due to duplicative items (Smith 1999).

In comparison, the Rasch Model is based on a strict mathematical model of a theoretical relationship (Bond and Fox 2001). The model represents an ideal form and neither items nor persons will ever fit it perfectly, instead the researcher is interested in which items or persons derive more than expected from the ideal model (Bond and Fox 2001). Therefore, item and person fit in relation to the model are computed (Wright 1977) and the items’ observed fit to the model is taken to investigate unidimensionality (Soutar and Monroe 2001).

In a Rasch Model items and respondents are projected on the same dimension and become directly comparable. Rasch Software programs e.g. RUMM 2010 (Andrich, Sheridan and Lou 2001) provides indices and visual displays that help to establish whether items spread sufficiently along the continuum as opposed to clump together on one point of the dimension. Persons are also investigated concerning their spread. This enables the researcher to visualize if and where additional items are necessary to cover the entire dimension of the construct, including extreme positions.

WHY RASCH MODELLING SUITS THE MEASUREMENT OF AFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO CONSUMPTION

Currently used satisfaction scales that have been developed in the tradition of Classical Test Theory, constantly show limited discrimination and a strong negative skewness (Peterson and Wil-
son 1992; Diener and Fujita 1995; Diener 1984). These characteristics not only distort results of frequently used statistical procedures (Diener and Fujita), but also question the managerial usefulness of results gained. The limited discrimination of existing scale suggests that only a point on the dimension rather than the entire continuum is being measured, while the overwhelming use of the most positive answer category illustrates that this point is on a rather weak point on the continuum.

By introducing the concept of Affective Response to Consumption as an extension to satisfaction, the emphasis shifts from one word to a number of positive terms that can be used to express an experience and allows the inclusion of stronger words to insure that the entire dimension—up to the very positive end—is covered. It has been pointed out that Rasch Modelling encourages the use of items with different intensities during scale development, while CTT is likely to eliminate especially difficult or easy to endorse items due to their lower correlation with other terms in the scale. Indices and graphic displays provided by Rasch Modelling further enables the researcher to determine whether the chosen items spread sufficiently along a continuum and where additional items might be included in the scale.

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Recently traditional satisfaction research has been questioned, particularly the lack of the inclusion of stronger emotions found when people are asked about expressing their experience (Arnould and Price 1993; Fournier and Mick 1999; Giese and Cote 2000). Affective Response to Consumption provides an extension to the traditional view of satisfaction by being conceptualised as an emotion that includes a large variety of possible responses to experiences.

Rasch Modelling was developed in the 1960s (Rasch 1960) and although it has been widely used in other social sciences, its use in marketing has been very limited. It provides a useful tool to develop scales in marketing, especially a scale for measuring Affective Response to Consumption, as the model encourages the inclusion of items that tap different intensity levels of a continuum, and should therefore help to overcome shortcomings in currently used scales regarding lack of discrimination and negative skewness.

In ongoing research, the first author has engaged in an extensive item generation process that resulted in a pool of 29 items. First validity checks by three experts of the English language show that these items tap the entire continuum of ARC. In the next phase of the research, a measurement instrument for ARC will be developed using Rasch Modelling Software RUMM2010 (Andrich et al. 2001). This scale will be tested against currently used scales measuring satisfaction e.g. Delighted-Terrible Scale (Andrew and Whitley 1976) regarding its ability to avoid negative skewness and discriminate between respondents.

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Developing a Parsimonious Measure of High-Low Context Communication Style

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ABSTRACT

High- versus low-context communication style (HLCCS) refers to the extent to which individuals rely on contextual cues for meaning (high-context–HC) as opposed to attending to the literal text alone (low-context–LC). Seeking to develop a practical measurement, two studies were undertaken. The first study replicated 6 of 8 original factors identified by Gudykunst et al. (1996). A seventh factor combined two of the original eight. Four top loading items from each factor (28 total) were then subjected to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using a second sample to assess the reduced scale’s validity. While promising, the CFA results indicate a need for further refinement.

INTRODUCTION

High-versus low-context communication content has been extensively examined in advertising as an example of differences in advertising strategy across countries (e.g., Callow and Schiffman 2001; Cho et al. 1999). Content analytic studies have consistently confirmed that advertisements from Western cultures employ more direct, verbal and/or printed text communication (low-context–LC), while those in Eastern cultures rely more on indirect and often subtle cues “surrounding” the overall advertisement (high-context–HC; cf., Cho et al. 1999). Content analytic studies have made major contributions by documenting the prevalence of HC versus LC advertisements in different cultures. However, relatively little is known about the ways that individual differences on high versus low-context communication content (HLCCS) impact the relative effectiveness of advertising content within and across cultures. To date, three advertising studies involving high-versus low-context communication have employed an experimental approach (Callow and Schiffman 2001, forthcoming; Taylor, Miracle, and Wilson 1997). However, in these studies, the construct was not measured at the individual level. Rather, Korean, Filipino, and Spanish participants were assumed to employ a high-context communication style (HCCS) while their American counterparts were assumed to employ a low-context communication style (LCCS).

We believe that the scarcity of the experimental research using HLCCS stems in part from the lack of a valid, reliable and practical measure of the construct at the individual level. The absence of such a measure is surprising given that HLCCS along with individualism-collectivism are two of the most frequently cited differences in advertising content across cultures (Taylor et al. 1997).

HIGH-VERSUS LOW-CONTEXT COMMUNICATION STYLE (HLCCS)

According to Hall (1976, p.91), “a high-context communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. A low-context communication is just the opposite; i.e., the mass of the message is vested in the explicit code.” Certain cultures are hypothesized to encourage one or the other as the preferred style of communication. Thus, interpersonal communication in HC cultures is usually characterized as more indirect, nonverbal and ambiguous. In LC cultures, on the other hand, communication is relatively more direct, verbal, and unequivocal (Gudykunst and Matsumoto 1996). Hall (1976) identifies northern European, western European, and northern American countries as LC cultures and southern European, East Asian and Latin American countries as HC cultures. Despite widespread discussion of the construct, an extensive review of the literatures in marketing, advertising, speech communication and management revealed a limited number of studies that have attempted to develop individual level difference measures of HLCCS. These measures are now discussed.

EXISTING MEASURES OF HLCCS

Gudykunst et al.’s (1996) Measure

Gudykunst et al. (1996) developed an 80-item self-report scale using subjects from two HC countries (Korea and Japan) and two LC countries (the US and Australia). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) indicated that the scale tapped eight dimensions of the construct. Six of these were hypothesized to reflect LCCS and two, HC (see Figure 1). Most of the dimensions are in line with Hall’s (1976) description of high versus low-context culture, for example, use of indirect/ambiguous communication in HC interactions. Interpersonal sensitivity also appears to have face validity as a HC dimension. Given the strong association of context-dependent cues with HC communication, interpersonal sensitivity appears far more important in HC interaction than it would in situations in which printed and verbal text were paramount (i.e., as in LC interactions).

Furthermore, use of feelings to guide communication behavior does seem less likely in HC cultures as HC communicators often must minimize display of feelings in order to maintain relationships (Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey 1988). As a result, high scores on this dimension seem likely to reflect preference for a LCCS. Dramatic communication is another dimension hypothesized to be LC. Here too, face validity is suggested by the observation that LC communicators more frequently view argument, persuasion and larger numbers of words as important to communication (De Mooij 1994). Finally, openness and preciseness are labeled as LC dimensions. This is justified by the reasoning that consumers in LC cultures tend to be more explicit and direct (Hall 1976). Whereas conversation in LC cultures is expected to provide neither more or less information than is required, verbal conversation in HC cultures often involves understatement (Gudykunst and Matsumoto 1996).

Despite such face valid EFA results, two dimensions from Gudykunst et al.’s (1996) factor analysis appear counterintuitive. First, Gudykunst et al. (1996) hypothesized that a high perceived ability to infer reflects LCCS. The researchers argue that on the surface, inferring others’ remarks is part of HC communication. However, the inference is said to be “taken-for-granted” in HC cultures. What is measured is the ‘perceived ability’ to infer as opposed to what people actually do and because individuals in HC cultures take inference for granted, Gudykunst et al. (1996) argue that LC communicators will rate their “perceived ability to infer” more highly than will HC communicators. However, this argument is at odds with empirical findings reported by Holtgraves (1997) who reported that HC Korean scored significantly higher than LC Americans on interpretation of conversational indirectness—a trait which presumably requires high levels of self-perceived inferential ability. Gudykunst et al.’s (1996) position is also at odds with that of Singelis and Brown (1995) who argue that the ability to intu-
itively understand others is a HC characteristic. As a consequence, the actual validity of this dimension as an indicator of LCCS is subject to question.

The other counterintuitive dimension is silence. In LC cultures, silence is space to be filled. In HC cultures, silence conveys meanings. Based on this functional difference, people in LC cultures would generally be assumed to experience more discomfort with silence because it interrupts the flow of conversation (Gudykunst and Matsumoto 1996). Therefore, LC communicators would be expected to hold more negative attitudes toward conversational silence. Gudykunst et al. (1996) argue the opposite. They suggest that because HC people tend to use silence to convey negative information, LC communicators will express relatively more positive attitudes toward silence. This position is supported by Hasegawa and Gudykunst (1998) who report that Japanese versus Americans have a more negative view of silence when communicating with strangers. Even without solid evidence that HC communicators use silence predominantly to communicate negative information, the theoretical rationale employed by Gudykunst et al. (1996) appears questionable and is ripe for an additional study.

Kim, Pan, and Park’s (1998) Measure
Developed using samples from the U.S., China, and Korea, Kim, Pan, and Park’s (1998) 16-item scale does not directly measure preference for HLCCS. Rather, their scale is hypothesized to measure five correlated constructs: social orientation, responsibility, confrontation, communication/commitment, and dealing with new situations. As predicted, Chinese and Koreans (Americans) displayed characteristics consistent with HC (LC) communication. For example, Chinese and Koreans were more socially oriented, less confrontational, and more content with current ways of living than Americans. Although consistent with high-versus low-context (HLC) characteristics, the relationships between these constructs and actual communication style have not been directly tested. Rather than representing styles of communication per se, it appears more reasonable to view the five constructs as antecedents to or consequences of HLCCS.

Other Measures
There are other measures that are relevant to a discussion of HLCCS. For example, the Conversational Indirectness Scale or CIS (Holtgraves 1997) was developed to measure the extent to which individuals prefer to communicate indirectly. Although evidence suggests this scale is both reliable and valid (Holtgraves 1997), it taps only one dimension of HLC communication (indirectness). Based on the literature, HLC appears to be a multi-dimensional construct. As a consequence, CIS is unlikely to tap the richness of the HLC construct relative to approaches proposed by Gudykunst et al. (1996) and Kim et al. (1998).

Finally, Singelis and Brown’s (1995) measure uses HLC communication as an outcome variable through a set of four scenarios. Each scenario features three parts: (a) a short description of the people in the scenario, (b) a description of the setting of the scenario, and (c) a verbatim dialogue consisting of an exchange of a greeting, a request and a response. Six questions measuring reliance on context, attributions to context and receiver versus sender orientation follow each scenario. Unfortunately, the lengthy format in this approach limits its usefulness in experimental work in which subjects are typically exposed to multiple stimuli and measures. In addition, the scenarios, by nature, are context-specific. As a consequence, scenarios developed with student subjects might not be applicable for non-student subjects. With a similar line of reasoning, scenarios developed in a LC culture might not work as well for subjects from a HC culture.
After thorough review of the relevant measures, we have the following concerns regarding their practicality in experimental and survey settings. First, use of Singelis and Brown’s (1995) scenario measure may require excessive time and limit researcher’s ability to execute multi-factor/multi-measure designs or surveys in the field. Second, Holtgraves’s (1997) CIS approach taps only one of several dimensions associated with the HLC construct. Third, Kim et al.’s (1998) scale measures HLCCS through five constructs that appear more appropriate as antecedents or consequences rather than direct indicators.

As noted earlier, Gudykunst et al.’s (1996) scale attempts to directly measure an individual’s HLCCS. In addition, its self-report format makes it practical for use in both experimental and survey settings. Even so, questions remain regarding the validity of some of the scale’s dimensions. Such questions, coupled with a need to reduce the current scale’s 80-item format, suggest possible benefits from further research prior to application. To this end, we conducted two studies.

STUDY 1
Study 1 seeks to determine whether or not Gudykunst et al.’s (1996) original eight factors that emerged following EFA are replicable. Assuming a reasonable EFA solution, Study 1 also provides a basis for selecting a reduced number of items for further testing.

Method
Two hundred and six junior and senior business students from a major Western university participated in this study. Extra credit was given to increase motivation. The original 80-item Gudykunst et al.’s (1996) scale was distributed to students as a take-home survey. One hundred and ninety-three usable questionnaires were returned. There were slightly more female than male students (107 vs. 86).

Results
The means of the 80 items ranged from 2.52 to 5.85 (from 7-point scale) with standard deviations from 1.04 to 1.75. The 80 items were factor analyzed using principal axis factor extraction with promax rotation since the HLC factors are thought to be correlated (Gudykunst et al. 1996). An imposed 8-factor EFA solution accounted for 62% of the total variance compared with 30% from the original study. Six factors which are similar to the original factors emerged. The first factor was comprised of items previously on the Dramatic Communication and Openness dimensions. Given the combination of constructs, we have re-labeled the factor as Self-Expressive Communication. The eighth factor was dropped due to interpretation difficulty. It contained only 3 items from Gudykunst et al.’s (1996) Openness and Preciseness factors.

To shorten the scale, four items with the highest factor loadings from each of the seven retained factors were selected. Altogether, 28 items remained in the shortened version. These 28 items are provided in the Appendix. The reliabilities of the 7 four-item factors ranged from .55 to .83. The four items in each factor were combined to compute sum scores. The sum score of each factor exhibited a high correlation with the original longer version, ranging from .81 to .93. This result provides preliminary evidence that the shortened version accurately represents the latent constructs from the full scale.

Factors from the original 80-item scale were replicated fairly well in this study. This confirmed the robustness of the proposed factors in the original scale. However using the original scale in the consumer research remains problematic due to its length. The shortened version appears promising but would benefit from further validity testing prior to use. To this end, we now present the results of Study 2.

STUDY 2
The primary objective of Study 2 is to assess the reliability and validity of the shortened version of Gudykunst et al.’s (1996) scale. Reliability is tested through an attempted replication of our initial EFA results using the reduced version of the scale. Validity is determined using two approaches. First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is employed to discover how well the theoretical latent factor model fits the data. Second, relationships of the shortened scale with scales measuring related constructs are identified, including the Conversational Indirectness Scale (Holtgraves 1997); Self-Construal Scale (Singelis 1994); and the Five Cultural Dimensions Scale, based on Hofstede (1990) and developed by Furrr, Liu, and Sudharshan (2000).

Conversational Indirectness (Holtgraves 1997) refers to the extent to which people express their meanings directly or indirectly and the extent to which they look for indirect meanings from others. As noted earlier, this construct is theoretically related to HLC because one distinction of HC versus LC is the use of indirect and direct communication. As a consequence we expected this construct to exhibit higher correlation with HC items in Gudykunst et al.’s scale than with LC items. The Conversational Indirectness Scale or CIS (Holtgraves 1997) is comprised of 19 items measuring two separate but related dimensions: conversational indirectness interpretation and production. The scale’s reliability and validity have been supported in previous research and it has been cross-culturally validated. For example, a series of studies by Holtgraves (1997) found that reliability ranged from .89 to .91. The scale’s convergent validity and disciminant validity have also been demonstrated with several other measures, including: need for cognition, self-monitoring, assertiveness and social desirability.

Another conceptually related construct is self-construal. Previous research found that the use of HC communication is related to interdependent self-construal while the use of LC communication is related to independent self-construal (Gudykunst et al. 1996; Singelis and Brown 1995). As a result, it is expected that the nomological validity of the shortened scale will be demonstrated through the correlations with this construct. Self-construal was measured with Singelis (1994)’s self-construal scale (SCS). This scale measures two images of self. Both are conceptualized as reflecting an emphasis on connectedness and social relations (interdependent) or separateness and uniqueness of the individual (independent). The scale has been extensively used in consumer research (e.g., Aaker 2000).

Hofstede (1990) identifies five cultural dimensions; i.e., individualism (the extent to which ties between individuals are loose or tight); power distance (the extent to which the less powerful members expect and accept that power is distributed unequally); masculinity (the extent to which social gender roles are clearly distinct); uncertainty avoidance (the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain situations); and long-term orientation (the extent to which a society exhibits a pragmatic future-oriented perspective rather than a historic or short-term point of view).

We expect that individualism will correlate with HLC scores because this cultural dimension is related to self-construal (SC). However the magnitude of the correlation of individualism and HLCCS should be smaller than that between self-construal and HLC because SC is hypothesized to mediate the relationship (Gudykunst et al. 1996; Singelis and Brown 1995). In addition,
HLCCS should exhibit low or no correlation with the other four cultural dimensions. Because Hofstede’s original research setting was the workplace, we employed Furrer et al.’s (2000) measures, which were adapted for use in a consumer research setting.

Method

Procedures followed those used in Study 1, except that students completed not only the shortened 28-item (instead of the full version) scale but also CIS, SCS, and Hofstede’s cultural dimension scales. Two hundred and forty-six useable questionnaires were analyzed.

Results

EFA produced a 7-factor solution similar to that reported in Study 1 with similar reliabilities. This outcome further suggests that the shortened version reliably represents the full 80-item scale. To analyze the validity of the 7-factor solution, HC and LC items were subjected to CFA as two separate dimensions. The rationale for this approach was two-fold. First, preliminary analysis of the sum scores showed that the sum scores of HC items and LC items were uncorrelated (r=.02, p=n.s.). In addition, HLCCS has been found to be a consequence of independent-interdependent self-construals. Because these two SC dimensions are considered by Singelis (1994) as orthogonal, it seems reasonable to assume that HLCCS will exhibit a similar relationship.

Our CFA analysis produced mixed results. The indices in Table 1 suggest that the HC model in Figure 2 fits the data reasonably well, but the LC model falls short of achieving a satisfactory overall fit. In particular, for the LC model, the GFI and CFI measures were slightly lower than .9, which are below recommended limits (Browne and Cudek 1993).

In addition, although the HC model achieved a relatively good overall fit, the two latent variables in the HC model exhibited an unexpected negative correlation (-.17) and some item loadings were less than ideal.

Relations with other scales

To assess nomological validity, correlations of HLC scores with other theoretically related scales were computed. Four items in each factor were combined to yield a sum score for each factor.
Developing a Parsimonious Measure of High-Low Context Communication Style

Next, sum scores from the HC factors were combined and sum scores from LC factors were combined. As result, each respondent had two scores, one for HC and the other for LC communication. HLC correlations with the CIS, SCS, and Hofstede’s cultural dimensions are shown in Table 2.

The HC (LC) sum score was significantly related to interdependent (independent) self as predicted. However, the smaller but still significant correlation between LC and interdependent self was not expected. Furthermore, there was a significant correlation between LCCS and the CIS interpretation dimension but not CIS production. The first correlation seems counterintuitive inasmuch as one would not expect LC communicators to be strong on indirect interpretation. However, this result is consistent with Gudykunst et al.’s (1996) argument that LC communicators have higher perceived (not necessarily actual) ability to infer others’ message. As expected, HC exhibited significant correlations with both CIS interpretation and production dimensions.

Finally, correlations between HC and LC dimensions and Hofstede’s cultural dimensions were not significant. This outcome was expected for four of the dimensions and indicates that the reduced scale possesses good discriminant validity. In addition, the fact that individualism/collectivism was not significantly related to HC/LC does not necessarily suggest lack of convergent validity, as this measure is undoubtedly less sensitive than its individual difference level counterpart, self-construal, which was positively correlated with HC/LC as expected.

### DISCUSSION

This research is an initial attempt to provide a HLC scale that can be used in either experimental or survey consumer research. The original 80-item Gudykunst et al.’s (1996) scale was first reduced to 28 items based on an EFA, which replicated the original study reasonably well. Both this study and a second study indicated that the shortened version reliably represents the original scale. Furthermore, the second study provides preliminary evidence of the shortened scale’s promise. However, Study 2’s findings also indicate the need for additional research before consumer scholars can confidently apply the more parsimonious scale (or the full scale, given the high correlations between the longer and shorter versions).

First, as previously discussed, not all CFA fit indices achieved ideal levels. In addition, three out of seven dimensions in Study 1 and four out of seven dimensions in Study 2 had alphas below the traditional cut-off of .70. Thus, certain items or even dimensions may need to be rephrased, removed or added. Using only the LC items may be considered, given the low alphas (<.60) of the two HC dimensions. Second, our respondents were students at an American university. A test of the shortened scale in other cultures using a mix of groups viewed as predominantly HC versus LC would strengthen the cross-cultural validity of the scale.

Finally, to illustrate the potential value of future research using this scale, we performed a second CFA using the data from Study 2. In this analysis, Factor 6, silence was dropped from the model.

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### TABLE 1
Fit Indices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fit Measures</th>
<th>LC Model</th>
<th>HC Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
<td>295.01</td>
<td>42.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Freedom</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodness-of-fit Index (GFI)</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted GFI</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative Fit Index (CFI)</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90% confidence level of RMSEA</td>
<td>0.05-0.07</td>
<td>0.04-0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 2
Correlation of HLC with CIS, SCS and Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LC</th>
<th>HC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent Self</td>
<td>.47*</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependent Self</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.49*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIS (Interpretation)</td>
<td>.27*</td>
<td>.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIS (Production)</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.35*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Distance</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualism</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty Avoidance</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-Term Orientation</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*significant at p<.05 level
This was done for two reasons. First, the previous CFA had resulted in a negative correlation between silence and all the other factors. This counterintuitive outcome casts doubt on the construct’s face validity within the nomological net specified by Gudykunst et al.’s (1996) model since all factors are hypothesized to directly predict LC. In addition, as mentioned earlier, there are theoretical reasons for questioning the validity of silence as a LC factor. CFA results suggest that the 4-factor, 16-item LC model fits the data better (Chi-Square=192.56, df=98, GFI=.91, AGFI=.88, CFI=.89, 90% confidence level of RMSEA=.05-.07) than the 5-factor model. Results such as these suggest that one or more of Gudykunst et al.’s (1996) factors may be more problematic than others.

It is also possible that the less than desirable outcome regarding HLC scale development is due in part to the effects of postmodernity on general consumer experience. That is, multiple realities are rapidly developing and previously valid categories of cultural patterns, for example, HLCCS may not be as relevant (Steenkamp, Batra and Alden 2003). A casual glance at magazines, whether they are from the West or the East, will reveal advertisements with charged images, but little or no text. These advertisements, which may have been previously categorized as indirect or HC, are more prevalent in this meaning-charged world, and consumers, whether they are culturally LC or HC, may be increasingly more adept at interpreting indirect meanings. New conceptualization of HLC may be required to develop a more ecologically valid scale.

In sum, these studies have attempted to develop a valid yet parsimonious measure of HLC at the individual level. Given the wide scope of the HLC concept, and the complexity of its underlying dimensions, future research to better understand the construct and refine its measurement appears warranted.

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We appreciate the comment from an anonymous reviewer for this direction.
APPENDIX

Twenty-eight items that were remained in the parsimonious version of Gudykunst et al.’s (1996) HLC Scale.

Factor 1 (Self-Expressiveness)
25. I dramatize a lot when I communicate.
19. I verbally exaggerate to emphasize a point.
16. I tell jokes, anecdotes and stories when I communicate.
17. I tend to constantly gesture when I communicate.

Factor 2 (Inferring)
22. I am very good at knowing the feelings other people are experiencing.
4. I can distinguish between a sincere invitation and one intended as a gesture of politeness.
5. Even if I do not receive a clear and definite response from others, I can understand what they intended.
1. I catch on to what others mean even when they do not say it directly.

Factor 3 (Feeling)
2. My feelings tell me how to act in a given situation.
24. My emotions tell me what to do in many cases.
3. I use my feelings to determine whether to trust another person.
23. I listen to what my “gut” or “heart” says in many situations.

Factor 4 (Indirectness)
11. I am ambiguous when I communicate with others.
7. Others have to guess what I mean when we communicate.
9. I use silence to avoid upsetting others when I communicate.
8. I avoid eye contact when I communicate with others.

Factor 5 (Sensitivity)
12. I maintain harmony in my communication with others.
27. In interacting with my superiors, I am always polite.
14. When I turn down an invitation, I make sure that the other person is not offended.
28. In interacting with someone I dislike, I keep my true feelings hidden.

Factor 6 (Silence)
13. I can sit with another person, not say anything, and still be comfortable.
26. I do not like conversational silence.
15. I feel comfortable with silences in conversations.
6. I think that untalkative people are boring.

Factor 7 (Preciseness)
10. In argument, I insist upon very precise definitions.
18. I insist that other people document or present some kind of proof for what they are saying.
20. I openly show my disagreement with others.
21. When I disagree with a person in authority, I express my disagreement.
ABSTRACT

We present the inferential statistics for Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha. This index of reliability is extremely important in marketing research. The estimation of alpha and the confidence intervals is described, and we illustrate the effects on these statistics of their components, including the number of items, the item intercorrelations, and sample size. We offer SAS programming code for easy implementation.

Acknowledgement

The authors are grateful to Professor van Zyl for his thoughtful and encouraging correspondence.
The purpose of this session is to present a series of studies that offer new insights into the relationships between collecting, collectors and collections.

Collectors and their collections and collecting behaviour have attracted increased interest at ACR conferences over the past ten years. This literature focuses on the ways in which people collect and the reasons for establishing and building their collections. Most often these studies are based on psychological perspectives, examining the subject from the position of an individual actor, the collector, with a view to identifying why people collect (Cheetham 2002:2, who cites in support, Belk 1995a; Belk 1982; Belk et al. 1988; Guerzoni and Troilo 1998; Holbrook 1987; Pollay, 1987; Troilo 1999). Drawing on ethnographic approaches and also netnography, the papers in this special session offer four new perspectives on researching collectors, collections and collecting behaviour.

The first paper (Cheetham) uses ethnography to explore collecting from the perspective of material culture. Cheetham’s paper draws on ‘process sociology’ to examine the processes within which “novelty teapot collectors and the novelty teapots they collect are produced as entities in a network of relationships that are materially and socially contingent”. Cheetham argues for using a material culture (rather than a consumer behaviour perspective) because it ensures that the three aspects: collecting, collectors, and collections – remain embedded in the material and social environment, rather than being abstracted from it (as is often found in studies which draw on psychology).

This theme of the collecting community is also examined in the second paper (Hooi Beh and Pickton) which explores the interactions between collecting, collectors and collections within the context of a brand community (Muniz and O’Guinn 2001). McAlester et al (2002) have recently extended Muniz and O’Guinn’s traditional model of customer-brand-relationships within brand communities, to encompass a wider variety of dyadic relationships. The authors explore the customer-customer dyad within a brand community of Mini car owners using a netnographic approach. Their paper demonstrates how the behaviors of swapping and trading are central to building and enhancing the social interactions within this brand community of collectors. Whereas Cheetham’s ethnographic study of a collecting community was undertaken in a traditional field setting; Hooi Beh and Pickton’s study of the role of collecting within a brand community was conducted online in a virtual environment.

In the third paper (Hughes) draws on dyads and also gender for her research. Her examination of dyadic relationships concentrates on the dyads represented by collecting couples. Long term participant observation in the field allows Hughes to offer a series of observations about these dyadic relationships, as well as the gendered nature of collecting behaviour and the discourses which surround it. She identifies a number of potential dimensions from the literature (e.g. instrumentality versus self-expressiveness) and from her findings (competition/competitiveness versus collaboration/co-operativeness) around which to conceptualize the differences between male and female behaviour in the world of collecting.

In the final paper (Nee Loh) the focus moves to what happens to collections when they are broken up and disposed of. Rather than being interested in how goods and possessions are invested in meaning (which was one of the key themes explored in the first three papers), this paper is interested in how collections are divested of meaning: and the impact of this on the collector. This provides the opportunity to bring a different perspective to bear on the traditional interrelationships between collectors, collecting and collectors in order to capture the dynamic and changing aspects of the collector’s world towards the end of the life cycle of the collection. It also shows again, the importance of the social context for collecting behaviour, although in this case collecting often serves as much to disrupt, as to enhance, interpersonal ties, because the collections often become the focus of disagreement.

ABSTRACTS

“Totally Teapots: The Material Culture of Novelty Teapot Collecting”

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This paper addresses shortcomings in consumer behaviour research on collecting, contributing critical insights to research on collecting material objects specifically, and material consumption generally. This is achieved through two specific and interrelated means: first by employing an ethnographic research methodology to situate collecting within the material and social environment within which it is embedded and second by treating collecting as an incidence of material culture rather than a form of consumer behaviour. Fieldwork undertaken with a novelty teapot collectors’ club has comprised mainly participant observation. This has involved listening to and observing collectors, dealers and manufacturers as they interact with each other, through the handling, buying, selling, bidding, admiring and swapping of novelty teapots.

The relationship between collectors and their collections has received particular attention in the literature. However these analyses have tended to coalesce in a functional approach, which identifies the potential for a collection to serve as an extension of the self. This notion is most clearly articulated by Belk in his early research on collecting (see Belk 1988; Belk et al. 1988 and 1991), but is widely acknowledged across the literature (see Formanek 1991; Smith and Apter 1977; Stoor 1983). Nonetheless, the self-extension thesis has been subject to criticism. Indeed, Olmsted (1991) argues that the reason consumer behaviour researchers have failed to analyse fully the relationship between non-human objects and the social self is precisely because the self-extension thesis is based theoretically on the functional approach of Talcott Parsons (1991: 293). I would argue, furthermore, that in reducing their analyses to individual psychology consumer researchers have tended to abstract collecting from the material and social environment within which it is embedded.

Focusing on material culture rather than consumer behaviour is helpful because it “implies that the material and the cultural are always combined in specific relationships and that these relationships can be subjected to study” (Lury, 1996: 1). As Lury suggests, a material culture perspective highlights the significance of “objects-in-use”, while simultaneously reminding us that “this attention to the materials of everyday life is not at the expense of a concern with the meaningful, the symbolic or the moral” (1996: 1). Thus in a more recent study of collecting, Belk and Wallendorf (1997) adopt a material culture perspective, in favour of their earlier preference for a functional approach, to provide an excellent analysis of how gender is “expressed, shaped and marked” through...
the process of collecting (1997: 16-23). Indeed, their case study of the interaction between Brent and his collection of Barbie Dolls provides a theoretical precursor to this study. Moreover, Lury (1996) argues that consumer culture constitutes a particular form of material culture, suggesting, furthermore, that viewing consumer culture from this perspective is helpful because it provides for a “critical distance from our everyday understandings of consumption” (1996: 1) which often serve to distinguish consumption from production. Indeed, Lury urges us to consider that the use or appropriation of objects often comprises elements of both consumption and production. This is consistent with Belk et al. who argue that “collecting is perhaps the purest example of a consumption activity” which it also a form of production. At its best, collecting creates and produces a unique, valuable and lasting contribution to the world” (1991: 180).

That consumer behaviour researchers frequently ignore the mutually constitutive relationships among people and things is a consequence both of the theoretical frameworks which inform their analyses and the research methodologies that privilege surveys and interviews with collectors, over ethnographies and participant observation within various fields of collecting. Exceptions can be found and in a psychological study of fine art collecting, Baekeland (1981) asks us to consider the notion that “if the collector stopped buying works of art, the rationale for his (sic) network of personal art relationships and activities would begin to disintegrate. It would then lose much of its raison d’etre and the future the aura of anticipation. He would still have a collection, but he would no longer be a collector” (1981: 50). Thus Baekeland (1981) encourages us to question the assumption that the identity ‘collector’ resides exclusively within an individual, externalised only in the accomplishment of a collection of material objects, as psychologicist perspectives would suggest. Instead he intimates that the identity of an art collector and the act of collecting art reside somewhere between the two: within a network of personal art relationships and activities. A network which, for Baekeland’s art collectors at least, includes regular contacts with other collectors, with artists, dealers and museum staff as well as making “regular rounds” of the auction houses, antique shops and art galleries (1981: 50). This paper builds on the ideas laid out in Baekeland (1981) by employing a theoretical perspective based on ‘process sociology’ to illuminate the processes within which novelty teapot collectors and the novelty teapots that they collect are produced in a network of relationships, which are materially and socially contingent.

“Mini Collections: Reinforcing Social Interactions Within a Brand Community”
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Although collecting is often regarded as an individual pursuit, the act of collecting may be done collectively in a family or within a community. There have been limited references in relation to the social aspects of collecting behaviour and the interrelationships between collectors. The exploration of the different ways in which collecting activity can enhance the relationships among the members of a brand community will be the main focus of this paper. No research thus far has studied collecting behaviour within the context of a brand community. Therefore this paper seeks to further expand the literature both on brand community and on collecting by demonstrating how the collecting behaviours of brand community members reinforce their social bonds.

Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) introduced the notion of brand community; a specialised and non-geographically bound community based on the social constructions of relationship among community members who admire the same brand. Recently this research has been further developed by McAlexander et al (2002) who demonstrate the complex role of a brand community in facilitating the process of negotiating brand meaning among members and the multiplicity of relationships involved therein. Their customer-centric model extends Muniz and O’Guinn’s (2001) traditional model of customer-brand relationship which construes brand community as a social aggregation of brand users who share the same interest towards a particular brand, building up a “repository of meaning” around the brand. McAlexander et al.’s (2002) model suggests a web of relationships that exist within a brand community which include: the customer-product relationship; the customer-brand relationship; the customer-company relationship; and the customer-customers relationship. The exploration of the customer-customer relationship within this customer-centric model is the main emphasis of this research that carried out a longitudinal study of the Mini car owners’ brand community. Collecting activity among members in the Mini car brand community exists within a strong social context as members interact and communicate with each other in a dense fabric of relationships that are either formed or further developed through their collecting activities.

The main methods used to conduct this study involve both netnography in the online environment and semi-structured interviews in the offline environment. A netnographic approach first devised by Kozinets (1998) is selected as the main methodological tool as it is specifically used to investigate the cultural aspect of the communities on the Internet. Typically, this method includes activities such as participant observation, interaction in chat-rooms, semi-structured interviews via email and discussions on message board lists and other sources taken from official web sites of Mini online communities. Semi-structured interviews will have also been carried out in the offline environment together with participant observation at various Mini club events.

In relation to the Mini car brand community, the findings suggest that many Mini car owners collect Mini car memorabilia such as miniature version of Mini car models, Mini car event T-shirts, car accessories and parts that are used to customise and individualise the car and other Mini-related items. They do not just collect such items, however, but also swap and trade among themselves. Such activity enhances and strengthens the interpersonal ties that underpin the concept of brand community. In turn it also reinforces their mutual appreciation of both brand and product as members interact and share meaningful collecting and trading experiences. In particular, collecting behaviour provides a strong bond between traditional Mini car owners, emphasising personal and social histories that exclude owners of the new BMW Mini who do not engage in such activities and are thus not accepted by other members of the community.

“Co-existing Consumer Behaviours and Identities: Women Collect ‘Rubbish’ Whilst Men Collect ‘Art’?”
Nia Hughes, University of Staffordshire, UK

This paper speculates on the interplay between gendered consumption effects and ownership of a collection in the context of collecting couples, which is an under-researched area. There are more women collectors in Britain than men (Pearce, 1998), but male collectors are usually given more attention by media and academics alike. This paper reviews the notion that men are deemed the serious collectors, because they collect “proper antiques and collectables” (or authentic art and authentic artefacts), whereas women are deemed inconsequential collectors because they collect “rubbish” (or inauthentic art and artefacts).

There seems to be general agreement that there are distinct gender patterns to collecting and possession (Eccles, 1968; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Wallendorf & Arnold,
In Pearce’s survey, all the machinery, the musical instrument and militaria collections were collected by men, and the vast majority of sporting and recorded material also. Women dominated the household ornament, jewellery and tourism souvenir categories. Men also tended to have larger collections, in terms of the number of items in the collection, especially younger male collectors. The larger the collection, the more influence it had on family life, although small collections were just as important to the owner in terms of the feelings and the memories of past events that they generated (Pearce, 1998, p32).

As defined by classification schemes of authenticity (such as Griemans and Rastier, 1968; Clifford, 1988; Pearce, 1995), there is agreement that the type of material culture that women collect is ‘non-authentic’ art and artefacts i.e. what might commonly be called ‘rubbish’. Running parallel to this assertion, that women collect rubbish, is the popular notion that serious women collectors do not collect (Belk et al, 1991). The birth of a collection is often the result of an accident known as ‘serendipity’ (Pearce, 1995). Usually during a collection’s life cycle, the most time is spent on its acquisition. The ability of collections to evoke memories of ‘other people, other time and other places’ is all accumulative experiences of this acquisition stage, and feature frequently in recalling and retelling these experiences of collecting. However, this emphasis changes when approaching the final stage of the collecting lifecycle. Belk et al (1991) indicate that at this point, the collector becomes more concerned with the immortality of the collection and the problems that this immortality entails, such as seeking a suitable heir to preserve and care for the collection. The exploration of the ways in which the collection can be preserved and cared for to gain immortality is the focus of this paper and hence, the research questions are: how collections ‘die’ or are disposed of, and what does this mean to the collector?

A recent study by Price, Arnould and Curasi (2000) explores precipitating events, emotions and decisions that are involved during older consumers’ disposition of special possessions. Their findings relate how older consumers voice their concerns over avoiding intra-familial conflict; reducing uncertainty; and attempting to control the meanings transferred with their cherished possessions. Other research into the disposition of possessions include: Sherry, McGrath and Levy’s (1992) ethnographic study of the disposition of gifts; and Young’s (1991) study. Young (1991) examined firstly, the disposition of possessions during role transitions; secondly, how the disposition of possessions can help to facilitate role changes; and thirdly how disposition can contribute to the process of reconstructing self-concepts and social role identities of consumers. Finally, Roster’s (2001) research examined how the special meanings that are attached to the act of disposition may facilitate the psychological experience of severance during the final stage of the consumption experience.

There has been little previous research in consumer behaviour, however, to explore disposition in relation to collecting behaviour. Using semi-structured interviews with individual collectors and participant observations at collectors’ clubs and fairs over a 12-month period, this current research explores the temporal aspects of the whole collecting process with a particular focus on the end of the lifecycle stage. Most importantly, it seeks to highlight firstly, the different ways of disposing of a collection; and secondly how a collection can be preserved, or cared for, in order to gain immortality. It also considers the precipitating events and emotions that are associated with the decisions to dispose of collections; and how the classification of possessions on gendered lines. These findings can be linked to the issues which are starting to emerge from the larger study, most notably the identification of two potentially gendered dimensions in collecting communities, which revolve around competition/competitiveness; and collaboration/co-operation; and also instrumentality and self-expressiveness (as identified in earlier literature, e.g. Dittmar 1992).
symbolic meanings attached to the collection change or are transferred at this time, using the framework of the movement of cultural meaning (McCracken 1986, 1988). McCracken’s (1986) meaning transfer model was also adapted by Curasi, Price and Arnould (1998) for their study on the transfer of meaning involved in the disposal of valued possessions of older consumers. Curasi et al (1998) used the meaning transfer model to illustrate the strategies used by older consumers to mediate these meanings in order to facilitate identity preservation.

The findings suggest that the immortality or death of the collection is a concern for many collectors. They experience mixed feelings and emotions when the idea of their collection’s disposal occurs during the final stage of the collecting lifecycle. The emotions associated with disposition are often complex and maybe influenced by voluntary or involuntary disposition. Voluntary disposition tends to involve normally positive feelings whilst involuntary disposition tends to arouse negative ones. The findings also indicate that certain events may precipitate the disposition of a collection, such as its incompatibility with a spouse or partner; insufficient space in a room; and having to dispose of a collection due to a house move. In addition, the decision to dispose of a particular collection was often ascribed to a feeling of boredom with that collection. Lastly, the main ways suggested for disposing of a collection generally involved passing it on to the next generation; selling it; or willing it to a museum to preserve the collection for posterity. As the process of disposition takes place, the symbolic meanings and the stories that are used to recall and retell the life experiences of the collection may be changed or enhanced as the collection is passed on to the heir who has been identified as suitable to receive, curate and continue the collection.

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ABSTRACT

This ethnographic study took place over several decades of increasing involvement with classical dance, especially classical ballet, modern, and jazz. This participation came mostly as a parent and observer, rather than a participant. Results are based on field notes, pictures, and other material gathered over a number of years, as well as introspection and netnographic material from a ballet bulletin board’s archives. Perspectives gained from the dancers voice the conflicting modalities through which the dancer must navigate in her efforts to create self and achieve virtuosity. Using a religious metaphor, the paper also traces the transformation of consumption goods from the profane into the sacred.

INTRODUCTION

The meanings and practices constructed by classical dancers inform values and structure consumer actions of not only this subculture, but a broader subculture of adolescents and even adults to wish to identify with the grace, beauty, and power embodied by dancers (McCranken 1996; Tamisari, 2000). This paper is designed to provide a socially constructed view of the world of dancers through the voices of the dancers, their parents, and teachers. The perspectives are those experienced through the subculture enacted by the dancers in several medium-sized southern cities in the U.S. and, through bulletin board postings, adolescent dancers worldwide. The world that emerges is a blending of issues specific to the dance world and issues affecting children approaching adolescence in postmodern societies. Moreover, many of the issues explored transcend the dance subculture, facilitating understanding of issues facing young athletes, musicians, and other performers.

The study evolved from a personal involvement in classical dance, primarily classical ballet, modern, and jazz, that extended over several decades of increasing involvement. The project began through introspection of that experience, which was eventually supplemented through extensive field notes, informal interviews, and member checks. An important contribution of this technique was the complete immersion and acceptance within the community, a feature only acquired over time in most ethnographic studies. Therefore, cultural entrée and establishment of trust and rapport with informants pre-dated formal data collection, which lead to a great deal of openness among informants. One of the benefits of this technique was that much of the data collected was longitudinal and continuous, rather than episodic, as are other types of ethnographic data in marketing. Similarly, while filtered through culturally derived notions of discourse as with all communication, conversation evolved in a more naturalistic fashion. Extensive observations over time aided analysis by supplementing those expressed perspectives of action against perspectives in action (Snow and Andersen, 1987; Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994). In this case, observations were literally “backstage”, allowing access to observation of private behaviors (Wallendorf and Belk, 1989).

While dancers often “fly under the radar” of most forms of media, advertisers have begun to identify their products with images drawn from them, especially the ephemeral beauty and grace of ballet dancers. The increasing use of dance symbols in commercial advertising suggests these firms recognize that, not only do dancers represent a large number of consumers, an even larger number of consumers are drawn to the image of dancers and seek to identify with this image through their consumption decisions. Consider, for instance, the recent television advertisement for Swifter Cloths showing a room full of ballet dancers using their pointe shoes to move the dusting cloths around. The fashion world, in its never-ending search for the next fashion trend, has developed lines of clothing and shoes patterned after those utilized by dancers. Some of these designs were featured in the December issue of Glamour Magazine, 2001. The Limited, Too also featured dance-inspired clothing and models prominently in its Spring, 2002 flyer. These popularized notions of dance serve a culture obsessed with glamour (Hagood, 2000).

Yet, when dancers express their feelings toward Madison Avenue’s commercialization of their image to promote consumption, the emotions are strong and decidedly negative. They accuse advertisers of being inaccurate and offensive. Dancers complain that these advertisements perpetuate the sexist and anti-intellectual values of our popular culture and marginalize dancers by implying that ballet is for sissies, ballet is for snobs, and real people don’t like ballet (Hagood 2000; Hanna 1983). Consider the following, a posting to the ballet website by a young dancer in England, which underscores the disjoint between reality and media perpetuated notions of reality.

As for the commercials, people in advertising do not have hearts or brains; they are only interested in money. But anyone who believes what they are told by a commercial is not worth thinking about either, so hey; just ignore the lot of them.

Dancers are among the 30 to 50 million unpaid performers in the U.S. who entertain us with their grace, beauty, and talent every year (Szuhaj, 2001). She calls this the volunteer sector of the arts and it is comprised of artists who perform with companies whose meager expenses are underwritten by ticket sales, local advertising, parental contributions, and dwindling governmental support for the arts.

Ballet has been called the dance of kings because King Louis XIV was a ballet dancer. Unfortunately, it now suffers from a poor public image. Boys usually discover dance much later than girls, some not until comfortable enough with their own sexuality to ignore the ridicule society heaps on effeminate men (Hanna, 1988). For most boys, the path of least resistance is through sports or, if they need creative outlet, music. Ballet was once even considered inappropriate for proper young ladies, until Jackie Kennedy decreed it respectable (Hanna, 1988). Since then, the number of young dancers has grown substantially (Szuhaj, 2001). This growth, along with concomitant increases in participation for other forms of performance art, may account for a steady increase in the American audiences for classical performances (Weiss, Holbrook and Habich, 2001). Observations made in Europe suggest audiences there have long appreciated the classical performing arts.

Considered a high art, there is the pervasive notion that “real men don’t like ballet”. In fact, as with all the high arts, fans are “mythologized as snooty, wealthy elitists” (Weiss, Holbrook and Habich, 2001; pg. 40). Their efforts are also trivialized by a society consumed with images of athletes. For instance, in the middle of a dress rehearsal held recently for the local ballet company, incredulity was obvious when George (whose daughter was rehearsing for her first company performance) announced that ballet was “just like football” due to the amount of training and effort that went into the performance. This feeling corresponds with prevailing notions that do not condone anything other than immediate and complete
Most people, after seeing a ballet class for the first time say, “I never realized that you took class and you worked that hard!” Now, to us, that’s like DUH! We just rehearse for a show automatically knowing how to do fouette turns and fantastic grand jetes and it just comes to us. People don’t realize that we actually work and practice like a football team or basketball team. To not realize that is like thinking that Michael Jordan just went out and said “I want to be in the NBA—I think I’ll just go try out” and all of a sudden he could do slam dunks and whatever.

There is a more practical reason for the association between ballet and kings—the expense. Everything associated with dance is expensive and with volunteer companies most of the expenses are covered by the dancers’ family. Take shoes, for instance. A serious dancer goes through a pair of pointe shoes (at a cost of $60-$70) every four to six weeks and most dancers have at least three pairs of shoes at all times. Add in the costs of classes, costumes, hair design, make-up, performance fees, etc. and the costs are substantial. This observation supports Belk and Costa’s (1998) contention that serious leisure activities become not only the focus of thoughts and energies, but expenditures as well.

In dance, we transform the profane into the sacred and become the servants to these consumption products like alter boys carefully polishing and storing religious articles. If dance is a religion, costumes are its vestments. Costumes are carefully pressed and stored in special garment bags to protect them backstage, blankets are laid out for dancers to sit on while awaiting their entrance (lest the costume become soiled), and special sacks are placed over dancers heads to protect the costume from make-up during changes. Costumes are carefully removed from backstage after a rehearsal or performance, taken home for pressing, and returned to the performance hall for the next performance, rather than being left in the dressing room where they might be damaged. Old costumes are never discarded. Janet recently had her daughter’s picture taken for inclusion in the Nutcracker program wearing the handmade party dress made for the Nutcracker party scene and outgrown years before. Costumes purchased by dancers for a performance are rarely worn again and almost never shared with later dancers requiring the same costume. Ballet shoes command similar reverence, although they are often discarded due to their poor condition (and smell) when no longer serviceable. Other dancers, as noted by Belk (2001), save bags full of shoes because of the work they represent.

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH ACTIVITY

Data collection involved multiple sources, venue, and types of data collected over a decade, although formal data collection involved a year of immersion in the culture as a participant (Wallendorf and Belk, 1989). During this time, other participants were informed of my status as a researcher, but over time appeared to forget this status and focus on my participation as a parent. Such prolonged and extensive engagement facilitates a more contextualized understanding of the culture under investigation (Hill and Stamel, 1990; Lincoln and Guba, 1984). Field notes, photographs, video, and interviews were collected from several dance studios in a southern U.S. city and compared with photographs, video, and introspections of experiences with studios and dancers in several other cities. Informants were selected across various ages and genders, involving students whose involvement in dance was superficial and those whose involvement was extensive. Comparisons across these data sources both increased the range of observed behaviors and aided in interpretation through disjoints between different types of data and different sites (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994).

Conversations with informants were guided by the participants, covering a variety of topics of concern within their community, as recommended by Thompson and Haytko (1997). Many of the conversations occurred spontaneously while involved in joint projects to prepare for performances, during rehearsals, or while waiting for events. According to Thompson (1997), stories, such as those recounted by informants, are a primary means for discovering the culturally constructed meanings underlying individual consumption choices. Interpreting the data involved translating the lived experiences of the writer with a contextualized interpretation of these utterances, since there was an objective order to the data (Hodder 1994).

One problem inherent in conducting this research was that adolescent girls are not particularly comfortable talking about intimate feelings with any adult. Some of the issues are wrapped in social norms, which might lead to social desirability bias. This was especially true in gathering information about diet and body image. Thus, much of the data came from participant observations, especially of background events, and storytelling; parents’ stories about their daughters and dancers’ stories about other dancers. Also, to overcome this limitation and provide within-method triangulation, netnography was used, as recommended by Kozinets (2002). Netnography was implemented through access to the archives of a ballet Internet bulletin board. To protect the privacy of individuals posting to the board the site is confidential and the names are fictitious (Kozinets, 2002). Since choices to download postings from within specific topic areas (threads) affects achievement of the research objective, choice was guided by emerging interpretations of the terrestrial data, as well as those from the virtual community (Kozinets, 2002). Most of the data came from archives of posting made between 2000 and 2002 by dancers between 13 and 18 years of age. Supplementing this were archives from posting made during the same time by dancers’ parents and a special section reserved for male dancers, who were primarily adults. This process resulted in over 300 single-spaced pages of data. Complimenting the choice made in the terrestrial context, members of the bulletin board community were not informed of my presence and I did not interact or post questions directly onto the board. This choice was guided by my desire to capture the thoughts and emotions of the posters, rather than to generate or channel their thoughts. To mitigate ethical considerations associated with this methodology, the website address was omitted, as are the screen names used by individuals.

Analysis proceeded through a series of part-to-whole iterations; first comparing within the text followed by comparisons across data to identify patterns and differences across utterances (Thompson 1997). The interpretive process was basically hermeneutic, involving iterative analysis to develop a holistic understanding of the data. Analysis within the context of a hermeneutic circle requires immersion in background research on the context and cultural conditions within the domain (Thompson 1997). The next section provides this background to the reader, based on analysis of the data and extant literature.

Cultural conditions

Most serious dancers begin classical ballet training at about three years old, along with hordes of other little pink-clad youngsters. Although some dancers begin later, as older children or
adolescents, few of these will become serious dancers. Meanwhile, they get to dress in cute costumes for about an hour a week and it is fun. The local dance academy even has them dance with their dolls at this age. They are the hit of the recital, even though they are all doing their own unique version of the dance, possibly involving tears. Afterwards, family and friends bring them candy and flowers to celebrate their performance.

In the normal progression, dancers will advance to increasing difficulty as their skills and bodies mature. Some girls may continue to dance, while others drift in and out of dance over the years. For a few, the lure of dance becomes as seductive as a siren’s call, often while still in pre-school. For instance, while dining with 10-12 dancers and their parents recently, two of the 4-year-olds began spontaneously dancing a part they had seen their older sisters perform earlier in the evening. These early signs of socialization into the culture of dance forebode later obsession. From the legions of little pink-clad three year olds, only a handful of dancers remain; the rest having succumbed to interests in sports, boys, school, or social activities. By adolescence, there are three distinct groups: 1) serious dancers; 2) wannabes; and 3) social dancers.

Serious dancers want to be professional dancers, as demonstrated by a recent web poll which showed 37% wanted to dance in music videos, 28% hoped to sign contracts with professional dance companies, 20% wanted to dance on Broadway, and 15% wanted to teach dance as a career (Dance Spirit Magazine, 2001). To reach their goals, they take many hours of classes each week and work in rehearsals on the weekends for months before a performance. Some of the girls will even attend special dance schools where they take a few hours of academics and many hours of dance every day. Many studios have separate classes for the serious dancers who make up their performing company. Of course, summer workshops with prestigious ballet companies, such as the Joffrey, New York City Ballet, and Houston Ballet, are de rigueur for serious dancers. The following posting to the bulletin board in a girl from Sacramento suggests how being a dancer makes one different from everyone else.

Ever since I decided that I wanted to become a professional dancer, I felt different from my non-dancer friends. Dance was the most important thing in my life, while they were most concerned with boys and parties. I sacrificed a good deal of my social life for dance. The only time that I feel like I’m really able to be myself is when I am dancing. I still think dance is the most beautiful thing in the world.

Wannabes are similar to serious dancers, but, unfortunately, they lack the skill or body attributes (i.e. well-arched foot, slender build, long neck) necessary to be a dancer. It is easy to detect the wannabes because the teacher often ignores them in class and other dancers sometimes dance right over them. Social dancers are those who come to class to make their mothers happy, to socialize with their friends, or because they are the sibling of a serious dancer.

Ballet, whose movements are considered the unifying elements of all dance, is normally mastered before less restrictive forms of dance. Classical ballet involves very controlled and stylized body movements, normally performed on pointe to classical music. Themes for classical ballet often come from fairy tales or classic literature. Modern ballet, or simply modern, involves more natural body movements and often performed shoeless. Modern ballet themes primarily deal with topics of postmodern reality, especially issues of social injustice and equality. Rather than hide the body under period costumes, modern celebrates the human shape under tight fitting unitards. Jazz and tap also evolved from classical ballet, involving more freedom of movement and more modern themes. Many studios also offer more specialized forms of dance, including interpretive, ethnic dance (like Irish step dance, African, Salsa, etc). Serious students seem to be expected to master classical ballet and one or more of the more modern forms of dance, based on studies across studios.

Dancers prefer different artistic expressions to reflect individual visions of self. For instance, one set of twins, who are now adult dancers, recounted their evolving differences in artistry. One prefers the disciplined, prescribed movements of ballet, while the other enjoys the freedom offered by jazz (Hanna, 1988). Storytelling revealed that the “jazz” twin’s preferences were deeply affected through manipulation of the reward structure. In her story, their mother denied the dancer’s desire to learn jazz until she had been taking ballet for a number of years. Thus, freedom was “earned” through submission to the rigors of ballet.

**Peter Pan Complex**

Opposing forces of freedom and control begin to converge during adolescence. Dance functions as a way for participants to postpone the difficult social, psychological, and physical challenges incumbent on adolescents as they are initiated into adult society. Due to the many hours dancers spend at the studio, in the exclusive company of other dancers (mainly other girls), dancers function within a cloister. Although there are physical and psychological pressures within the studio, girls are allowed to retain both their aura of childlike innocence and body (Hanna, 1988). This is aided by the diets and the intense physical demands of dancing that allow girls to project the image of a child by arresting puberty and diminishing secondary sex characteristics like breasts, fat deposits, and wider hips (Hanna, 1988). Breasts that might be envied by other adolescent girls are a source of derision among dancers. Consider the following posting to the bulletin board by a girl from Baltimore:

I am very tall and slim, but have a 32C bust. All the other girls in my class seem to be completely or practically flat-cheated and wear really nice leotards. I have to wear a bra and a sports top and then a horrible non-flattering leotard with chunky straps. It really gets me down when I see them in their beautiful, low-back leotards and no bras.

Even girls without noticeable breasts are uncomfortable with the changes in their bodies and the attention drawn to this feature. For instance, the following story comes from a young dancer in Singapore and was posted on the bulletin board.

Sometimes we have to do steps that are embarrassing because none of us wear bras because we wear spaghetti straps and that makes it very obvious when you wear a bra underneath. Like just yesterday, he made us do this new step that made us jump in the air, arching our back, and our arms behind us in demi-seconde, followed by some other steps. But none of us dared to do it because when we do that, we are stretching out across our chest, and the makes everything too revealing for our liking.

Dieting is a common means employed by girls to delay body changes associated with adolescence, as well as to keep the thinness they feel necessary. Anorexia is very common among dancers and posting to the bulletin board suggest the problem begins as young as twelve or even younger. A recovering anorexic dancer, who was devastated on returning from a summer dance program at the Boston Ballet School by the teacher’s recommendation to lose
weight explained a dancer’s need for thinness theorizing that “embodied in their [dancers’] desire for thinness is their need to succeed and control some element of their lives.” (Evans, 1997). This may be especially strong in classical ballet dancers whose need to control their bodies and live under the sometime tyrannical control of dance instructors reported by our informants heightens a natural need for adolescents to gain some element of control over their lives.

Dancers face a double threat to good eating because they face not only the common peer pressure of all teenagers to be thin, but this is heightened by teachers and peers who assume absolute thinness is a prerequisite for success in the dance world (Evans, 1997). Although unclear where this notion developed, Balanchine (former choreographer and director of the NYC Ballet) is most often blamed, due to his insistence that dancers “eat nothing” and constant checks for thinness by thumping a dancer’s ribcage to ensure no fat covered the bone (Hanna, 1988). Of course, not all teachers subscribe to this philosophy and the local dance companies reflect this. In one company, students are allowed to dance regardless of weight and the subject is never articulated except by example—the director is still rail thin in her late forties. In the other company, the director can be vicious in his attacks on overweight dancers, and recently withdrew an important part from a dancer a few days before the performance because she was reportedly five pounds overweight. Observations offer further support for the importance of controlling eating habits. At a recent rehearsal, an extremely thin dancer consumed nothing but water and Slimfast during the six-hour observation. This dancer routinely remains on the fringe during birthday celebrations and other community rituals involving food in her efforts to remain thin.

Not only do dancers strive to make their bodies retain its childlike appearance, but they strive to avoid the emotional complications of adolescence. Adolescence is a time where an individual is trapped between the world of a child and that of an adult—fitting into neither comfortably. No longer willing to follow the directions of adults, the child is unprepared for assuming monumental life decisions and the rigors of social interaction, especially dating.

One mother at the local dance academy told a story about her 14 year-old daughter and her reluctance to become “obsessed” with boys as “all” her peers were.

All the girls around Beth’s age are becoming interested in boys. Beth isn’t really interested. I told her that, at their age, the boys just move from one girl to the next. The girls get hurt when they move on, but the boys are with a new girl next week—so they aren’t too upset. Beth had this boy interested in her. He was talking to her—showing interest. He asked her to go ‘out’ with him. She got so upset—she passed out. They thought she wasn’t eating, but look at my kids—they eat. She was just so upset, she passed out. She’s not that social. Now Sheila [her younger daughter], she’s the social one. She’s always saying ‘give me your number, here’s my number’. She has friends calling her all the time. I thought it would be Beth, but its Sheila.

It is interesting to note that Beth is a “serious” dancer, while her more social sister is a “social” dancer. Other “serious” dancers posting to the ballet board lamented their lack of a social life; missing football games, dances, and parties to attend dance class. One dancer suggested that dance was all the social life she needed. She felt the friends she made at dance were stronger, closer friendships and she had avoided many mistakes made by non-dancing peers. Adult informants echoed their belief that dance involvement acted as sufficient deterrent to keep their children from engaging in serious dark-side consumption activities, specifically smoking, drinking (alcohol), and illicit drug use.

Not all dance genres perpetuate this notion of everlasting childhood and, in fact, some celebrate the sensuousness of human existence. To quote Jackson (1989; pg. 135), “learning a body technique forms a bridge to an empathic understanding to explore the sensuous and affective nature of intersubjectivity”. Countering this, classical ballet reflects puritanical beliefs that the body must be harnessed in the pursuit of economic goals and denied freedom in efforts to achieve moral justice (Hanna, 1988). Modern dance is an example of a genre which not only celebrates sensuality, but addresses important aspects of human existence such as diversity, poverty, and women’s issues rather than the fairytales that are standard fare in classical ballet (Hanna, 1988). While classical ballet projects virginity with its rigid torso, modern embraces the seductive torso, bulging crotches, dips, and leg splits (Hanna, 1988). Jazz similarly allows more freedom of movement and, combined with use of popular songs, is sometimes very seductive. Not all dancers feel comfortable with such seductiveness, as it defies their child-like self-image. Mary told how her daughter (Pam) was uncomfortable with the dance choreographed by the new jazz teacher. The dance had them spreading their legs and the proposed costumes were tight and revealing. She said you could tell Pam did not enjoy the dance because she did not smile and moved stiffly through the number. Pam appeared to be having a particularly difficult time adjusting to the changes wrought by adolescence. Pam had been one of the youngest solo dancers in the company and was a very accomplished dancer. As her weight increased and it was re-distributed by hormonal actions, she began over spinning, loosing her balance, and falling off pointe. Her dreams of being a professional dancer were beginning to evaporate before her eyes and the lost innocence of the seductive dance meant a further step on the journey toward an adulthood that frightened her.

Rites of passage

The important transition from adolescence to adulthood is highlighted in many cultures, although the normative timing and means of demarcation for that transitory period varies. Not surprisingly, the entrance of young men into adulthood has been the traditional focus of formalized rites of passage. In many societies where survival is dependent on a man’s ability to procure food, displays of strength, survival ability, or courage commonly distinguish adult from child. In the U.S. and other developed nations, formalized rites of passage vary along cultural and regional dimensions or may be expressed in informal norms. For instance, Mexican Americans continue celebrating adulthood at 15 (quinceanero), as is the custom in Mexico, while other groups might recognize legal majority (at 18), high school graduation, or marriage as a surrogate measure of adult status.

In dance, the transition from dancing on demi-pointe to pointe marks the symbolic transformation from girl to woman—an event marked by rituals associated with buying the first pair of pointe shoes. As described by Spencer (1985), this initiation ordeal is the culmination of years of rigorous training designed to separate adept from inept children as a portent to their later success. Using pointe shoes, a dancer gains grace, height, and freedom of movement by performing on three toes with the help of a rigid “box” in the toe of the shoe (Hanna 1988). Only female dancers are allowed on pointe, which emphasizes the duality inherent in a dance form that both allows greater movement while increasing a dancer’s dependence on her male partner for balance. As with other initiation rituals, this
comes at the expense of physical pain and disfigurement, which is obvious when looking at the unshod feet of dancers.

Consumption of pointe shoes are such a strong symbol of attainment, that one local boutique has moved their display higher on the wall because younger dancers persisted in trying them on when no one was looking. Another dance boutique instituted a fee for trying on shoes unless a purchase resulted. The shoes seem to have a magical fascination. The desire for a culturally derived notion of beauty likely underscores this fascination. For instance, the local dance teacher calls feet “ugly” when they’re not pointed and contends the audience does not want come to the ballet to see “ugly” feet. By emphasizing the arch and point by wearing pointe shoes, dancers transform the unattractive and unacceptable into someone to be admired by the audience through this consumption event.

Pointe shoes are not “put on” but have proscribed ritual associated with them, as do most serious leisure activities (Belk and Costa 1998). Pointe shoes require special pads and tape to protect the feet from the hardened, box-like apparatus. The ribbons of the shoe must be carefully wrapped around the ankle and foot just so. Finally, the girl ascends on toe to ensure the ribbons are neither too tight nor too loose. A dusting of resin is applied before the ritual is considered complete. Girls normally begin arriving 30 minutes early to ensure adequate time for this ritual. Breaking in a pair of pointe shoes is also a serious matter. The shoe may be worn around the house until the box forms to the shape of the foot before being used for dancing. A girl usually has three pairs of shoes, one that she’s breaking in, one that’s been broken in, and one old pair in case her feet are bothering her. One local dance teacher emphasizes the privilege associated with the consumption of pointe shoes by assuming ownership of the shoes. Students who fail to perform appropriately may lose their pointe shoes.

As with other rites of passage, the transition to pointe shoes is accomplished only through pain. Jaime said she warned her pedicurist to be sure to leave the hard-won calluses from wearing her pointe shoes; otherwise, her feet would begin to hurt and blister again. The local dance instructor, who is in her 40’s, gave up dancing on pointe more than 10 years ago due to the pain cause by years of dancing on pointe shoes and beginning work on pointe too early. She now has trouble standing for long periods of time. Dancers on the ballet bulletin board also spend a lot of time talking about feet. The following shows the other side of the love/hate relationships between dancers and pointe shoes.

I have the worst feet! My big toenails are forever getting banged in my pointe shoes, causing them to be black for a few months, then come off completely! I hate looking at the ugly place where the new toenail is trying to come in! Plus, I have very bony toes, so they have grown knobby and gnarled over my years of pointe work. Of course, you could play connect the dots with the little scars I have on each toe knuckle and you can thump calluses all over and the little rosy splotches from rubber give me my nickname “Rozetoze”.

IMPLICATIONS

Understanding adolescent girls is never an easy task, especially when it comes to understanding their consumption behavior. Through portraying the socially constructed view developed within the subculture of dancers, this paper begins to inform our understanding of defining elements of the dance culture. The reality constructed by these dancers is also similar to the reality of non-dancing adolescents and highlights the struggle inherent in the conflicting dualities of adolescence. There are struggles between childhood and impending maturation that call the adolescent back toward the safety of childhood, while their bodies traverse inevitable biological imperatives. Also evident are struggles to develop a self-image as a distinct unit, while fitting into a larger social structure that privileges conformity. Through control imposed by studious application of dance techniques, dancers transcend public-ly scripted roles emphasizing industriousness to glimpse the freedom, creativity, and playfulness of modern and jazz dancing (Thompson and Haytko, 1997).

As suggested by the following quote by Tamisari (2000, pg. 85), “the experience of being embodied is never a private affair, but is always mediated by our continual interaction with other human and non-human bodies,” the self is constructed not only through reflection, but though interactions that reinforce or deny self. By dancing their fairytale roles, these adolescents not only reconstruct the fantasy experiences of others, but define self. Through their dance, they transform the values, beliefs, and expressions of society into a personal manifesto (Hanna, 1983).

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Consuming the Belly Dance
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ABSTRACT
This study explored the consumption behaviours associated with the highly gendered pastime of belly dancing and interpreted these behaviours in terms of the dancers’ aims and motivations. The women interviewed were found to invest more heavily in the accoutrements of belly dancing as they became more self-assured in the role of dancer. The way they adorn themselves for the dance symbolically links them with the other members of their group and the belly dancing sisterhood. In particular, costumes facilitate the transformation from a normal person to a dancer and assist in achieving self-expression and self-satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION
Belly dancing is an ancient and flamboyant art form that is becoming increasingly popular in Western cultures (Orecelkin 2002). There are numerous consumption rituals associated with belly dancing, including those involving costumes, music, and body decoration with jewellery and henna. To date, these consumption rituals do not appear to have been examined through the Consumer Behaviour lens. This article explores the increasingly popular pastime of belly dancing from the perspective of twelve Australian women who have been involved in belly dancing for differing lengths of time and who exhibit different levels of passion about the activity. The objective was to generate a rich description of some of the consumption behaviours associated with the highly gendered pastime of belly dancing and to interpret these behaviours in terms of dancers’ aims and motivations.

The Role of Dance
Dance is similar to traditions in that it promotes group identity (Gaudet 2001; Jones 2000) and marks life events or rites of passage (Dissanayake 2001; Ginn and Hulme 1990; Muller 2001; Neitz 2000). In the dance literature, dancing in its many different forms is recognised as a language that communicates individual and group identities and delineates in-groups and out-groups (Hazzard-Gordon 1991; Juan 2001; Mason and Miko 2002). Historically, dance has performed the function of communicating customs and stories to the young while also confirming community identity to older group members (Barnes and Eicher 1992; Davis 1992; Tulloch 1992). In this way dance can function as a means of cultural survival or resistance (e.g., Berardi 2001). In the Australian context, however, the relative newness of non-Aboriginal Australian culture (just over 200 years) has resulted in a lack of dance forms that can be considered particularly Australian in nature. Engaging in dancing activities in Australia is thus more likely to be about identification at the sub-cultural rather than cultural level.

According to Bernstein (1979, p.259), dancing is a “happy activity” that is “physically incompatible with depression”. Young women have been found to have higher self-esteem and to display increased levels of empathy, sensitivity, and creativity when participating in regular dancing activities (Kalliopuska 1989). This outcome has been largely attributed to the physiological or motor activities involved in dancing (Walker 2001; White and Sheets 2001). Dance is recognised to be an inherently enjoyable activity for many (Bernstein 1979), and as enjoyment of an activity has been linked to increased confidence (Carleton and Heinrich 2000; Mason and Miko 2002), dance is argued to be able to positively influence dancers’ confidence levels (Rittenhouse 2001). Csikszentmihalyi (1975) noted that dancing produces a holistic sensation of total body involvement. This sense of “flow” encourages self-forgetfulness, a loss of self-consciousness, and the transcendence of the individual. Recent studies of various forms of dance have identified these outcomes across varying groups of dancers such as Hutson’s (2000) ravers and Jenson’s (2001) ballroom dancers.

Adornment. Members of every society engage in rituals and ceremonies that involve adorning their bodies and artefacts (Dissanayake 2001). Such adornment has been interpreted as a means of protecting from uncertainty and making an investment in the outcome of the activity (Brain 1979; Eicher 1995). In a dance context, Weeks (2001) has documented the pre-show rituals of the members of the New York City Ballet Corps. Most of the professional ballet dancers she studied had rituals or talismans to ensure the quality of their performances. Some had special warm up clothes that they avoided washing, while others had “lucky” accessories like rings, hair bands, or undergarments.

Clothing or costumes “socialise” the human body, transforming the person from a mere biological entity to a cultural being (Wilson 1992). They reflect the particular (sub)culture in which the individual is immersed (Barnes and Eicher 1992; Davis 1992; Tulloch 1992), and they often play highly significant roles in cultural ceremonies and celebrations (Dissanayake 2001; Muller 2001). In particular, costumes can act as a projection of what the individual wishes to be (Wooten 2000). In the case of clothing donned for dancing, the selected costumes communicate information about the dancer and the situation to the audience (Barnes 1999). They are the garments of the persona the dancer projects (Flugel 1930). As costumes can be highly sacred to performers, their storage and care are important aspects of their possession (Arnold 1973; Tarrant 1983).

Belly Dancing
Compared to other dance forms popular in Western cultures, such as ballroom dance and boot-scooting, the belly dance is a more natural earthy dance that is danced with the whole body and not just the feet. It can be as structured and choreographed or as freeform and spontaneous as the dancer wishes. This makes it very versatile to any skill level, occasion, or audience. There is an element of mysticism in belly dance, probably due to its primarily Egyptian and Turkish roots and the mythology and mystery connected with Ancient times. It is important to note, however, that the Middle East is a diverse region that exhibits varying forms of belly dancing. Some dances, like Nefertari’s Dance where a dancer holds candles in both hands, hold ancient myths and stories from Egyptian history and mythology (Ikram and Dodson 1998). Some dances are specifically designed for special circumstances or events, like the wedding Zaffa or the Birth dance that is performed during labour (Dissanayake 2001; Muller 2001; Neitz 2000).

Like other forms of dance, belly dancing has been interpreted as a form of resistance. For example, Doubleday (1999) found that in Middle Eastern cultures where women’s behaviours can be highly restricted, women can find power and inner self-worth through dancing in private all-female meetings (see also Neitz 2000; Wooten 2000). Similarly, in Western cultures the movements and highly decorative and feminine costumes of belly dancing can symbolise liberation from the trappings of a professional career (Jensen 2001).
METHOD

In-depth interviewing was the main method of data collection, combined with participant observation and self-introspection. These methods were combined in an attempt to obtain rich data relating to belly dancing and its associated consumption rituals. In the early stages of the research the first author engaged in self-introspection to identify appropriate topics to raise during interviews. Subsequently, twelve female belly dancers of varying skill and experience levels were recruited for depth interviews where they were invited to share their lived experiences of the act of belly dancing. Being already immersed in the subculture of Middle Eastern dance, the first author had extensive knowledge from naturalistic and participant observation that served to provide valuable background information (Adler and Adler 1994). Accessibility was another benefit of familiarity, along with a detailed knowledge of the language of the subculture that assisted in building rapport and developing an atmosphere conducive to disclosure.

There are many degrees of involvement in belly dancing. There are career dancers who perform publicly and are highly trained and there are those who attend classes once a week in community halls. The dancers involved in this study had highly disparate backgrounds and dancing histories. Some were professional dancers and teachers while others were novice dancers enjoying their early attempts at belly dancing. Some had families while others were single women for whom belly dancing was a lifestyle in and of itself. Education and income levels varied significantly among the women. Some held full-time jobs while others were housewives seeking social and creative outlets.

The recruitment of interviewees was managed to ensure that multiple levels of participation, experience, and skill were represented within the sample. All the interviewees were white Australian women living in Perth, Western Australia at the time of interviewing. Recruitment commenced with a posting to the Belly Dance WA mailing list seeking expressions of interest to participate in the study. Responses were received from a wide range of belly dancers. Selection was made on the basis of availability for interviewing and the dance histories and personal characteristics of the volunteers. During the interviews the women were encouraged to discuss those aspects of belly dancing they find to be most personally relevant. The interviews thus held some element of an oral history of the dance life of the respondent (Fontana and Frey 1994). All interviews were tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed. The transcripts were coded at the level of line unit. Some of the codes were based on themes generated through self-transcribed oral history of the dance life of the respondent (Fontana and Frey 1994). All interviews were tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed. The transcripts were coded at the level of line unit. Some of the codes were based on themes generated through self-transcription and a review of the relevant literature while others were generated inductively based on the information provided by interviewees (as per Glaser and Strauss 1967).

FINDINGS

The interviewees focused their discussions on their enjoyment of belly dancing, and many offered explanations for their passion for the activity. Also of significance was the perceived importance of costumes and music to their dancing experiences. The following discussion outlines the interviewees’ stated motivations for belly dancing and their feelings about the music and costumes that are considered so important to participating in the dance.

Why Belly Dance?

Most interviewees discussed at length the support and unquestioning acceptance offered by other women within the community of belly dancers. The dancer enters a world in which they are accepted regardless of their shape, size, or skill level. They see this positive and non-judgmental atmosphere to be highly conducive to developing strong self-esteem and personal empowerment. The communities are matriarchal, with experienced and accomplished dancers receiving admiration and respect from the other members of the community and subsequently taking on leadership roles. These leaders provide mentoring services to other members of the group to ensure that positive feedback and confirmation of worthiness flow to each dancer, regardless of skill level or experience. This permeates the group to the extent that all members provide consistent encouragement and compliments to each other, ensuring that each member regularly receives positive feedback from a wide range of dancers. It was this element of belly dancing that appeared to differentiate the pastime from other forms of exercise in the minds of the interviewees:

In the belly dancing community, they really encourage each other. It’s a warm welcoming community amongst ourselves. It gives you confidence. There’s no judgement…there’s a warm connection between the women. The acceptance and all that, it’s a nice change (Bev).

Lough’s (2001) thesis that dancing with others or being taught or initiated into the art by another person forms a special bond between dancers was evident in the way interviewees discussed their feelings towards the other women in their belly dancing groups. A sense of community and sisterhood was reported by all interviewees, although this appeared to be particularly important to novice dancers who had a greater need for support and had had less time to become acclimatised to the collegial nature of the belly dancing scene.

While they also appreciated the warm, nurturing environment, the more experienced dancers tended to place greater emphasis in interviews on the transcendental outcomes of dancing. They described being transported to another plane where they are uplifted and transformed:

It’s one of those things I can do where I lose all perspective of time and I completely forget about everything else in my life and I just get lost in the music and in the movement, and I get into that flow state that people talk about. Or the “zone”, as the Americans call it. So I just love it from that point of view (Anita).

These women have become more comfortable with their own bodies and are thus able to be less self-conscious and more able to lose themselves in the dance experience. The progression from commencing belly dancing to experiencing transcendental dancing may take many years or a very short space of time. It is self-paced and depends on the personality and initial skills of the dancer. Jan is a new dancer who has been dancing for only one year. After being introduced to dancing she enjoyed the experience as she socialised with other dancers, lost some weight, and toned her muscles. She is a middle-aged lady with older children still at home. She felt she was lacking excitement and femininity in her life and was discontented with her self-image. Belly dancing has introduced her to ‘girlly’ pursuits and makes her feel glamorous, even though she is a newer performer and needs the security of set choreography and others to dance with. As Jan progresses through her dance life she will reach new stages, like Rosie.

In the middle of the spectrum is Rosie who is a costume maker who operates a small business called The Shimmy Shop. She specialises in making highly-personalised, painstakingly-beaded costumes for dancers, and her own costumes are always dazzling and of the highest quality. Rosie is a very practical person who enjoys the feminine pursuits of belly dancing, particularly the
music. She performs frequently, both in troupes and solos. When preparing for a dance she concentrates on the costume she wears and also the audience she dances for. Rosie seems to have accepted herself as she is and has lost the self-consciousness about her body that she experienced in earlier years. Rosie at times achieves transcendence in her dancing, but is yet to be able to achieve this frequently.

Helen is a true transcendentalist. She says dancing has changed her life. She has “cleansed” her life of all its bad influences and she is connected to the “beatific energy” in the world. She dances whenever possible to express the mood she is in and also to convey her feelings towards a person or thing. Welters (1999) suggests there is a basic human need to connect to a supernatural energy, power, or deity. Helen feels the connection very strongly and is positively affected by it. Although a larger lady, Helen totally accepts her body and wears clothes that show her belly and her other “flabby bits” without any of the self-consciousness felt by “less actualised” people (Green 1999). Helen is also a dedicated henna tattooist and is rarely seen without decorated skin.

The point was often made by interviewees that belly dancing is something done by women to fulfil their own needs for femininity and sensuality, rather than being an activity designed for the male gaze. The all-female-environment provides the security and freedom for women to dance in ways that would be considered provocative or inappropriate in mixed company. Some interviewees specifically noted that belly dancing gives them the opportunity to engage in “womanly” behaviours that are not condoned elsewhere:

It’s graceful, you know. The veils dances are graceful, which is something all women love to be. (But) society’s knocked it out of women. You are not meant to flap your arms around, you not meant to swoosh your skirts around anymore. You’re taught not to do these things from a young age, but I think a lot of women would love to be able to go back and do that (Bev).

The freedom to exhibit what are considered to be highly feminine behaviours enables some dancers to obtain the reprieve they need from a social environment that is increasingly expecting women to act and think androgynously. In the following quote Rhonda explains how being able to express her femininity through dancing provides balance in her life:

It’s sort of stopped me, to a certain extent, men bashing. Because I’m in a corporate sort of job all the time, and it’s given me a totally different focus about the differences between men and us, and accepting that difference and enjoying it. Yeah, that’s what it’s done for me anyway in particular (Rhonda).

**Music.** All of the interviewees discussed the importance of music to the belly dancing experience. It is perceived as both a source of enjoyment in itself and critical to the dance. They described dance as the visual interpretation of the music, a manifestation of how the music affects the individual. When dancing solo, an important element of the performance is the way the dancer assimilates the music and produces a unique dance that reflects her style and personality:

I love the music. I love the challenge of deciphering music (Jasmine).

Interviewees described the music to which they dance as a source of pleasure and inspiration. The pleasure derives from the sensory and emotional responses to the music while the inspiration relates to dancers’ choice of dance style and specific steps. The work involved in interpreting music is perceived as rewarding and part of the process of becoming one with the dance. According to the dancers interviewed, belly-dancing music provides the activation trigger that creates the mood necessary for belly dancing and draws the dancer and any audience into a mental state that is conducive to appreciation of the dance form:

It’s the music. I just love the music, and I love to move to it and it just transports me. It’s just beautiful… It’s very hard to explain, as soon as I hear the music, I just have to do it… Listening to the music, it’s just so romantic, so sensual. It’s very uplifting (Eva).

**Adornment.** Decorating the body is recognised in the literature as an important part of preparing for transcendental experiences (Brain 1979; Flugel 1930). The women interviewed nominated numerous forms of adornment associated with belly dancing. These often involve lengthy beauty rituals that include showering, grooming hair and nails, applying makeup, perfume, and henna, and donning costumes, hairpieces, and jewellery. Through such rituals the women feel they can shed their everyday concerns and become dancers:

I have to do the whole getting ready thing two hours beforehand. I have a shower, wash my hair, brush the teeth, do the whole thing. If I don’t feel like I go through that ritual, I don’t dance as well, because I haven’t changed personality (Jasmine).

The application of henna to the skin and hair is a ritual that is particularly associated with Eastern cultures. It is historically associated with patriarchal ceremonies that serve to reinforce the subordinate role of women (Ustuner, Ger, and Holt 2000). In the Australian belly-dancing context, however, henna is viewed as a source of authenticity and femininity that enhances the dancing experience and is thus evidence of cultural hybridisation. In the lead up to important performances Helen allows her usual henna patterns to wear off completely to enable her skin to return to its natural state. This process begins approximately six weeks before the event as it takes henna a long time to fade entirely from the skin. Then, approximately one week prior to the event, Helen takes an entire day to henna herself. This time and care investment reflects how important it is to Helen to fully prepare for important performances. The time-consuming and complex process of henna application enables Helen to transform her everyday self into a decorated cultural entity that can participate in the dance to a higher level.

As well as skin decoration, all interviewees mentioned the importance of costumes to dancers. Costumes enable the wearer to feel authentic in the act of belly dancing, and they communicate femininity and beauty to the wearer and others. Some interviewees discussed the reactions they receive from those viewing them in costume, but most interviewees described the effects their costumes have on the way they feel about themselves:

It’s just beautiful to have such a lot of costumes, just to be able to just put them on and feel like a princess whenever you wear them (Ayesha). It’s great to wear gorgeous clothes, and show bits of your body that you probably wouldn’t dare to otherwise, especially once you’ve had kids. It’s just like a female thing, very sensuous. You feel sexy (Jan).
Costumes are the garments of the persona that the dancer projects and as such are cared for reverently. Costumes were reported to be stored in special areas of the house, removed from proximity to everyday clothing. Most dancers had an entirely separate room for their dancing accessories, costumes, and music. Rosie has a room with full-length mirrors and a music centre where she drapes her scarves, hangs her costumes, and displays her swords. She nominated this room as the one in her house where she feels most comfortable.

The interviewees discussed the lengths to which they go to ensure their costumes are stored properly. Heavily-beaded belts and bras are kept flat to avoid stretching. Skirts and dresses are hung carefully and many of the women have arranged some sort of display with either their jewellery or hip scarves. These items are draped over mirrors or hung up to be admired. Old costumes are used for decoration and costumes recently worn are hung out to air and sometimes sprayed to remove odours. The careful handling and storage of these garments denotes their personal significance to the dancers (Arnold 1973; Tarrant 1983). As noted by Jasmine: “I don’t dance in day clothes and I don’t do dishes in my costume.”

When it comes to disposing of a garment or a costume no longer needed, the dancers interviewed do not typically throw them away. Some of the more pragmatic dancers, like Rosie, sell their old costumes or re-use them to make new costumes. Most dancers had retained early costumes they are particularly attached to and would never part with despite their ill fit or state of repair. Some described their costumes as having personalities and attached memories to explain why they could never be thrown away. In the case that a costume is not to be kept or sold, an acceptable method of disposal is to give the costume away. When given away, a costume is considered to have been “bequeathed” to another dancer who is expected to demonstrate due reverence for it. The process of passing on a costume is an important event in the relationship between two dancers. If a costume is given away and not treated with appropriate levels of respect the donor tends to become disgruntled and the personal relationship between donor and recipient becomes strained. For example, Jasmine recounted a story where she had given a red costume away to a dancing friend who had hankered after it to such an extent that Jasmine finally allowed herself to part with it. However, the friend did not wear the costume and did not give it its due attention and care. This upset Jasmine and put a strain on their relationship. She has now resolved to never give away another costume. Conversely, a costume transfer can strengthen a relationship:

Helen bequeathed me a costume that she no longer needed. I had it altered and have re-beaded it, but it remains in its original form. It is my favourite costume as it came from a dancer I had hankered after it to such an extent that Jasmine finally allowed herself to part with it. However, the friend did not wear the costume and did not give it its due attention and care. This upset Jasmine and put a strain on their relationship. She has now resolved to never give away another costume. Conversely, a costume transfer can strengthen a relationship:

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

While there were differences in interviewees’ accounts of the role of dance in their lives according to their experience levels and personal situations, there was a strong degree of uniformity in their descriptions of belly dancing is a source of freedom, empowerment, and joy. It is a way of dabbling in the exotic and experimenting in the ways of another culture. By engaging in the dance they can gradually achieve transcendence to a different level of existence that offers peace from the anxieties and mundaneness of their day-to-day lives. For these women, belly dance fulfills needs that are not filled elsewhere. They feel their participation in this activity has direct consequences for their self-esteem and confidence. In particular they have been able to come to terms with the shapes of their bodies, which for some was particularly difficult due to the clash between their relatively large sizes and the modern preoccupation with body image (Joy and Venkatesh 1994). Belly dancing constitutes one of the few physical activities for which curves are considered desirable and beneficial rather than ugly and a hindrance. This leaves participants free to enjoy their participation without the attributions of mental and physical weakness that often flow to larger individuals in Western consumer cultures that revere slimness as an indication of strength of mind and even of morality (Joy and Venkatesh 1994).

Enculturation into the art of belly dancing appears to be a transforming process that involves people, objects, and clothing that become sacred to the dancer (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989). These sacred things come to be considered vital to the dancer’s conception of who she is as her sense of self expands to include both the act of belly dancing and the people and artefacts associated with the dance (Belk 1988). There are thus two layers to the process by which costumes, for example, become part of the self. They are valued because they are necessary to properly participate in the dance, but they are also treasured in their own right because of the meanings of femininity, luxury, and beauty they contain and convey to the wearer (McCracken 1990). As dancers grow more self-assured they invest more heavily in the accouterments of belly dancing in order to more closely associate themselves with the lifestyle and the mindset of actualised dancers. The way they adorn themselves for the dance symbolically links them with the other members of their group and the belly dancing sisterhood in general (Belk 1988; Lury 1996). Costumes play a particularly important role in this evolution as they facilitate the transformation from a “normal person” to a “dancer”. Wearing her costumes the dancer feels as if she has become a different person, an alter ego brought to life by the sacred garments of the dance. This transformation can occur whether the dancer is on stage performing in front of an audience or dancing alone in her lounge room.

As noted by Dissanayake (2001), the scale of the investment in the dance made in terms of energy, time, and expense says much about the dancers’ priorities. Of all the things they could do with their limited spare time and money, our interviewees choose to dance, bead costumes, buy accessories, and adorn themselves for the dance. The strong emphasis placed on dancing by the interviewees, regardless of skill and experience levels, indicates the significance of the pastime in their lives (Barnes and Eicher 1992).

The belly dancing subculture is a consumption environment unlike most others in Western cultures, including other activity-related environments such as sporting clubs. It is a highly supportive and nurturing social environment in which women are encouraged to express their individuality. A stark comparison appears between this environment and the world of work in which many Australian women now find themselves ensconced (Mackay 1993, 1997). Rather than having to disguise their femininity through clothing and behaviour considered appropriate for the workplace, dancers can replace heeled shoes with bare feet and controlled behaviour with emotional and physical release. Similarly, in the roles of wives and mothers women are expected to conform to certain standards of behaviour that require a degree of containment of the individual’s spirit. Escaping to a belly-dancing lesson provides adult conversation with like-minded women who take on the task of making each other feel valued and special. In this environment women can feel free to engage in forms of consumption that may elsewhere be considered “frivolous” and “fanciful”. Far from being trivial, however, these
consumption activities are highly symbolic behaviours (McCracken 1990). The costumes and other forms of adornment selected by dancers are nonverbal communications (Douglas and Isherwood 1979) that express the dancers’ needs for social inclusion and personal actualisation. Their exotic nature and blatant femininity make them particularly effective means by which women can achieve a connection with other women yet communicate their individuality.

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On the Methods of Researching Music in Everyday Life: Assessing the Musician as Producer of Commercialised Music

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ABSTRACT

Adorno & Horkheimer (1998) argue that the Culture Industry generates cultural artefacts that fail to develop human consciousness and hence support the domination of the capitalist system. Steinert (2003) states that the pressures facing musicians to negotiate between the demands of the Culture Industry and the traditional role of the artist generates a fundamental contradiction within art which is symbolically enacted through artistic production. This study, which draws on on-going postgraduate research aims to develop a research framework that investigates how musicians negotiate this contradiction. The study considers if a more reflexive approach to art exists, typified by the Pop Art movement, which paradoxically lends itself to commercial appropriation whilst still remaining a legitimate art form in its own right. This study questions if the interaction of music with marketing represents a commodification or “sell-out” of music or if it can constitute a more reflexive approach towards musical production and the negotiation of Culture Industry pressures.

PAPER

Adorno & Horkheimer (1998) argue that the Culture Industry generates cultural artefacts that fail to develop human consciousness and hence support the domination of the capitalist system. Steinert (2003) demonstrates that the pressures facing musicians in negotiating between the demands of the Culture Industry and the traditional role of the artist, generate a fundamental contradiction within art. This study investigates how musicians negotiate this contradiction and considers whether a more reflexive approach to art exists, typified by the Pop Art movement, which paradoxically lends itself to commercial appropriation whilst still remaining a legitimate art form in its own right. This paper seeks to develop a research framework, which draws on on-going postgraduate research, that seeks to understand and locate the production of music in its theoretical context.

The paper examines the following issues:

1) Literature review
2) Research issues
3) The Present Study
4) Research Framework
5) Discussion

LITERATURE REVIEW–MUSIC AND THE CONSUMER SOCIETY

Adorno and Horkheimer, in the Dialectic of the Enlightenment, argue that the Culture Industry seeks to control individual consciousness, denying people the ability to form resistance to the capitalist mode of production (1998). In the Culture Industry music becomes predictable with a tendency towards the “obvious touch” (pp125) and fails to challenge the listener, leading to their ability to “resist central control” being suppressed by the Culture Industry which controls individual consciousness. Hence films, radio, magazines and music within the Culture Industry comprise a system which is “uniform as a whole” (pp120) and no longer “pretend to be art” (pp121) whilst citizens live in city housing projects “designed to perpetuate the individual as a supposedly independent unit in a small hygienic dwelling make him all the more subservient to his adversary—the absolute power of capitalism” (pp120). All these factors combine to operate as tools of domination.

The claim that music may frame consciousness has resulted in authors interpreting music dialectically. McLary (1987) traces musical dialectics through the history of western music stating that music is often the symbolic enactment of social antagonisms. For example, she argues that nineteenth century music dramatises the conflict between the subjective self and the constraints of bourgeois society (McClary, 1987:pp19). Similarly Shepherd (1987) argues that contemporary ‘cock rock’ (for example Bruce Springsteen, Mick Jagger and Iron Maiden) represents the dialectic of the battle of the sexes. The dialectic between the artistic need to create an autonomous art form versus the market demands of the Culture Industry and sustenance in a highly competitive and ephemeral market is described by Steinert as the ‘internal contradiction of art’ (Steinert, 2003:pp88). Artists negotiate this contradiction, Steinert demonstrates, by adopting different approaches such as the ‘classic bourgeois’ typified by Schoenberg’s Circle (a group of people who organised esoteric private concerts where standard elements of cultural consumption, such as applause, were prohibited) to the reflexive working alliance whereby “the conditions of artistic production and reception became the subject-matter for art” (pp91) and the artist seeks to make the effects of the Culture Industry more visible. Steinert identifies Duchamp’s Fountain—a urinal which was displayed in an art gallery and declared as a work of art—as the “archetypal exercise in reflexivity”. Drawing on such analyses, this study examines artistic productivity dialectically and focus on how musicians negotiate the tensions of the “fundamental contradiction in art”.

Steinert’s dialectic may be witnessed in Robinson, Buck and Cutbert’s (1991) study as the tension between the local musician versus the homogenising global music industry. Frith dramatises this dialectic as the battle between Good (the scattered bands of committed musicians) versus Evil (the corporate force of Time Warner, Song-CBS, Thorn EMI and so on) (Frith, 1991). Here two important concepts ought to be addressed, that of commodification and of the “sell-out”. Goldman et al (1991) define commodification as “the practice of joining otherwise disparate meaning systems to generate new sign-values” (pp336) illustrating that the meaning of the “commodity” is changed in the process. Hesmondhalgh (1999) defines a “sell-out” as “the abandonment of idealism (on the part of the musician) for financial reward” (pp44). Therefore the process of “selling out” or commodification are associated with the change in the meaning of the music and/or the abandonment of idealism. The question then is, does the interaction of music with marketing represent a commodification or “sell-out” of music or can it constitute a more reflexive approach to musical production and the negotiation of Culture Industry pressures?

This paper argues that the increased interaction between music and marketing in the consumer society often results in a more reflexive approach to art from the artistic community. Baudrillard (1998:pp26), in his treatise of the Consumer Society argues that the consumer no longer relates to a particular object in its specific utility, but to a set of objects in its total signification which act as a “chain of signifiers”. The consumer, then, becomes immersed in
this directive path of consumption and art, hence, becomes culturised until a drugstore is indistinguishable from an art gallery (pp27) or as Adorno & Horkheimer put it, “everything is looked at from only one aspect: that it can be used for something else” (1998;pp158).

Music too has entered this chain, for example one piece of classical music is now identified as being the “Hovis song now” due to its use in an advertisement (O’Donohue, 1997;pp245). This reflects a change from the use of music in advertisements from aiding product recall to transferring or exchanging value from the music to the product. Music thus becomes broken down into signifiers and signified (Goldman and Papson, 1996;pp70). Such is the extensive appropriation of music by advertisers that one observer notes that watching—or at least listening to—television commercials is almost like flipping around the radio dial as more songs, from every era and every kind of artist, are filling up the commercial breaks (De Marco, 2002). Indeed one advertiser recently described music and ads as having “walked hand-in-hand up the aisle of advertising” (Channel-4, 2002).

**POP ART**

Arguably the symbolic enactment of the dialectic between art and marketing is most overtly represented in the Pop Art movement typified by artists such as Lichtenstein, Oldenberg and Warhol. Pop Art, according to Baudrillard, is the outcome of the “chain of signifiers” in that the logic of consumption eliminates the traditional sublime status of artistic representation as they coexist in the consumer culture, but also consumer culture re-appropriates and hence itself a mere object of consumption (Baudrillard, 1998;pp115). It is an art form contemporaneous with the logic of signs and consumption whilst also an effect of fashion, and hence itself a mere object of consumption (Baudrillard, 1998;pp115). Whiting (1997;pp4) notes that Pop Art borrows from consumer culture, but also consumer culture re-appropriates and disseminates Pop Art. Hence works such as Warhol’s paintings of Campbell’s soup tins or Oldenberg’s Shop ought to be regarded as a celebration of the market (Frith and Horne, 1987; Whiting, 1997) and as homogenous with the industrial, mass production and hence with the artificial, manufactured character of the consumer society (Baudrillard, 1998;pp115). Frith & Horne (1987) state that Pop Art influenced a large number of pop musicians. For example Pete Townsend, the songwriter and guitar player with The Who, stated in an interview: ‘We stand for Pop art clothes, Pop art music and Pop art behaviour. … we don’t change onstage, we live Pop art!’ (cited by Frith and Horne, 1987;pp101). Frith & Horne regard the Who and albums such as *The Who Sell Out* for being a Pop Art masterpiece noting how they celebrated their own sales. Recent technological changes allow musicians more freedom to explore signification. Popular music has witnessed the emergence of the DJ who remixes or samples sound bytes of existing pieces of music to create a pasteic. Just as the Pop Artists had stripped art of its sublime privileged status, the DJ is a glorified craftsman questioning the traditional concept of the artist, blowing it apart and re-establishing it in an overwhelmed form (Poschardt, 1998;pp14). Strange (2002) claims that of all social commentators, the DJ, using the logo minefield of America as source, is placed to be in tune with the zeitgeist and therefore ought to be regarded as the meme shaman, a musician as commercial producer who provides the public with the ultimate form of music, one that resembles “a really cool commercial” (pp8). Hence there is a process which Goodwin (1992) describes as the “mediatisation” of popular music with sound-bytes and forms of editing associated with advertising being integrated into popular music. A further development in terms of the mediatisation of music has been the development of video. The music video is described by Savage as an advert turned into product: “pop is now culture in the situationist sense, with its own past, its own references, even its own marketing, as part of a seamless package. With its industrial importance, it can’t afford not to be!” (1990;pp149). The rise of the video, note Frith & Horn (1987), further blurs the traditional distinction between making music and marketing a commodity as pop groups are expected by their record companies to construct their music as its own advertisement as a video spot (pp176). As Adorno & Horkheimer described it, “advertising and the Culture Industry merge technically as well as economically” (1998;pp163).

**THE COMMERCIAL APPROPRIATION OF MUSIC**

Two of the most commonly researched uses of music within consumer research are the contexts of retail atmospherics and advertising. In both areas a notion that is regarded by many writers as central is that of Musical Fit (Areni and Kim, 1993; Bruner and Gordon, 1990; Chebat et al., 2001; De Nora, 2000; Dubé and Morin, 2001; MacInnis and Park, 1991; North and Hargreaves, 1996, 1997c, 1997a; North and Law 2000; Oakes, 2000; Park and Young, 1986), defined by MacInnis & Park as the ‘consumer’s subjective perceptions of the music’s relevance or appropriateness to the central ad message’ (1991;pp162). That music can fit a context implies an underlying meaning or symbolism within the music which resonates with the context. As that context is commonly commercial and we live in a period where the musician is described as commercial producer (Strange, 2002) the suggestion is that some music may lend itself to commercial appropriation. Where music is successfully appropriated then the process can become, as comedian Vic Reeves described it, a “passport to No. 1” (Channel-4, 2002). In recent years numerous songs have gone on to become chart hits after their appropriation by advertisements (Channel-4, 2002; De Marco, 2002; Sexton, 2000). The outcome is what Derek Robson of the advertising agency Bartle Bogle & Hegarty described as a marriage between music and advertising (Channel-4, 2002).

**RESEARCH ISSUES**

In order to research music in everyday consumer life, a vantage point from which to view the issue is required. Within consumer research numerous writers have called for analysis of works of art as a means of gaining knowledge (Belk, 1986; Brown, 1997; Holbrook and Grayson, 1986; Schroeder, 1997). Noting how only art can convey the specific, personal, and experiential knowledge in a way that approaches the intensity and intimacy of the actual experience (pp23), Belk encourages consumer researchers to use art as a “non-traditional vantage point” (pp6) to generate hypotheses for further analysis through scientific methods. This is a similar approach to Holbrook & Grayson, Brown and Schroeder who analyse film, fiction and art respectively. In all cases, the consumer behaviour that they are investigating is directly represented in the art form itself yet this is rarely the case in music. According to the composer Mendelssohn, “the feelings expressed in music are incapable of articulation, not because they are too vague for words, but on the contrary, because they are too specific” (cited by Holbrook, 1990;pp1). Schopenhauer (2001) states that music is the most powerful and penetrating of all art forms as, where other arts “speak only of the shadow… music is the essence” (pp92). Whilst recognising that music is abstract because the subject is obscure, Schopenhauer argues that music can communicate the essence of a phenomenon and, whilst we may not be able to explain why, when music is applied to context we can sense that it has conveyed the “secret meaning” of the context—it fits (pp94). This ‘essence’ is therefore difficult to represent in non-audial form. In this sense the interpretation of art as proposed by the various consumer researchers is either inappropriate for interpreting musical pieces or lacks...
penetration and there exists a need to develop an alternative framework with which to consider the phenomenon.

Consumer research has traditionally observed musical response within the everyday context in which it is heard such as retail atmospherics (Areni and Kim, 1993; Bruner and Gordon, 1990; Hui et al., 1997; Milliman, 1982, 1986; Oakes, 2000; Yalch and Spangenberg, 1990). This contrasts with studies such as Holbrook & Schindler (1989) and Lacher & Mizerski (1994) that attempt to recreate the listening experience in laboratory style contexts. Outside consumer research, the context bound approach has been admired as it recognises the tendency of people to listen to music whilst engaged in other tasks (De Nora, 2000; De Nora and Belcher, 2000; North and Hargreaves, 1997b) and also because the fit of the music to the context has been illustrated to determine consumer response to both the music and the context (Areni and Kim, 1993; De Nora, 2000; MacInnis and Park, 1991; North and Hargreaves, 1996, 1997a)—hence the research focus on music in everyday life. An implication of this approach is that a new meaning emerges from the interaction of music with marketing (Cook, 1994; O’Donohue, 1997). This study seeks to develop a framework for analysing this meaning from a previously neglected vantage point, the musician.

THE PRESENT STUDY

In order to refine the research question a number of in-depth interviews were carried out adopting the humanist emergent design where initial interviews were largely nondirective (Belk et al., 1989; Holbrook, 1992). The emergent approach allows data previously collected to form the basis of an interpretation, which then defines what data are still required to test the interpretation—as opposed to data collection followed by analysis. The advantage of this approach is that it allows the research question to be formulated based on the analysis of field data in tandem with the literature review which has been argued to yield a more grounded and refined research question (Belk et al., 1989). A series of respondents were chosen who were expected to have impassioned and educated views on the notions of music in the consumer society. The interviewees included: Mocean Worker, a New York based electronic musician who has produced three solo albums, scored the music for numerous films and documentaries and has licensed his music to appear in several commercial contexts, Pat Hannon, a multi-award winning freelance radio advertiser who has licensed the music of many musicians, Gerald Davis—a Dublin based artist, gallery owner and jazz record label owner who has campaigned against the abuse of background music and Pipedown—an English based lobby group who campaign for freedom from piped music. Depth interviews were conducted and analysed in tandem with the literature review in order to form the basis of further research.

Amongst the themes that emerged from the pilot study was the notion of the musician as producer of commercial music. In asking Mocean Worker why the American retail chain Old Navy had licensed one of his songs, Tres Tres Chic, he responded by describing the song as being “the flavour” of the business, it was for Old Navy, “who we are”. He also commented:

I wrote this song and was like, “you’ll see, this song will become a coffee commercial”. And then it ends up getting used by Old Navy and they’re whole thing was, it wasn’t really like a loungey coffee thing but it was like pretty near close to it.

The above comment shows how even before the song became appropriated by Old Navy, Mocean Worker had an expectation that it would become part of a commercial. Though the song’s lyrics contain no reference to coffee or textile or any such notion, there is an underlying meaning or intertextuality within the piece that lends itself towards this particular commercial appropriation. Similarly when Pat Hannon licensed the song Inside by Moby for a commercial, he claims that he knew immediately upon first hearing the song that it would be perfect as it “underpinned the architecture” of the advertisement.

Mocean Worker stated that the conservatism of the radio stations and other cultural intermediaries in terms of allowing new forms of music to emerge, forces musicians to explore other avenues of distribution.

I think that, like, licensing is a gift to a lot of composers that would not necessarily ever get noticed because the machine, as it works now, precludes a lot of different stuff from being noticed, period. You know film supervisors are actively going out of their way to find this music that nobody else knows about because they want to have something exclusive in their film.

This commercially aware approach to music differs to the more traditional approaches to music. For example the artist Gerald Davis considered the commercial appropriation of music to be insulting to the musician whilst one member of Pipedown described music during dinnertime as an insult to both the musician and the chef! A common argument put forward against the use of background music was that it was found to be distracting, for example one member of Pipedown, Mr Wackett, made the following point:

I’m a great fan of music. I spend a lot of my time listening to music, listening to music so my ears are fairly well tuned to listen carefully. Now when this Muzak is being poured over me, I find it very difficult not to listen because my ears are sensitive to listening and therefore it is even more of an affront...

Similarly Gerald Davis expressed irritation at finding himself listening to music in restaurants whilst also trying to engage in conversation. These views contrast with Mocean Workers’ who enjoyed background music as a “soundtrack to your life”.

These early findings lend support to the notion of a fundamental contradiction within art. On the one hand there is the musician as artist yet content to produce and consume music in a commercial context. On the other hand there are those who still hold the traditional romanticised notion of autonomous music and see commercial appropriation as an abuse of and insult to music. Mr Wackett’s view of this “Muzak being poured over me” implies that such commercial music is produced by hacks and is utterly devoid of creative content, echoing the sentiments of Adorno and Horkheimer, yet clearly Mocean Worker is very much an artist who is comfortable working within a commercial context which generates its own creative process. As he put it “my music has the purpose of much of what Muzak used to produce, but in a much cooler, hipper way”. The romanticists, therefore, may not represent an opposite spectrum to musicians such as Mocean Worker but rather it appears that they are trapped into prior notions of what music is, an anachronistic ontology that fails to recognise the creative process at play.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The present study attempts to delineate a framework, which permits the views of the musician to be documented and theorised. This framework will form the focus of this year’s conference.
article. We firstly draw the research back to Adorno and Horkheimer who claim that the Culture Industry denies musicians the ability to create music that can develop human consciousness and resistance to the capitalist form of production (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1998). We thus acknowledge there is a lack of work considering these issues from the perspective of the musician and employ a interactionist perspective to frame the production and consumption of music. It has been elsewhere argued (see Robinson et al., 1991) that an analysis of the production of music is required, ironically, before the consumption of music can be further understood. This informs the rationale for the present study which applies ethnographic methods of data collection.

The framework is therefore ambitious as it attempts to develop previous theoretical problematics. As a result it synthesises Baudrillard’s (1998) “chain of signifiers”, develops the framework for symbolic interactionism for musicians attempted by Robinson, Buck and Cuthbert (1991:pp14); embraces Steinert (2003) thesis that there is the ‘fundamental contradiction within art’ (pp88)—a tension between the traditional role of the artist in opposing bourgeois values versus the economic pragmatics of sustenance in a highly competitive and ephemeral industry; and incorporates the influences of Baudrillard’s typology of London musicians (Cottrell, 2002;pp70). Bourdieu defines musical capital as a ‘measure of the desirability, from the musicians’ point of view, of their participation in the event, as well as its value to them as they seek to establish a reputation and profile for undertaking particular types of work within the professional world” (Bourdieu, 1984:pp70).

Acknowledging Baudrillard, the framework notes how each of the cultural artefacts of the consumer society all signify each other in an intertextual chain. O’Donohue (1997) states that intertextuality also includes decoding in terms of how meanings generated from one text are determined partly by the meaning of others. The exchange of meaning therefore is a two way process.

This represents a research framework that acknowledges the creative processes that exist between the artist as producer of music and the advertiser who appropriates the music for commercial purposes. The intervening process involves society who encodes the values that such variables represent that attract the advertiser to the context bound meaning that society applies to the music and the foundation of the company (O’Donohue, 1997) and Nike’s use of The Beatles’ Revolution for a commercial caused widespread revulsion (De Marco, 2002; Densmore, 2002; Scott, 1994) and accusations of, to carry forth the Yeats allusion, “fumbling in the greasy till”. John Densmore, former member of the Doors recently described musical appropriation as being ‘bribed to make a pact with the devil’ (pp4).

However when the mediated forms of musical production are considered alongside Strange’s writings about the ultimate piece of contemporary music being a “really cool advert”, musicians such as Densmore and their romantic approach towards music in commercial contexts appear anachronistic. Many of today’s musicians, then, reject such romantic approaches to music and, like the Pop artists, ride the line that separates art from consumerism. In Ireland too this process is manifesting itself and in 2002 both The Walls and Jerry Fish & the Mudbug Club have had hit singles after selling commercial licenses to AIB and Vodafone respectively.

“All changed, changed utterly” indeed, and the outcome is, to quote Yeats again, that, at least in the traditional response to music, “Romantic Ireland is dead and gone, it’s with O’Leary in his grave”.

REFERENCES


On Madonna’s Brand Ambition: Presentation Transcript
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ABSTRACT

Madonna is a marketing genius, on a par with P.T. Barnum. This presentation extracts Madonna’s marketing secrets and explains why they are relevant to the consumer research community. It sets out the “Seven S’s” of Madonna Marketing and contends that she is an icon, a metaphor, a symbol of America’s constantly changing commercial psyche. Madonna is a rock ‘n’ roll role model. She goes all the way up to eleven. She’s the greatest show-off on earth. She’s a bone fide marketing superstar, with chutzpah to spare.

TRANSCRIPT

Twenty years ago, “Living in a Material World” was a worldwide smash. To this very day, the artiste responsible has provoked, entertained and astonished us with sartorial excess, dancing prowess, video artistry, and hit after hit after hit.

However, I’m not here to talk about Russell Belk, whose materialism scale is still going strong, who has had hit after hit after hit in JCR, whose video artistry was on display first thing this morning, and whose dancing prowess has to be seen to be believed.

Instead, I’m going to do it with Madonna, the Russell Belk of rock music, as hundreds have done before me. The only problem is that the literature on Madonna is almost mind-boggling in its abundance. There’s the mound of commentary on her music and art. There’s the thicket of magazine and newspaper articles. There’s the innumerable biographies, all of them unauthorized. There’s the copious Madonna apocrypha, such as the Encyclopedia Madonnica and the I Hate Madonna Handbook.

And then, of course, there’s the academic literature. As you may be aware, “Madonnology” is a recognized sub-discipline of Cultural Studies, with its own courses, textbooks and associated scholarly apparatus. Indeed, when you read some of the stuff that academics have written about Madonna, such as her subversion of the subversion of the subversion of the male gaze in the Material Girl video, then you’re inclined to conclude that certain scholars should get out more. But marketing and consumer researchers, fortunately, are much too sensible to attend to self-indulgent academics squawking on about Madonna. Aren’t they?

Actually, the more you read about Madonna, the more obvious it is that she’s a kind of postmodern projective, a rock ‘n’ roll Rorschach test, a musical metaphor elicitation technique. People find in Madonna arcana what they want to find. What people say about Madonna says more about them than it says about the singer. So, I’ll be choosing my words carefully from here on in...

Still, if there’s one thing that Madonnaolics agree on, it is that she’s a personification of the postmodern. If, as someone once argued, the postmodern condition is characterized by fragmentation, de-differentiation, pastiche, retrospection and anti-foundationalism, then Madonna fits the postmodern bill. The multiple personas, from Street Urchin to Earth Mother; the blurring of sexual, ethnic and artistic boundaries; the pick ‘n’ mix pastiche of every passing fad; the career-long fascination with the Golden Age of Hollywood; the serial shock tactics, such as her recent shocking decision to abandon shock tactics, are there for all to see.

However, there’s no need to poke around, as it were, in the wild and wooly crevices of the postmodern in order to get to grips with Madonna. We can look much closer to home. Because it seems to me that Madonna is first and foremost a marketing genius, on a par with P.T. Barnum. Bearing in mind that popular music is one of the toughest markets in the world, where innumerable identikit brands battle day and daily for the fickle consumer's attention, anyone who bestrides that market for more than twenty years is manifestly a marketer of supreme ability. Madonna, lest we forget, is one of the best selling artistes of all time—140 million albums and counting—second only to Elvis and The Beatles. Madonna, what’s more, made it without a behind-the-scenes marketing mastermind, like Colonel Tom Parker or Brian Epstein. She is a self-made star. She represents the triumph of toil over talent, or so she likes to insinuate. She epitomizes the American Dream, as her current album makes clear.

Madonna, in short, is someone everyone can learn from, although the lessons run counter to the 4P’s, customer-first ethos that we know and love. Madonna marketing, rather, is based on the—wait for it!—Seven S’s of Subversion, Scarcity, Secrecy, Scandal, Sellebrity, Storytelling, and Sublimity. Yes, I know, I know. The Seven S’s. It’s pathetic. But, if you can’t beat them, batter the bastards into submission, I say!

Subversion. Madonna is a subversive in many ways—her fondness for underwear as outerwear says it all—nowhere more so than in her attitude to consumers. Whatever else it is, Madonna Marketing is not predicated on customer coddling. To the contrary, she treats her audience abominably and they love her for it. Her stage persona during the Drowned World tour of 2001, for example, was provocative and contemptuous by turns. Her inter-song patter eschewed “love you all” showbiz platitudes for “fuck you, motherfuckers.” With the exception of Holiday, she refused to play any of her greatest hits and the show ended not with several hand-waving, lighter-holding curtain calls, but a giant video clip informing the audience “she ain’t coming back, so go on...piss off!”

Scarcity. According to the eminent social psychologist Robert Cialdini, “things seem more valuable to us when they are less available.” And Madonna is a master of strategic scarcity. From the very start of her career she has refused to do encores, preferring to leave the audience desperate for more. She performs comparatively rarely—only five major tours in twenty years—and, when she does, the number of dates is strictly limited. Her sets, at ninety minutes or thereabouts, are relatively short, though what they lack in length, the number of dates is strictly limited. Her sets, at ninety minutes or thereabouts, are relatively short, though what they lack in length, they make up for in intensity, if you’ll pardon the parallel. The upshot of this scarcity strategy is that the shows are instant sellouts, which dramatically reduces associated promotional expenditure, her ticket prices are premium-plus, the highest in the industry by far, and her tours are extremely profitable, despite the enormous staging costs.

Secrecy. People may be attracted by the contrived scarcity factor—hurry while stocks last!—but they are intrigued and enraptured by Madonna’s carefully manufactured mysteriousness. Her constant changes of image keep the audience guessing, as does her predictably unpredictable off-stage behavior. Consider her cliff-top wedding to Sean Penn, which she leaked to the press, fomented a tabloid feeding frenzy and duly got herself on the front cover of everything from Time to People. Consider her second clandestine wedding to Guy Richie, the extreme secrecy of which drove the media wild with speculation and sent the price of a paparazzi snap—any snap—up to a quarter of a million dollars. Consider too the controversial Sex book of 1992, a 128-page fantasy photo-essay that came encased in an opaque Mylar sheath, retailed at the then stunning price of $49.95, and because its secret steamy contents could only be seen by paying peeping toms, sold 1.5 million copies in a matter of days. Eat your heart out, Hugh Heffner!
Scandal. Magnificent as the Mysterious Girl is, Madonna’s inscrutability pales beside her ability to offend. She is a serial provocateur, a sensationalist supreme. From her schoolyard exhibitionism, through the Pope’s threat to excommunicate her for blasphemy, to her bare-breasted canter down Jean-Paul Gaultier’s catwalk, Madonna has perfected the art of affront. Profanity, promiscuity, sacrilege, bisexuality, abortion, rape, child abuse, masturbation, war mongering, and many more taboo topics are grist to her marketing mill. In 1990, to pick one incident among many, our Warren Buffett of the shock market engineered an MTV ban on her “lesbian kiss” video Justify My Love, and, thanks to the ensuing publicity eruption, proceeded to sell 400,000 copies of the $9.99 videotape, conveniently released in time for the Christmas market. She pulled a similar stunt earlier this year when she sensationa

Sellebrity. Madonna, of course, doesn’t just sell scandal. She sells the selling of the scandal. That is to say, Madonna’s popularity is partly predicated on her command of the music business, whose manifold marketing tactics she simultaneously exemplifies and exposes. She shows people how it’s done, invariably in an ironic, conspiratorial and occasionally hilarious manner. Take the diva’s dubious date with Michael Jackson, when they attended the 1991 Academy Awards as a star-crossed couple. Everyone knew it was a shameless publicity stunt for their latest projects, but the press and the public went along with it anyway, not least on account of Madonna’s cheeky comments on her then reclusive companion, “Michael’s coming out more.” In this regard, Madonna is very similar to P.T. Barnum, whose success, according to Barnum biographer Neil Harris, was based on reflexive revelation of the machinations behind the manipulations. Just as Barnum’s success was based, not on the fact that he suckered people, but his understanding that people like to be suckered, so too Madonna appreciates that people like to be shocked. They secretly enjoy being affronted, expressing outrage and tut-tut-tutting at her latest transgression. If Barnum’s byword was “there’s a sucker born every minute,” Madonna’s is “there’s a motherfucker born every minute.”

Storytelling. There’s much more to Madonna than snappy slogans, however. Her fame and fortune aren’t simply due to the fact that sex sells, shock sells, and shocking sex sells best of all. Her marketability is built on telling tales. On selling tales. People buy the rags-to-riches myth that Madonna brilliantly peddles, even though the details are decidedly dubious. They buy the gnarled narrative that mediocrities can make it to the top through hard work, even though she is clearly someone of prodigious showbiz ability. They buy the parade of personas that go with the plots, even though Madonna is less a woman of many parts than a megastar playing herself in a variety of roles (just like Tom Cruise or Julia Roberts). They buy the calculated controversies, premeditated provocations, and the media-but-ready-for-my-close-up fits of anti-paparazzi pique, even though everyone knows that they are an integral part of the celebrity marketing storyboard.

Sublimity. Whatever else she is, then, Madonna is a master of excess. Whether it be her staggeringly spectacular stage shows, or her staggeringly striking video performances, or her staggeringly sharp business instincts, or her staggeringly shameless headline hogging, or her staggeringly stunning professional failures—stage, screen, and talk show, in particular—Madonna is not only larger than life, she is larger than larger than life. As exemplified by her remarkable Marie Antoinette-themed performance at the 1990 MTV Video Awards, flamboyance, exuberance, hyperbole and chutzpah-plus are the hallmarks of this sublime marketer. Her sublimity is apparent in the consistently spiritual cast of her corpus, from Catholicism to the Cabbala, and also in her shaman-like ability to straddle different worlds—sacred and profane, gay and straight, art and commerce, material and ethereal, avant-garde and mainstream, S and M. Celebrities, Rojek contends, are the shamans of the 21st century. They are the mask wearers of our tribe, special people who possess mama, a mysterious charismatic power that enables them to transcend, transcend and take our collective breath away. Or, as Madonna puts it when describing her artistic objectives, “I don’t see the point of doing a show unless you mind-boggle the senses. It’s about theatre and drama and surprise and suspense.”

It’s about shock and awe, in other words. Shock and awe.

Regardless of whether you agree or disagree with my Seven S’s—and, if you disagree, what else can I say but “fuck you, motherfuckers”—you’ll surely concur that Madonna Marketing is in tune with our times. The ubiquity of scandalous advertising, such as FCUK and Opium; the popularity of corporate storytelling, as the airport bookstands remind us; the commonplace creation of contrived shortages (Exclusive! Limited edition!!); the appeal of pseudo secrets (“Who’ll be killed off in the new Harry Potter novel?”) and so on and so forth all suggest that the Seven S’s are capable of giving the 4P’s a run for their money. Indeed, such is the power of subversive sellebrity that sales of the items stolen from Saks by Winona Ryder spiked suddenly after her arrest for shoplifting. What’s more, the designer who has his goods stolen, Marc Jacobs, is planning to use Winona in an upcoming advertising campaign. In this world turned upside down, Madonna seems like a model of propriety and if that’s not sublimely subversive, then nothing is!

Madonna, to be sure, has often been described as a bellwether, a harbinger, a metaphor for American society. In the 1980s, her Material Girl persona was held up as an embodiment of the “Greed is Good” decade. She was once famously described as the musical equivalent of a junk bond. In the early 1990s, her obsession with sleazy sexuality and the art of seduction not only anticipated the degradation of the Clinton-Lewinsky epoch but also preempted the rise of the so-called “slut feminism” of Camille Paglia and co.

Analogously, it can be argued that Madonna, of all people, offers a model for corporate life in the post-Enron, post-Andersen, post-Worldcom era. Ten years ago, her obscene outburst on The David Letterman Show met with the kind of response that is strikingly reminiscent of the language used to describe Bernie Ebbers, Kenny Lay, Martha Stewart and the rest of our millennial malefactors. “Shock,” “Horror,” “Outrage,” “Disgrace,” “Damaged Goods,” “Reputation Ruined,” “Never Again,” “Heads Must Roll,” “Steps Must Be taken,” “Something Must Be Done,” etc, etc, etc.

Madonna, moreover, responded to her mid-career slump by getting back to basics, working harder than ever, and embracing a kinder, gentler, Maternal Girl persona. In this regard, her post-Letterman posture parallels the low-key, Good-to-Great, seriously socially responsible ethos that characterizes contemporary management sentiment. It may seem almost incomprehensible that someone who once advocated urinating in the shower should be considered a corporate role model. But it seems to me, at least, that the Material Girl is now a Managerial Girl. With knobs on.

Rather than leave you with that somewhat unsavory thought, there is a concluding lesson that we can take from the Madonna phenomenon, a lesson that is relevant to each and every one of us, a lesson that we often overlook in our non-stop pursuit of scholarship, our preoccupation with publications, our unhealthy obsession with rigor, rectitude, reputations, research assessment exercises and all the other accoutrements of intellectual endeavor. It’s a lesson inscribed in the title of this track. It’s a lesson artfully
articulated by Angela and Simone, our previous speakers. It’s a lesson derived from Madonna’s initial form of artistic expression. Dance. Madonna reminds us of the joy of dancing, the pleasure that comes from shaking our bodies, the life-enhancing thrill that we academics remain reluctant to introduce into our work, even though we love what we do. When was the last time you saw someone dance their presentation at an academic conference, or indeed dance during a presentation about dance?

Well friends, I have some frightening news for you. You’re about to see a middle-aged man dance. Be afraid, be very afraid. You remember that email I sent you, asking you to pack your dancing shoes? Well, now’s the time to get them on. I want to see you dance. Hey, folks, it’s 1985 all over again! Lock up your daughters, or your livestock at least…
Humor In Television Advertising: A Moment-To-Moment Analysis
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Wayne D. Hoyer, University of Texas at Austin, USA
Josephine L.C.M. Woltman Elpers, University of Groningen, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT
This article develops a dynamic, moment-to-moment (i.e., MTM) model of humor in television advertising. The proposed model, which investigates the effects of MTM surprise and MTM humor on overall humor, is tested in two studies. Results indicate that higher overall humor is associated with a higher peak, final moment, average level, and average velocity of the MTM humor trace. In addition, overall humor is higher when the peak in MTM surprise precedes the peak in MTM humor, when there is a high correlation between MTM surprise and MTM humor, and when MTM surprise peaks relatively late in the ad.
Audience Reactions Toward the Intertwining of Editorial Content and Advertising in Magazines

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ABSTRACT

This study examines reactions to three forms of advertising in magazines that differ in degree of editorial formatting: theme features, advertorials, and advertisements. The survey among subscribers (n=316) to five different magazines showed that advertising formats with a higher degree of editorial formatting generated more attention, appreciation, and acceptation. Furthermore, audience reactions were influenced by the quality and informational value of magazines. Intertwining of advertising and editorial content appears to be a promising advertising format.

Acknowledgement

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ABSTRACT

This present study examines the most appropriate message framing to present to consumers in print commercials for healthcare products. A 2 x 2 x 2 experimental study is conducted to investigate the moderating effect of product type and innovativeness on the processing of framed advertising messages. Individual differences in health consciousness are also considered and are viewed as covariance in data analysis. The findings support the view that messages should be framed differently depending on product characteristics (prevention vs. detection) but positively framed messages may be more persuasive for both new prevention and detection product ads.

INTRODUCTION

Consumers are faced with a bewildering set of healthcare choices and a confusing barrage of health-related information. The question of how consumers perceive healthcare messages arises. Researchers argue that advertisers should pay attention to how ad messages are presented to consumers because the way information is labeled or framed may significantly influence consumers’ judgment and decisions about products (Smith, 1996; Ganzach and Kasari, 1995; Woodside and Singer, 1994; Puto, 1987). The issue of framing and its implications are important in marketing communications and persuasion. For example, an understanding of framing effects can be applied to the creative and effective execution of advertising copy and layout (Arora, 2000).

This study investigates situations in which people have little experience with an innovative healthcare product, testing the idea that responses to advertising are influenced by the framing of the ad, perceptions of product innovativeness, and one individual difference factor: health consciousness. Prospect theory (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979 and 1981) and healthcare studies (Arora, 1996; Rothman et al., 1993) examine preference behavior based on the information obtained from decision problems that specified the formal probabilities and expected values associated with each response option when people have some prior experience. In other words, preference behaviors are based on subjective information interpretation and previous experience. However, when consumers face a new healthcare product and have no usage experience or little expectations, how do they evaluate it? How should advertisers frame messages that are intended to promote new healthcare products of varying degrees of innovativeness? Should they emphasize potential gains resulting from using the product or the negative consequences of not buying the product? Will the effectiveness of positively framed advertising differ from negatively framed advertising, and will these effects be the same for familiar and new healthcare products? In addition, taking individual difference into consideration, what could be the possible mediators of framing effects? Examining these issues will help healthcare advertisers develop appropriate message framing for particular types of products aimed at different market segments.

THEORIES AND HYPOTHESES

Message Framing

The ultimate goals of healthcare advertising are to maximize message persuasion and enhance informed choices. Various approaches exist for conveying information to enhance consumer knowledge and maximize message persuasion. Message framing is one of them. The theoretical framework for framing draws on prospect theory. According to prospect theory (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979 and 1981), framing refers to the presentation of one of two equivalent value outcomes to different decision makers, where one outcome is presented in positive or gain terms, and the other in negative or loss terms. A positively framed message emphasizes the benefits to be gained by adopting a promoted course of action, whereas a negative frame focuses on the loss of these same benefits if the course of action is not adopted. The framing postulate of prospect theory states that people’s decisions are sensitive to how information is presented. Specifically, people are risk-seeking in their preferences when considering loss-framed information (in loss domain) but are risk averse in their preferences when considering gain-framed information (in gain domain). They will select an option to avoid a loss even at the “price” of risk-taking, but avoid risk that might turn a gain into a loss.

A variable that may help clarify the influence of message framing on health behaviors is the nature of the behavior being promoted. Health behaviors can be thought of as performing one of two functions: prevention or detection (Rothman et al., 1995). Prevention behaviors prevent the onset of a health problem and include such activities as doing exercise, wearing a seatbelt, applying sunscreen, using a condom, and losing weight. Detection behaviors, such as breast self-examination, mammography, Pap tests, and colorectal exams, are performed to discover early signs of a disease so that treatment effectiveness and prognosis may be optimized. An important difference between prevention and detection behavior is their perceived risk (Banks et al., 1995). Although detection behaviors are performed to minimize long-term risks (i.e., finding diseases at early stage when prognosis is improved), their perceived short-term risks are great (i.e., discovering an abnormality in the breast). Because risky options are preferred when people consider losses, negatively framed messages are more likely to facilitate the performance of detection behaviors. However, prevention behaviors may not be considered risky at all. They are performed to deter the onset or occurrence of a health problem (e.g., using sunscreen to prevent skin cancer). Choosing to perform a prevention behavior is less risky or, in the language of prospect theory, a risk-averse option—it maintains good health. Because risk-averse options are preferred when people consider benefits or gains, positively framed messages may be more likely to facilitate the performance of prevention behaviors. Of the prevention behaviors that have been investigated, researchers conclude that doing exercise (Robberson and Rogers, 1988), using infant car seats (Christophersen and Gyulay, 1981), sunscreen (Rothman et al., 1993), and intentions to use condoms (Linville, Fischer and Fischloff, 1993) are promoted best by gained-framed messages. Investigations of detection behaviors reveal an advantage for loss-framed messages in promoting breast self-examination (Meyerowitz and Chaiken, 1987; Meyerowitz, Wilson and Chaiken, 1991), mammography screening of breasts (Banks et al., 1995), HIV-testing (Kalichman and Coley, 1995), amniocentesis (Marteau, 1989), skin cancer examinations (Block and Keller, 1995; Rothman, Pronin and Salovey, 1996), and blood-cholesterol screening (Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy, 1990). In other words, people may respond differently to gain- versus loss-framed messages depending on whether the target behavior is a prevention behavior or a detection behavior.

1I would like to thank Dr. Stephanie and the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions.
These concepts can be applied to healthcare advertising since most healthcare products perform either prevention or detection functions. For example, many mouth rinses may be described as a prevention product—people regularly use mouth rinses to prevent the buildup of dental plaque and the development of gum disease (Adam and Addy, 1994). However, other mouth rinses—called disclosing rinses—serve as detection products since they are used to detect the presence of dental plaque and the onset of gum disease. Healthcare marketers should choose different framed messages depending on product functions.

H1: It is expected that the impact of message framing will vary according to the nature of the product/behavior advocated. Specifically, it is expected that positive framing will have a more favorable impact on intention to purchase prevention healthcare products while negative framing will have a greater favorable impact on detection healthcare products.

Research on the persuasive effects of positive or negative framing of ads is not conclusive (Homer and Yoon, 1992). There still exist some unresolved issues in framing research on choice behaviors. Recently, some moderators such as involvement (Maheswaran and Meyer-Levy, 1990; Donoven and Jalleh, 2000), source credibility (Grewel et al., 1994), and education of respondents (Smith, 1996) have been found in the framing literature. This study focuses on product characteristics and individual differences as moderators of healthcare product effectiveness.

Framing and Product Innovativeness

Previous literature (Kahneman and Tversky, 1984) assumed that the concept of utility and value includes decision and experienced values. Decision value refers to the contribution of anticipated outcome to the overall attractiveness of an option. Experienced value is defined as the degree of pleasure or pain, satisfaction or anguish in the actual experience of an outcome. The distinction between these two values is rarely explicit in decision theory because it is tacitly assumed that decision values and experienced values coincide. The assumption is part of the conception of an idealized decision maker who is able to predict future experience with perfect accuracy and evaluate options accordingly. For ordinary decision makers, however, the correspondence between decision values and experienced values is far from perfect (March, 1978). The common mismatch of decision values and experienced values introduces an additional element of uncertainty in many decision problems.

It is this situation which interests us: people face a new healthcare product and have no usage or even similar experiences. According to prospect theory, the experienced value of using the product is hard to estimate. What if people do not have any past experience? Our proposition is that adding the risk associated with newness may tip the balance against the loss-framed messages, which traditionally have been found to be more effective in promoting the adoption of detection products. The arguments are stated as follows.

Studies of innovation and framing come to different conclusions from those researching prevention/detection behaviors and framing. Effective framing is a function of the riskiness of the behavior (Block and Keller, 1995). Product purchase is one kind of behavior. Since the “detection product” may seem high in risk, negatively framed messages seem preferred. Negative consequence information increases consumers’ need for information about the relevant attribute, its negative consequences, and ways to avoid their occurrence (Burnkrant and Sawyer, 1983). This increased need for information reflects consumers’ levels of information acquisition and elaboration. Moreover, sometimes gain-framed messages create a boomerang effect, shifting consumer attitudes in the opposite direction from that intended by the advocacy. Such boomerang effects happen when messages are highly discrepant from subjects’ prior attitudes (Dignan et al., 1985). Gain-framed messages are viewed as providing relatively weak arguments for detecting because they do not provide consumers with sufficient justification for enduring the short-term costs of the target detection behavior. In contrast, loss-framed messages are viewed as providing more powerful arguments for why consumers should endure the short-term discomfort of having a health problem possibly detected (Cox and Cox, 2001).

However, literature on framing and innovativeness appears to favor positive framing for innovations. The idea of relying on consumer perception for defining an innovation has its roots in the sociology literature. Rogers (1983) defined an innovation as “an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption.” Literature shows that consumers’ perceptions of innovations differ from those of familiar products. Cox and Locander (1987) found that attitude formation processes differ for novel or unconventional convenience goods. In particular, attitudes for novel products may depend more heavily on consumers’ affective reactions to the advertisement, and positive framing can invoke a good mood. A good mood has been linked to favorable evaluations of a target, particularly when the information describing the target is ambiguous or neutral (Mayer et al., 1992; Sedikides, 1992). This suggests that when people face an innovative product with no prior experience, positive framing should be more effective. So when innovativeness is considered as a relevant variable for detection products, it is not clear which set of studies (favoring positive or negative framing) we should pay attention to.

Because people process health relevant information actively, behavioral responses to framed information should be a function of both the framed messages and pre-existing perceptions (Cioffi, 1991; Clark, 1994). Health messages are mostly likely to be seen and received when they are believable and consistent with past experience, and salient or relevant to consumer (Weinstein, 1988). Therefore, experience with a health issue should influence one’s receptivity to information about gains or losses and whether a behavior is perceived as risky or uncertain to adopt. Framing has been shown to have a much stronger effect in the case where consumers have little or no related product experience. Hoch and Ha’s (1986) research suggests that the framing effect will be stronger when the product experience is non-diagnostic (ambiguous) and it will be weakest (or overwhelmed) when the product experience is diagnostic (unambiguous). Therefore, it is predicted that framing effects will be enhanced when applied in new product advertisements, where the viewer of an ad has no product experience to draw on. From the discussion above, an interaction effect of product innovativeness and message framing on message effectiveness is expected in the cases of prevention and detection products separately and framing effects become stronger as product innovativeness increases. To sum up, our hypotheses are stated as follows.

H2: For prevention products, there will be a significant difference in the message effectiveness of an ad between the positive and negative framing for a familiar product, and a greater difference for a new product. Positively framed messages are more effective for both familiar and new prevention products. (Figure 1)

H3a: For detection products, there will be a significant cross-line interaction effect between framing effects and product
innovativeness. Negative framing is more effective for advertising a familiar detection product, but positive framing is more effective for advertising a new detection product. 

**H3b:** For detection products, difference between positive and negative framing effects become more significant for a new product than that for a familiar product. (Figure 2)

**Health Consciousness and Framing Effects**

Prospect theory is a psychological theory of choice behavior that pays scant attention to individual cognition, intentions, and dispositions (Lopes, 1987). Thus, although the focus of most framing research has been on the role of positive versus negative frames (i.e., context variables), some researchers have attempted to investigate the degree to which individual differences moderate framing effects (Levin et al., 2002). Previous research has shown that effectiveness of alternative message framing manipulations is contingent on individual difference variables (Meyers-Levy and Maheswaran, 1990).

Health consciousness presents the concept of health involvement and is defined as the degree to which an individual is conscious of his or her own health (Gould, 1988, 1990; Jayanti and Burns, 1998). It reflects awareness and concern about health (Hollis et al., 1986) and refers to the degree to which health concerns are integrated into a person’s daily activities (Jayanti and Burns, 1998). Previous literature suggests that there is a positive relationship between a respondent’s level of health consciousness and their attentiveness (and exposure) to health message (Kaskutas and Greenfield, 1997). High consciousness may stimulate much attention to information processing in health messages. People who are not very involved in or concerned about a behavioral domain are predicted to process information heuristically. Positively valenced information has been shown to be more persuasive than negatively valenced information when information is not extensively processed (Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann, 1983). Individuals who are highly involved in a behavioral domain, however, are predicted to process information systematically. Previous research has suggested that negative information has a greater influence than positive information when processed systematically (Kanouse, 1984). From the discussion above, it seems that health consciousness may be an important variable moderating framing effects. Instead of manipulating involvement during the experiments as in previous studies (e.g., Mahewaran and Meyers-Levy, 1990), health consciousness was measured as an indicator of health involvement and then used as a covariate in the data analysis.

**METHOD**

**Overview**

The experiment tested the relative effectiveness of gain- and loss-framed messages to promote prevention and detection behaviors with different degrees of product innovativeness in a 2 (message framing: gain, loss) x 2 (product category: prevention, detection product) x 2 (degree of product innovativeness: familiar, new product) factorial design. Participants were instructed that the purpose of the study was about dental care behavioral research and were given a three-part booklet containing the stimulus materials. The first part was a premanipulation questionnaire, followed by a gain- or loss-framed advertisement that described for either a new or familiar oral hygiene product that either prevented or detected dental health problems. The third part was a post-manipulation questionnaire sought for their attitudes and intentions concerning the product. Participants followed the instructions in the booklet, answered the questions in order and were instructed to take as much time as they wanted.

**Product category**

It was important to choose a product that consumers could evaluate on attributes that facilitate information processing. Two additional criteria were that the products should vary in perceived innovativeness for our subject sample, and be involving. Based on these considerations and the results of a preliminary test with 13 products, dental care products were selected as the product class of interest. Mouthrinse was chosen as the familiar prevention product (existing in the current market) and rinse tablets as the innovative prevention product (a fictional product). For detection, the familiar existing product was disclosing gum; the innovative detection device was disclosing strips (a fictional product).

**Participants**

Since participants were required to have a basic familiarity with the product category, students were selected for the subject pool. In fact, students are present or potential consumers of this product category and represent a profitable market segment for manufacturers. In fact, 95% of the sample had bought dental care products. The experiment was a between-subjects design. The participants consisted of 202 undergraduate students (104 men; 98 women) from a large southwestern university at the United States. Participates were assigned randomly to one of eight conditions with 26, 25, 25, 24, 26, 26, and 24 subjects in each condition. Age
ranged from 19–39 years. 31.2% of participants’ ethnic backgrounds were White, 12.9% were African American, 16.3% were Hispanic, 29.2% were Asian, 10.4% were others, which reflected the ethnic mix of the university.

Advertisements

The dental health information was presented in a one-page print advertisement that was designed to appear professional. Eight different advertisements were developed as follows:

1. Mouthrinse (familiar, existing prevention product), positive framing
2. Mouthrinse (familiar, existing prevention product), negative framing
3. Rinse tablets (new prevention product), positive framing
4. Rinse tablets (new prevention product), negative framing
5. Disclosing gum (familiar, existing detection product), positive framing
6. Disclosing gum (familiar, existing detection product), negative framing
7. Disclosing strips (new detection product), positive framing
8. Disclosing strips (new detection product), negative framing

Care was taken to ensure that the positively and negatively framed versions of the advertisements provided the same information. Aside from specific details about the particular product promoted, all advertisements presented the same general information about how the product could improve dental health.

Measures

Premanipulation measures. There were three groups of premanipulation measures.

1. Health consciousness. A series of items assessed participants’ dental hygiene practices: frequency of brushing and flossing the teeth, and frequency of visiting a dentist for routine examinations. Adding responses to these three questions formed an index of health consciousness. A higher number indicates higher level of health consciousness.

2. Perceived risk of gum disease. Participants rated the likelihood of developing some form of gum disease if continuing their current dental hygiene practices, how worried they were about developing gum disease, and how serious a problem developing gum disease would be for people who develop it. Each rating was made on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (extremely).

3. Demographics. A series of items assessed general demographic information, including participants’ age, gender, ethnic background, and length of stay in the U.S.

Postmanipulation measures. There were seven groups of postmanipulation measures. The first two were manipulation checks, following by one confounding variable check, two possible mediators previous literature suggests (Banks et al., 1995, Rothman et al., 1999), and then the measure of the dependent variable.

1. Manipulation check on framing. Two questions assessed the difference of the information framing. In each question, the rating was made on a 9-point scale ranging from -4 (mostly negative/costs) to +4 (mostly positive/benefits).

2. Manipulation check on product innovativeness. Two questions assessed the differences between the perception of familiar product and that of new product. In each question, the rating was made on a point-scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

3. Opinions of the advertisement. Four questions assessed participants’ evaluation of the advertisement. Participants indicated how interesting, appealing, informative and persuasive they found the advertisement. In each case, ratings were made on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 9 (extremely). The latter two questions were reverse-coded. An index was created by calculating the mean of the four items.

4. Perception of risk and severity of gum disease. The three items included in the premanipulation measures were repeated in the postmanipulation questionnaire, and the mean of the three items form an index of perception of risk and severity of gum disease.

5. Affective reactions to advertisements. Participants indicated how they felt while reading the advertisement in seven positive (assured, calm, cheerful, happy, hopeful, relaxed, relieved) and seven negative (anxious, afraid, discouraged, disturbed, sad, troubled, worried) adjectives scales. Negative items were reverse scored.

6. Behavioral intentions. Two questions assessed participants’ intentions regarding the behavior about which they had read. Participants rated the likelihood of buying and using the product on 7-point scales.

RESULTS

An initial set of analyses was conducted to determine whether any of the demographic variables moderated behavioral intentions. Because no moderating effects were obtained, all analyses are presented collapsed over these factors.

The reliability of the scales was checked and the following Cronbach’s alphas were obtained: framing=.739, opinions of the ad=.5979, positive reactions to ad=.8604, negative reactions to ad=.9132, and behavioral intention=.9156 with two highly-correlated questions which are about the likelihood of buying and using the product (correlation coefficient=0.8444).

Health Consciousness

Participants’ frequency of brushing, flossing, and visits to dentists formed an index of health consciousness. The range was from 3 to 13 with a mean of 8.1 and a standard deviation of 2.41. The higher the number, the more dental care routines were practiced, which could indicate higher level of health consciousness.

Manipulation Checks

Participants’ evaluations of the advertisement were examined to confirm that advertisements differed in terms of how the information was framed and perception of product innovativeness. Both were tested with post hoc tests with Bonferroni adjustment for alpha=.05. To assess whether the framing manipulation was perceived as intended, participants rated whether the advertisement placed more emphasis on the benefits associated with using the product or the costs associated with not using the product. In general, as hoped, participants in the negative framing condition judged the advertisements as emphasizing costs more than benefits, whereas participants in the positive framing condition judged the advertisements as emphasizing benefits over costs, F(1, 200)=63.731, p<.000. An examination of participants’ ratings of the information in the advertisements revealed similar patterns. Participants who read positively framed information judged the
tone of the advertisements to be significantly more positive than did those who read negatively framed information, F(1, 200)=69.302, p<.000. Examinations of product innovativeness indicated that participants identified the two levels of product innovativeness; new products were perceived as less familiar than existing ones (prevention products: F(1, 99)=72.234 with p<.000; detection products: F(1, 101)=33.56 with p<.08 which is marginally significant).

Opinions of Advertisements

The eight versions of the advertisement were rated as comparably interesting, appealing, informative, and persuasive, F (7, 180)=.948, p<.471. Post hoc tests with Bonferroni adjustment for alpha=.05 were also executed and none of the pairwise comparison was statistically significant. Subjects in the eight conditions had comparable understanding of the basic information presented in the ad. This suggested that opinions of the advertisements were very similar across conditions and would not confound the experiment’s results.

Perceptions of Risk and Severity of Gum Disease

Three items assessed participants’ perceptions of the likelihood that they would develop some form of gum disease and the perceived severity of its development. The perceived risk after viewing the ad depended very little on the ad conditions (p<.988).

Affective Reactions to Advertisements

No significant condition difference was found to have either positive or negative emotional reactions among the eight groups with consideration of missing data (positive affective reactions: F(7, 189)=1.374, p<.218; negative affective reactions: F(7, 189)=1.117; p<.354). Affective reactions to the ads do not mediate the experiment results.

Behavioral Intention

Participants first reported their intentions to buy the product within a week. H1 stated that positive framing would have greater impact on intention of purchasing prevention healthcare products while negative framing would have greater impact on detection products, which was partially supported. For familiar prevention products, the message framed in positive terms led to higher intention to purchase than that framed in negative terms ( F(1, 51)=9.56, p<.05). However, for familiar detection products, the impact of message framing had no statistically significant effect on intention to purchase ( F(1, 52)=1.69, p<.711).

Two indicators assessed participants’ intentions regarding the dental hygiene product featured in the advertisements. It was predicted that participants who read a positively framed ad promoting new prevention (rinse tablets) or new detection products (dental strips) would report stronger intentions to purchase and make use of the product than would those who read negatively framed versions of the ad. To be specific, H2 predicted the interaction effect between product innovativeness and framing effects in prevention products. Consistent with the predictions, the interaction between message frame and product innovativeness was significant and framing effects were stronger in the new product ad, F(3, 96)=12.134, p<.000, that is depicted in Figure 3. Pairwise comparisons were analyzed across the four groups in prevention products and the differences were all found significant. H2 was fully supported.

H3 concerned the interaction effect between product innovativeness and framing effects in detection products and increasing framing effects in new detection products. For detection products, consistent with the predictions, the interaction between message frame and product innovativeness was significant, F(3, 98)=12.368, p<.000, as depicted in Figure 4. H3a was partially supported since the difference in message effectiveness due to framing was not statistically significant in the familiar detection product (3.81 vs. 3.96). H3b was supported because framing effects were much stronger for the new product than for familiar one (2.71 vs. 0.16) (2.71=5.15-2.46; 0.16=3.96-3.81).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study is to provide some insights to marketers interested in persuading the general population to purchase healthcare products. The research draws on prospect theory (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979) to explain why the strength of the relationship between advertised information and persuasion depends on product characteristics (product functions and innovativeness). The results supported the predicted relation between product innovativeness and message frame for both prevention and detection products. Specifically, subjects showed higher intention to purchase or use the new promoted products in the positively framed ad, and the framing effects were stronger in promoting new products than in promoting familiar products. This research extends knowledge about the effect of framed advertising in consumer purchase decisions, particularly those involving healthcare products, and suggests that it is advisable to communicate with consumers in different ways depending on product characteristics. When the product is new to consumers, positively framed messages would be more effective than negatively framed ones.

The findings that the hypotheses 1 and 3a were not completely supported due to subjects already having considerable experiences of the products and were knowledgeable about them. There is little framing effect for highly involved people (Donoven and Jalleh, 1999, 2000; Krishnamurthy et al., 2001) or for the people who have diagnostic (familiar) product experience (Hoch and Ha, 1986). However, when the subjects face new products, they have not formed their knowledge about the products and positive framing appeals to them by focusing on the potential benefits of buying the products. Another possible reason for the non-significant results may result from the inappropriate scale development and measure for the behavioral intentions. Changing to a 9-point scale (more sensitive scale) and adding some other questions to measure intention could increase the opportunity of finding significance. The other improvement for future studies should move the manipulation check of product innovativeness to the pre-manipulation questionnaire because subjects’ perception of newness could change after viewing the ad.

One limitation of this study was that it only manipulated two levels of product innovativeness (existing familiar vs. new), a categorization that could be oversimplified. Different levels of product innovativeness could be incorporated in the future research. The other measurement limitation of the research is about health consciousness. Health Consciousness Scale (Gould, 1988; Gould, 1990) could be used to measure individual differences in health consciousness directly. The last limitation might be the unusual ethnicity of the sample with over-representation of Asians (29.2% participants) and under-representation of white (31.2%). Further study should be conducted with different samples to increase the validity.

There is a need to go beyond prospect theory in identifying critical factors underlying differences in framing effects. This research provides some insights into individual differences in framing effects by considering health consciousness, and suggests that health consciousness is an important variable. Instead of
FIGURE 3
Comparison of Message Effectiveness for Prevention Products Using Positive vs. Negative Framing

Note: Message effectiveness was measured on a 7-point scale of likelihood to buy; higher number indicates a higher likelihood of purchasing.

FIGURE 4
Comparison of Message Effectiveness for Detection Products Using Positive vs. Negative Framing

Note: Message effectiveness was measured on a 7-point scale of likelihood to buy; higher number indicates a higher likelihood of purchasing.
manipulation, health consciousness was measured and observed directly from actual behaviors/routines. Future research should consider other individuals factors (e.g., perceived health status) and establish a more complicated model in healthcare product advertising effectiveness. Even with the limitations discussed above, this research has contributed to the framing literature because it sheds light on how various degrees of newness influence consumer evaluations of a product and examines how framing effects influence consumers’ intentions to purchase. It is the first research combining framing and perceived product characteristics and its findings should be of interest to healthcare product advertisers.

REFERENCES


The Seven Sins of Memory and Their Implications for Advertising

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Daniel Schacter (2001) reminds us that psychologists and neuroscientists have provided a vast literature on various aspects of forgetting and memory distortions, but no unifying framework within which we can think about the many problems that memory can create. In his recent book, The Seven Sins of Memory (How the Mind Forgets and Remembers), Schacter looks at the problem of memory, and suggests that these ‘imperfections’ may be classified into seven fundamental areas, the ‘seven sins of memory’: transience, absent-mindedness, blocking, misattribution, suggestibility, bias, and persistence.

A review of the seven ‘sins’ suggests that each of these memory “malfunctions” raises a number of concerns over how they could affect the processing of advertising and other marketing communications utilizing his framework. In this paper we will be looking at what the likely impact of these memory problems might be.

**THE SIN OF TRANSIENCE**

Transience is the name Schacter gives to the forgetting that naturally occurs over time. More particularly, it is the realization that while memory of what you did yesterday may be all but perfect, after a week or so our memory for events tends to be more of a generic description of what generally occurs during such an event. Specifically, memory experiences a “general switch from reproductive and specific recollections to reconstructive and more general descriptions” (Schacter, 2001, p. 16).

This problem of transience is aggravated in older adults, those over fifty years of age. While they are quite capable of remembering just as well as younger people over the course of a few minutes, forgetting occurs much more rapidly over time. With the passage of time, older adults tend to lose recall of specific details, and tend to rely even more than younger people on a general descriptive sense of what they remember.

- The sin of transience implies that ‘recall’ of advertising is much more likely to reflect a generic description of what is expected about the brand rather than specific benefits included in the message. This has clear implications for interpreting measures of advertising message recall. But, more importantly, it underscores the need to develop unique brand benefit associations that become a part of the generic understanding of the brand. It also suggests that the specific content of marketing communication should be consistent with, or carefully integrated with, prior understandings of the brand.

- However, one way to help reduce transience is to encourage elaborations that relate information that someone is interested in remembering with something they already know. With advertising this could be encouraged with questions in the copy which stimulate elaboration: for example, with an arthritis pain remedy one might ask “What would you do with a pain free day?”

**THE SIN OF ABSENT-MINDEDNESS**

Absent-mindedness results when we fail to pay proper attention to something and therefore do not encode it properly, or when the information is actually in memory, but overlooked when we need to retrieve it. The consequence of the sin of absent-mindedness manifests itself both in failing to remember past experiences as well as failing to remember to do something in the future. Both, of course, can prove troublesome for marketing communication. Also, the fact that absent-mindedness is more likely for routine experiences that do not in and of themselves require elaborative encoding (e.g. exposure to advertising) adds to the problem.

Memories for past experiences are generally classified as either recollections or familiarity. Recollections are when we recall specific details from memory (e.g. remembering specific benefit claims from an advert), while familiarity reflects a more ‘primitive’ sense of simply being aware of something without recalling specific details (e.g. remembering ‘seeing’ an advert, but not particular content). Interestingly, when there is divided attention during exposure, there is a significant effect upon recollection, but little or no effect upon familiarity (cf. studies by Craik et al., 1996).

- Given that divided attention rather than full attention is likely to be the norm for exposure to advertising, memory for specifics is unlikely. This underscores the importance of maintaining a consistent ‘look and feel’ over time (Percy, Rossiter, and Elliott, 2001), encouraging familiarity, and utilizing imagery that will elicit a positive benefit (associated with the brand) even at low or even sub-cognitive levels of attention. Additionally, too much exposure, especially massed exposure, could lead to lower levels of specific ‘recollection’ (as we understand from as long ago as Ebbinghaus, 1885). Spaced exposures generally results in better memory, a finding demonstrated in Strong’s (1974) simulations of various media schedules based upon Zielske’s work, and more recently in fMRI studies conducted by Wagner, et al. (1998).

Remembering to do something in the future (e.g. buying an advertised brand the next time you are shopping) is described by psychologists as ‘prospective memory.’ Einstein and McDaniel (1990, 1997) have offered a useful way of looking at this idea of prospective memory, distinguishing between what they call ‘event-based’ and ‘time-based’ prospective memory. Event-based prospective memory is when we want to remember to do something at the time of a specific event; for example, the next time you are at the store you want to buy a new brand. Time-based prospective memory is when you wish to remember to do something at a specific time in the future; for example, to put the roast in the oven at four o’clock so it will be ready for dinner.

Prospective memory failure occurs largely because we are so preoccupied with other things in our lives that when the event...
occurs or the time arrives to act upon it, we are so involved with other things that the memory links are not activated.

- To minimize prospective memory failure, marketing communication should utilize distinctive cues that are unlikely to be associated with other long-term memories (especially for competitive brands). We need to establish links in memory to the appropriate category in such a way that the event or specific time spontaneously triggers memory of the intention to act. This is especially true for recognition driven band awareness, suggesting that point-of-purchase material as well as packaging must be both sufficiently informative to trigger the associative memory as well as distinctive enough to minimize confusion with other brand memories. Especially with fmcg brands, shoppers are likely to be in a hurry and pre-occupied with other attention consuming behaviour, adding to the difficulty in gaining attention to the appropriate prospective memory cue. (This idea, in fact, is one of the techniques associated with compliant behaviour capitalized on by successful salesmen distracting your attention, minimizing the likelihood you will remember your initial good intentions to not be influenced by the salesmen: cf Cialdini, 2001.)

**THE SIN OF BLOCKING**

Blocking is typified by the all-too-familiar experience of recognizing someone but not being able to remember their name. According to Schacter, the sin of blocking involves a different kind of forgetting from absent-mindedness and transience. Unlike absent-mindedness, the memory has been encoded and stored, and in fact a retrieval cue could be in place that would be expected to trigger recall. Unlike problems with transience, the information is still in memory; it just remains tantalizingly out of reach when required.

Blocking is basically associated with names, and therefore potentially a problem for brand names. The problem seems to occur in the left temporal pole, where the fragile link between the characteristics associated with something and the name by which it is known is made. The reason we often have trouble remembering someone’s name is that they are difficult to retrieve because people’s names tend to be isolated from conceptual knowledge.

- Like proper names, brand names may be ‘blocked,’ especially those that are not well integrated or related to obvious associations with the category need. If there are no logical and immediate links in memory between a brand name and the category need, we run the risk of occasional blocking. Even when names are equally familiar to people, arbitrary brand names will be blocked more often than descriptive brand names (cf. Brédant and Valentine, 1998).

In another troubling aspect of blocking when considering brand names, access to brand names that are not immediately salient when thinking of a category will be blocked by the successful recall of other brands. This is why we are only likely to ‘recall’ a small subset of all the brands with which we are aware when thinking about a product or category. But there is more to this. To minimize blocking, it is necessary to suppress the retrieval of recently encountered information that is related to a recall cue so that the mind is not cluttered with irrelevancies that could interfere with the desired memory.

- If a brand’s benefit in its communication is similar to a leading brand’s, it will be that much harder to make the connection to the advertised brand, especially if the category cue is linked to the leading brand. Such a situation would make it very difficult to spontaneously recall that the advertised brand also has the same or similar benefits as the leading brand. This again suggests the need to have copy (and packaging as well as other marketing communication) unique to a brand in order to avoid multiple connections in memory that could minimize or override the desired brand-related memory.

Certain retrieval inhibitions that lead to blocking can be ‘released’ if we encounter a sufficiently powerful cue (e.g. nondeclarative emotional memories) that help us re-experience something in the same way in which it was initially experienced. Appropriate triggers in advertising or other marketing communication that elicits the correct emotional memories may help overcome retrieval inhibitions, and release positive memories for the brand.

**THE SIN OF MISATTRIBUTION**

Perhaps the most common occurrence of the sin of misattribution reflects source misattribution where someone does in fact correctly remember something they have learned, but attribute it to the wrong source. This is often referred to as ‘unconscious transference,’ and is the bane of eyewitness identification. As Schacter has put it: “A strong sense of general familiarity, together with an absence of specific recollection, adds up to a lethal recipe for misattribution.” This is potentially lethal in the case of eyewitness identification. While not as serious, it can certainly be a potential problem with brand benefit associations in memory.

- To avoid misattribution, it requires more than simply retrieving specific benefits from memory, they must be linked together in memory in such a way that you can recall the correct conjunction of brand and benefit claim. This linking process is known as ‘memory bonding’ where all of the critical associations within the advertising must be bound together into a unifying whole at the time of encoding. Failure can lead to something called ‘memory conjunction error,’ and is very likely to happen when adverts for different brands are visually or verbally similar. Memory conjunction errors occur because people misattribute strong familiarity with similar (even if not identical) things from more than one source, as coming from a single source; brand advertising in our case. Interestingly, a strong visual-verbal congruence can help minimize misattribution (cf. Schacter, Israel and Racine, 1999).

**THE SIN OF SUGGESTIBILITY**

Suggestibility in memory results from people’s tendency to include information that they have learned from some outside source as something they have personally experienced. This information may come from any external source, including advertising or other marketing communication. While similar to the sin of misattribution, misattribution may occur without specific suggestions from outside sources. But when the two combine, it is quite possible for people to develop memories of something which in fact never occurred.

- While in many cases suggestibility may indeed be a ‘sin’ of memory, with marketing communication this sin may be a blessing. For example, suggestive questions may produce memory distortions by creating source memory problems. As a result, advertising that utilizes questions that remind people of a favorable brand association could occasion a
‘memory’ for that positive experience, even if it never occurred: ‘Remember how easy it was to remove those nasty stains the last time you used new Persil with bleach?’

Hyman (1996) and his colleagues have done some interesting work in successfully creating false childhood memories via suggestion, simply by asking subjects about things that never occurred. One of the important conclusions they drew from their work is that these false memories produce vivid visual images. This suggests to Schacter that if one embellishes a false memory with vivid mental images it should make it look and feel like a true memory.

• Application to advertising is obvious. If we reinforce a suggested favorable experience with a brand with a strong visual image of such an experience, it should help seed the false memory.

In an extension of these ideas, we know that one of the best ways to elicit early childhood memories is to ask subjects to ‘visualize’ themselves as children. While there is no evidence that anyone can remember anything much earlier than about two years of age, with suggestive visualization techniques one can create false ‘memories’ for events going back almost to birth (cf. Spanos et al. 1999). The key here, as in all suggestibility, is expectancy. If we are instructed to expect something, and it seems plausible, it is possible to create rather strong false memories. The more recent the primed experience, the more difficult it is to suggest a false memory; and of course it is very difficult to counter strong existing memory.

• If you hate a brand, an advertiser is unlikely to ‘suggest’ you like it. But if it is one of a set of brands that you use, it is certainly possible to suggest more positive experiences with that brand. And if it is a brand you have not used, if you can relate it to a positive experience from childhood, it is quite possible to suggest positive memories for the benefit and link it to the brand.

THE SIN OF BIAS

The sin of bias reflects how current understandings, beliefs, and feelings have the ability to distort how we interpret new experiences and our memory of them. Biases that are associated with our memory of past experiences will greatly influence how we perceive and understand new information or situations. Schacter identifies five major types of bias: consistency, change, hindsight, egocentric, and stereotypical biases.

The neurological source of bias seems to come from something in the left brain that Gazzaniga (1998) has called an ‘interpreter’ that continuously draws upon our experiences and understanding of things in order to provide some stability to our psychological world. This interpreter utilizes such things as inferences, rationalizations, and generalizations in relating the past with the present, enabling us to justify our present attitudes with our past experience and feelings. The left brain interpreter, however, is mediated by systems in the right brain that are more attuned to actual representations of what is going on in the world around us.

Consistency and Change Bias

As one might suppose, consistency bias is a tendency to behave (or believe) today in a fashion consistent with one’s memory for similar experience in the past. As a result, what we find is that memories of past experience and feelings are filtered through, and made to match, current experience and feelings. Because our memories are not ‘exact,’ we tend to infer our past beliefs, attitudes, and feelings from what we are experiencing today.

• This opens up an opportunity to exploit existing positive attitudes toward a brand by implying they are of long standing. Especially with brand switchers who include the advertised brand in their purchase set, one could imply a long standing preference: “You know you have always liked our brand, why not buy more?” This is also congruent with change bias, which is where one remembers an initial assessment as being worse than it actually was, making what you feel now an improvement by comparison. Both consistency and change bias help reduce cognitive dissonance.

Hindsight Bias

When we feel that we have always known something would happen after we have become aware of the outcome, this is the bias of hindsight. We are reconstructing the past to make it consistent with the present. The key seems to be an activation of general knowledge. As Schacter puts it, “it is as if knowledge of the outcome becomes instantly integrated with other general knowledge in semantic memory, and people simply cannot treat this new bit of information any differently from other information relevant to the judgment they are trying to make.” There is evidence that this selective recall is a function of the general knowledge that influences perception and comprehension and a vulnerability to misattribution.

• Hindsight bias would seem to suggest that after reading an advert or direct mail brochure, one will tend to ‘recognize’ or believe claims later that had not actually been made in the advert, but would have been expected precursors of the new claims. Work by Carli (1999) tends to support this suggestion.

Egocentric Bias

Egocentric bias is the result of the important role that the ‘self’ plays in our ongoing mental life. Because of this, when we encode information by relating it to the self, our memory for that information is better than other types of encoding.

• The implications for marketing communication here are obvious: include personal references. Moreover, given our tendency to see ourselves in a positive light, it follows that such memory bias will occasion memories in a self-enhancing light. This suggests that copy asking people to remember a situation in a positive light should encourage an egocentric memory bias: e.g. ‘remember when you . . .’. In the same way, egocentric bias can result from exaggerating the difficulty of past experiences: ‘remember how hard it was to . . .’

THE SIN OF PERSISTENCE

As we know, emotionally charged experiences are better remembered than less emotional occasions. Persistence involves remembering things you wish you would forget, and is strongly associated with our emotional experiences.

• Research has shown that emotionally-charged information automatically attracts attention; and in the briefest exposure, the emotional significance of a stimuli will be retrieved from nondeclarative emotional memory, evaluated, and mediate how we encode the information. Understanding the emotional associations generated by an advert is critical. Because people are more likely to remember the central focus of emotionally arousing information rather
than memory for peripheral details, it is essential to tie the brand in marketing communication to the appropriate emotion. Otherwise, it will become peripheral to the information conveyed (a problem with many highly entertaining adverts).

Schacter has pointed out that persistence thrives in negative emotional situations such as disappointment, sadness, and regret. Our memories of traumatic experiences are persistent, and while these unwanted memories may occur in any of the senses, visual memories are by far the most common. This suggestion is reinforced in the work of Ochsner (2000), who found that when people recognize a positive visual image they tend to just say it is familiar to them. But when they recognize negative visual images, people relate detailed, specific memories of what they thought and felt when they were originally exposed to the picture.

- All of this underscores the importance of the visual images in marketing communication. Because persistence thrives in a negative emotional climate, visual images conveying disappointment in a usage situation, resolved by the advertised brand, should tap into any persistent memories of product dissatisfaction (always assuming such dissatisfaction). It also suggests that for appropriate product categories (especially high involvement informational decisions such as medical or other insurance, financial planning, etc.) visual ‘reminders’ of past problems which could be avoided with the advertised brand should be an effective strategy. This should also be equally effective in situations where there is strong psychological risk involved: e.g., reminding young people of a social ‘disaster’ which would never occur with the advertised brand.

Not surprisingly, much of this activity is centred within the amygdala, the source of nondeclarative emotional memory. It is the amygdala that regulates memory storage, and can release hormones that can ‘force’ us to remember vividly an experience (LeDoux, 1996). And as we have already noted, this response by the amygdala is much more likely to occur for negative than positive experience.

- This suggests that, again for appropriate product categories, it could make sense to create situations within an advert that signal a possible threat to the well-being of the consumer. This ‘threat’ may then well intrude upon active memory when cued by the category, with the brand associated with a positive resolution.

**SUMMARY**

The seven ‘sins’ of memory, as outlined by Schacter, clearly have implications for marketing communication, as we have seen. Recent work in neurobiology has shown, especially with the advent of fMRIs and PET scans, that memories are not ‘snap shots’ stored in the mind waiting to be recalled. Rather, they are made up of a number of component parts waiting to be reassembled and ‘remembered.’ As a result, a lot of things can interfere with our ability to accurately remember. But, understanding how this happens can help us minimize potential problems with encoding and subsequent recall of communication messages. Schacter’s seven ‘sins’ provide a framework to help us with this understanding.

Additionally, a number of research projects to investigate the implications for advertising that are drawn from the seven sins of memory are easy to envision. A few suggestions are briefly outlined below for testing some of the implications suggested in this paper.

**The sin of transience** suggests that specific recall tends to change over time to more generic descriptions of what is expected. This premise would easily be tested by tracking short-term recall of message content over time. It was also suggested that questions in advertising copy should stimulate elaboration, which in its turn should reduce memory transience. This too would be testable.

**The sin of absent-mindedness** suggests that advertising with unique purchase cues, unrelated to other long-term memory associations (especially to other competitive brands), should minimize distraction caused by prospective memory failure at the point-of-purchase. This proposition could be tested in many ways, utilizing stimuli ranging from adverts with varying degrees of purchase cues to packaging with different degrees of similarity to competitors.

**The sin of blocking** suggests a number of possible studies. For example, brands with more arbitrary or abstract names, particularly relative to category need, should be less easily recalled when one is asked to remember brands from the category. Also, benefit claims that are similar to claims made by a leading brand should be harder to connect to the brand than more unique benefit claims. Such hypotheses could easily be tested using real-world stimuli.

**The sin of misattribution** suggests that if ‘memory conjunction errors’ are more likely with visual or verbally similar material, testing brand-benefit memory associations for similar vs. unsimilar adverts for different brands should reveal greater correct recall for more unique adverts, owing to greater memory bonding for the brand and benefit.

**The sin of suggestibility** suggests it should be possible to utilize visual images to reinforce suggestibility for events that have never occurred. If advertising utilizes copy and visuals that suggest a strong positive experience with a brand, this should generate more memory for such positive experiences among brand users. This would be an especially interesting exercise for occasional users of a brand.

**The sin of bias** suggests one should be able to imply long standing positive attitudes toward a brand simply by implying such in advertising. Strength or duration of a positive attitude toward a brand could be measured as a function of whether it is or is not implied by the message.

**The sin of persistence** suggests that adverts utilizing negative visual images of a problem that is solved by a brand should reinforce or build more positive attitude (especially in the case of serious problems). One could test adverts that utilize such images vs. adverts that use, say, positive benefits to measure this.

The implications drawn from the seven sins of memory for the processing of, and response to, advertising are significant. These brief examples represent only some of the more obvious research suggested by the sins of memory to better understand how to create and develop more effective advertising.

**REFERENCES**


A Cross-National Study of the Effect of Negative Celebrity Endorser Information

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ABSTRACT

Prior research has demonstrated that negative information about celebrity endorsers has been shown to decrease evaluative judgments of products with which the celebrity is engaged in an endorsement relationship. Building on this literature, the current study makes a cross-cultural comparison between Japan and the United States and also examines the effect that type of negative information—either personally damaging just to the celebrity (self-oriented negative information) or also to his friends and family (other-oriented)—has on consumers’ evaluative judgments toward a new product. Collectivism in the Japanese culture is expected to produce less favorable product evaluations when advertising associates a new product with celebrities who have negative information affecting others than for Americans, who are posited to view self-inflicted embarrassment and other-oriented damage equally. In a rather unexpected twist on attribution-theory expectations, our results revealed that when the experimental product was associated with a celebrity who had engaged in untoward behavior that had negative implications only for him (i.e., self-oriented negative information), endorsed product evaluations were significantly more positive for both Japanese and American respondents in comparison to product evaluations produced by the no negative information control group and the other-oriented negative information group.
Putting Your Best Face Forward: The Impact of Affect on Agent Preference
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ABSTRACT
This investigation examines the impact of affect on consumer responses to a positive, neutral, or negative agent. Experiment 1 finds that under certain circumstances, consumers will avoid an affect-incongruent agent (i.e., an agent whose face conveys affect inconsistent with the consumer’s own). Experiment 2 provides evidence that consumers confronted by an affect incongruent agent actually feel worse in the short-term and respond more negatively to the products endorsed by the agent.
The Moderating Role of Negative Consumption Emotions on Service Evaluation
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ABSTRACT
This paper examines the occurrence of two negative consumption emotions—anger and anxiety—in terms of their underlying cognitive appraisals (perceived causality and coping potential), and the impact of the emotions on the effectiveness of provider responses to the emotion. Confirming hypotheses, a survey of airline passengers found that anger is characterized by appraisals of provider blame and high consumer coping potential and anxiety by uncontrollable circumstances and low coping potential. These distinctive features implied that supportive provider responses to angry consumers were less effective than similar responses to anxious consumers. Implications for understanding how emotions impact consumer evaluations as well as managerial implications are discussed.
The Influence of Negated Product Benefits on Evaluations
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ABSTRACT
Product benefits are sometimes communicated as negations (“not difficult to use”) rather than as affirmations (“easy to use”). Results from three experiments suggest that the processing and persuasive impact of a negation depends on resource allocation. When resources are substantial, a product is preferred when a benefit is described as “not difficult to use” than when it is “not easy to use.” When resources are limited, the product is evaluated more favorably when it is “not easy to use” than “not difficult to use.” This preference reversal suggests that in processing a negation, the affirmation (“difficult”) initially serves as the basis for evaluation, and if additional resources are allocated, the negator (“not”) is incorporated. Most importantly, the preference reversal occurs despite evidence that the product benefit is encoded, integrated, and available in memory. This suggests that the negation is less accessible than its affirmation at the time of forming evaluations.
ABSTRACT

Research suggests that major life transitions (such as becoming a mother) impact upon consumption patterns. Adopting an inductive and interpretative methodology, we examine the transition to motherhood of four women. It is noteworthy that role transition is structured by whether these women embraced their maternal identity or distanced themselves from it. The paper demonstrates how consumption is used in role enactment and identity construction. The paper concludes that, for these women, the 'nesting instinct' equates with consumption.
Genes or Socialisation? Effects of Sex Role Stereotypes on Female Risk-Aversion in Financial Decision Making
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Elfriede Penz, University of Economics and Business Administration, Austria

ABSTRACT
Females are more risk-averse than men and therefore tend to choose assets which impose only small risks (e.g., savings accounts). In the Western culture risk taking is a typically male attribute, also depicted in the male sex role stereotype. We therefore hypothesize that people identifying with the male sex role stereotype are more risk seeking than people describing themselves with typically female attributes, independently of biological sex. In the first study a sample of 186 participants completed a questionnaire. Results show, that sex differences in financial risk taking delineate if attachment to female and male sex roles are kept constant. In the second study an experimental design with gender priming (male, female and control group) was applied to 180 respondents. Hypotheses were only backed in the male sub-sample. Only male students indicated higher risk-taking after priming with male sex role stereotypes and less risk taking after priming with the typically female sex role.
Gender Differences in Consumer Response to Complex Print Advertisements
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ABSTRACT
This research explores the gender differences in consumer response to complex print advertisements. In a controlled experiment, the complexity of the target print advertisements was manipulated along four dimensions: visual, technical, lexical, and information complexity. The results suggest that the effectiveness of such an advertising strategy (i.e., use of complex advertisements) is indeed influenced by the gender of the respondent. Specifically, women seem to favor messages that are visually complex and informationally rich while men seem to prefer ads that are technically complex. No gender differences were observed for the lexically complex message condition.
Masculine and Feminine Dimensions of Brand Personality: Initial Steps in Scale Development and Validation
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ABSTRACT
This paper reports development and initial validation of a scale measuring masculine and feminine dimensions of brand personality. The first phase of this scale development project resulted in a scale comprising twelve descriptive adjectives: six pertaining to the masculine dimension and six related to the feminine dimension of brand personality. These subscales were unidimensional and orthogonal. The scale also successfully discriminated among brands that were a priori expected to differ in terms of masculine and feminine brand personality.
SESSION OVERVIEW

The term “Consumers In Extremis” in our title is intended to denote consumers facing their own impending deaths or consumers having to deal with the death of a close relative or friend. A key motif underlying our decision to focus on such subjects is the fact that, to date, human mortality has been largely ignored or side-stepped by consumer researchers, with a few notable exceptions (Belk 1988; Hirschman 1990). At one level this omission is understandable; marketing seems to sit more comfortably with human vitality than with human mortality. At another level, the failure to feature what is arguably the most significant event in the human life-course on the consumer behaviour research agenda is quite remarkable.

Fortunately, this oversight has begun to be redressed and one element in this process has been the inclusion of papers on this topic at ACR conferences (Gabel et al. 1996). This nascent cadre of researchers have sought to progress the death-consumer behaviour nexus by broadening the research focus beyond the purchase event for funerary artefacts to include deeper psychological and sense-making dimensions. This special session is intended to continue this research agenda. Rather than homing in on what consumers buy when bereaved, we focus on the impact of dying and bereavement itself on consumers. Whether the death in question is one’s own impending death or the death of a loved one, the impact is typically one of shock, terror and heightened emotions (Parkes, 1986). Against such an affective backdrop what might be termed normal consumer functioning becomes problematic if not precluded, indeed comporting oneself as a “normal” consumer in the face of proximate or recent death might well incur social disapproval (Gentry et al. 1994).

The first paper by Kropp, Shoham and Gentry, explores consumer decision making under chronic pain, including people who are in the liminal, terminal, stages of life as well as surviving partners or caregivers. This study examines the difficulty these vulnerable consumers have in making the normal range of decisions that consumers typically make as a part of their everyday lives. Apart from the impact of loss on cognitive functioning and decision making, those who are bereaved must also restore meaning and sense in the face of what is perceived to be a meaningless and senseless loss. The second paper in this session argues that expenditure by the bereaved on the recently deceased can constitute such a meaning-making exercise. Specifically, Sørensen suggests that survivors are giving gifts and thus attempting to communicate both with the departed, and with themselves, through this expenditure. She proposes that these consumers in extremis are essentially making a final gift to their loved ones and that, as a result, the extant corpus of research on consumer gift-giving may well afford a useful prism through which such behaviour can be examined.

The third paper, by Turley and O’Donohoe, also positions itself on this meaning-making trajectory. One such meaning-making strategy is to continue to communicate with those who have died and, in so doing, maintain, modify and modulate relationships with them. It looks at a group of Irish bereaved consumers and the manner in which they insert memorial verses for their departed loved ones in regional newspapers. For many, placing these In Memoriam inserts with newspaper personnel can prove a highly charged and traumatic service encounter. Specifically the paper tries to illuminate how the emotional intensity and grief inherent in this exercise inform the service encounter for both provider and client.

ABSTRACTS

“Consumer Information Processing Under Chronic Pain and In Extremis”
Fredric Kropp, Monterey Institute of International Studies, USA
Aviv Shoham, University of Haifa, Israel
James W. Gentry, University of Nebraska, USA

Consumer decision-making processes have been thoroughly studied for a fairly wide range of products, however, consumer decision processes under extreme stress or in high emotional contexts have attracted less attention. Previous work by Kropp, Shoham and Rose (1999) examined consumer decision-making at the end of life. This study builds upon and extends this research to examine the decision processes by consumers who experience chronic pain, including those who may be at the end of life. A better understanding of consumer decision-making processes and consumer behaviour can help marketers to better fill people’s needs during a difficult and emotionally stressful period. In addition, as consumers are particularly vulnerable when in chronic pain and may not make “good” decisions there are public policy implications, specifically, to provide protection for an extremely vulnerable population.

Previous research identifies three major approaches to consumer behaviour: the decision-making perspective, the experiential perspective, and the behavioural influence perspective (Mowen 1988). In the decision-making perspective, the consumer can be viewed as a rational problem-solver. The experiential perspective suggests that consumers may not always engage in rational decision making prior to making a purchase but are often guided by affect or emotions. Rather, rational explanations can be constructed after the decision is made (Mowen 1988). The behavioural influence perspective starts with the concept that the behaviour is elicited by environmental stimuli including situational factors and the societal and group norms.

Sometimes, the person in extremis may not be capable of making decisions and the decisions are shifted to care givers. Therefore, in addition to studying the person in extremis, this study also examines the role played by care givers and by loved ones. Care givers are also in a stressful position. In previous work that examined the role of care givers in the decision process (Gentry, Kennedy, Paul, and Hill 1994), it was the exception rather than the rule that caregivers were able to keep the medical system accountable. Most relied on third parties to pay the bills which were submitted, without checking to see if they were legitimate. This further highlights another set of public policy implications.

This paper examines the decision-making processes of consumers in chronic pain, including those at the end of life, and examines how they relate to each of the consumer perspectives described above. It uses depth interviews to further understand consumers in extremis and care givers who also may be in extremis. It develops an approach for further study of the phenomena and explores public policy implications.
Research taking a consumer perspective on death and dying has focused primarily on the vulnerability that follows from the impact of bereavement on the consumer decision making of the bereaved (Schwarz, Jolston and Lee 1986, Gentry & Goodwin 1995, Mitford 2000). A notable exception, though, is the work of Gabel, Mansfield & Westbrook (1996). Based on their preliminary, exploratory analysis of meanings associated with death related consumption, they suggest that three interrelated categories of meaning underpin this consumption phenomenon: ‘peace of mind’, ‘search for trust’, and ‘fear, avoidance, and expediency’. The study reported in this paper should be seen as an attempt to build on the work of Gabelet al. So, besides portraying categories of consumption meanings experienced and expressed by survivors in their funeral related consumption, it also attempts to develop an overall framework that manages to encompass these consumption meanings. Since it can be argued that expenditure by bereaved survivors on caskets, flowers, gravestones, attire, etc. can be considered a final gift to the deceased (Schwarz et al. 1986; Kropp, Shoham, and Rose 1999), the proposed framework is strongly inspired by the consumer research literature on gift giving (e.g. Sherry 1983).

Initial observation made it clear that people’s accounts of death and funerals are more than replete with consumption meanings. They include personal experiences and stories, expressions of strong emotions, and moral evaluations that may relate to almost any object (e.g. coffin, hearse, flowers, graveyard, place of social gathering, etc.) or any person (e.g. the deceased, the survivors, the mourners, the funeral director, the clergyman) involved in the funeral and related consumption. Taking a gift giving perspective makes it possible to give a more structured overview of the objects, persons and processes involved in funeral related consumption together with their attendant meanings, motives, and emotions.

In his conceptualisation of gift giving, Sherry (1983) describes three distinct phases in gift giving: prestation, gestation, and reformulation. Applying this framework to funerals provides us with a structure through which funerary consumption meanings can be examined in terms of temporal sequence, i.e. those taking place before, during, or after the actual funeral ceremony. Further, it also points to the social aspects of funeral related consumption. Not only do survivors dispose on behalf of somebody else, their behaviour and choices are also strongly guided by social norms and values, e.g. a set of moral obligations that corresponds fairly well with Mauss’ notion of potlatch (Mauss 1990).

In order to capture the tapestry of meanings inherent in funeral related consumption, the research in this project is qualitative in nature and follows an emergent design, alternating between field studies, mainly depth interviews, and literature studies (e.g. Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry 1989). Specifically, the empirical research involves semi-structured depth interviews with a funeral director, a pensioned clergyman, an artist producing ceramic gravestones, and six persons who have recently lost a close relative. To this should be added a large number of unplanned and unstructured interviews that developed out of incidental observations and conversations with friends, fellows, and acquaintances concerning the topic of funerals and related consumption.

The findings of this research will hopefully provide some of the actors within the field of funeral consumption, e.g. funeral directors, with a more comprehensive understanding of how funerals and funeral related consumption are experienced by those responsible for making arrangements for their departed loved ones.

Few studies examine the range of service encounters normally ensuing upon the demise of a spouse, parent, or close friend (Gabel et al. 1996). The bereaved, either in person or through other family members, are likely to find themselves having to deal with an array of health, funerary, religious and financial service providers, at a time when their own decision making and psychological resources are severely impaired or depleted (Raphael 1984; Gentry et al. 1994). Hand in hand with this functional impairment, the heightened sensibilities of the bereaved and the perceived consequences of their decisions for the reputation, status and memory of the deceased infuse these interactions with an emotional charge and pathos rarely encountered on the service encounter spectrum. In every sense, this is consumer behaviour in extremis. Thanatological literature indicates that the trauma attendant on the grieving process can endure and consequently affect such encounters long after the death has taken place (Lopata 1973; Parkes 1986).

The specific service encounter examined in this paper involves bereaved people placing In Memoriam notices in local Irish newspapers and their interactions with newspaper staff. In Memoriams are verses inserted in local newspapers by bereaved relatives and friends on anniversaries or birthdays of their deceased loved ones. The empirical research involved phenomenological interviews with 8 bereaved consumers and six newspaper staff in various Irish towns and cities. The use of interpretive methods in exploring consumers’ experience of service encounters is supported by Sembro and Sandberg (2002). The authors initially conducted research with bereaved consumers to understand their experiences of placing In Memoriams and interviewed some newspaper staff to better understand how these verses were put together. It soon became clear however that encounters between bereaved client and newspaper employee could be highly sensitive and emotionally draining and merited further research in their own right.

Our findings uncovered a varied emotional tapestry among bereaved respondents. For some, dealing with the newspaper is routine and uneventful, for others, it constitutes a trying and traumatic experience. During the encounter itself a perceived emotional asymmetry on the part of placers can raise issues. If they consider newspaper staff and indeed the placing regime itself (deadlines, format restrictions, cost) to be inflexible and uncaring, resentment can emerge. For their part, striking the appropriate level of emotional investment in the encounter can be problematic for staff. Too much may both hinder their ability to function professionally and bewilders clients, too little may run the risk of seeming cold and clinical. Put dramaturgically, the question of how much of the provider’s “back region” should be disclosed during the service performance is both delicate and salient (John, 1996). Findings are further compared with similar extended, affectively charged and intimate service encounters (Hill 1995; Price & Arnould 1995). This study offers insights into experiences of intense service encounters, from the perspective of both providers and consumers. It also offers a rare glimpse of bereaved consumers going about their business, indicating how the quality of their encounters in the marketplace may help or hinder them in dealing with loss.
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Consuming Images: Media, Cultural Codes, and Representation
Jonathan E. Schroeder, Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden
Lisa Usitalo, Helsinki School of Economics, Finland

SESSION OVERVIEW
The mass media often depict consumer society as a fountain of personal freedom and satisfaction, where citizen and consumer are almost interchangeable expressions of identity (cf. Meijer 1998; Shields 2002). This session brought together four papers that question this portrayal, and pose several important questions for consumer researchers. What are the perceptual processes by which consumers interpret images, and how much leeway do consumers have to interpret freely? How does media structure our daily lives, including how we spend and think about our time? How is identity represented in marketing communication, and how has this changed recently?

We problematize the notion that “the consumption of symbolic meaning, particularly through the use of advertising as a cultural commodity, provides the individual with the opportunity to construct, maintain, and communicate identity and social meanings” (Elliott 1997, p. 285). We employ several different research methods, including content analysis, ethnography, and semiotics, to investigate how cultural codes are expressed and interpreted within a consumer environment saturated with images. We contend that visual consumption of media images is a key attribute of an experience economy organized around attention. As psychologist and art historian Rudolf Arnheim argues, “one must establish what people are looking at before one can hope to understand why, under the conditions peculiar to them, they see what they see” (Arnheim 1977, p. 4). Images function within culture, and their interpretative meanings are subject to change.

We draw on recent work on visual consumption as a key process of consumer behavior (Schroeder 2002). We question several assumptions that are fairly prevalent in consumer research circles—assumptions about interpretive polysemy, gender representation, and consumer relationships with media—from several disciplines, including psychology, philosophy, and marketing. One goal is to begin to reconcile diverse research traditions within consumer behavior, including social cognition, advertising interpretation, and media consumption. The session also was designed to demonstrate the growth of consumer research within Sweden and Finland in recent years, in the face of industrial marketing’s dominance of the research scene.

REFERENCES
the growing evidence that much of social judgment and behavior occur without conscious awareness or intent…” (2002, p. 280).

Bargh’s critique focuses on cognitive decision-making and motivation, without much discussion of advertising interpretation or social attribution. We extend his argument, and claim that these ‘automatic’ social attribution processes work against much deconstructive, playful, queering, or resistant interpretive work, often claimed to operate in the consumer’s identity construction activity. Tacit interpretation, then, serves as a boundary condition, or limiting factor, of advertising polysemic and interpretative creativity, particularly within the realm of consumer identity construction.

We join recent work that discusses advertising as discourse (e.g., Berger 2000; Kates and Shaw-Garlock 1999; Pearce 1999; Ritson and Elliott 1999; Schroeder 2002). Research on tacit interpretation, framed within theoretical concepts of identity construction, suggests that given the prevalence of particular versions of identities in advertisements, represented iterations often reproduce a limited realm for identity construction within consumer culture. We introduce several ad examples to illustrate the concepts of tacit interpretation, and discuss how awareness of tacit interpretative processes helps frame emerging models of marketing communication and consumer response. As consumer researchers increasingly acknowledge cultural codes, consumer response, and deconstruction as essential in understanding how advertising produces meaning, our multidisciplinary approach aims toward integrating knowledge from psychological and consumer research to situate advertising within perception and culture.

Experimental social psychological research has documented several such unconscious processes that affect social attribution, for example, making judgments about identity, character traits, and social inequality (see Jost and Hunyady 2002, for a review). Many perceptual processes fluctuate between conscious and unconscious control. For example, eye movement, attention, and awareness are governed by cognitive as well as physiological processes (Barry 1997). Perceptual codes influence visual information processing—Westerners generally read from left to right, and from top to bottom. Furthermore, perceptual cues, such as relative size, shape, color, and symmetry contribute to consumer cognition at a level of which most are most dimly aware (cf. Arneheim 1974). For example, objects—or persons—that appear larger in the visual frame are generally ascribed more importance than those that appear small.

We call this phenomenon ‘tacit interpretation’ and suggest that it is a major, yet relatively under-researched process of ad interpretation, particularly regarding consumer subject self-formation. Research on advertising interpretation and its connection to consumer culture needs to take tacit interpretation into account. Even within postmodern consumer culture, interpretation is not fully disconnected from basic perceptual processes, nor are consumers completely liberated to interpret images in any way they see fit.

References


“Reproducing Time: Understanding the Relationship Between Rituals, Media and Time”

Anu Valtonen, Helsinki School of Economics, Finland

This study explores the cultural role of media and advertisements in maintaining and breaking down the prevailing temporal order. It presents the results of an ethnographic study conducted in Finland. Drawing on anthropological literature, the study focuses on newspapers and explores the multiple ways in which they enter into the ritual renegotiation of temporal boundaries both in terms of their content and reading patterns.

The study regards the newspaper as a thoroughly cultural product—advertisements, journalistic contents, classification principles, publication politics and reading patterns are all products of a given culture, and they all also reproduce that culture. That implicates that advertisers, readers and reporters are all seen part of the same circle by which time is created. From this viewpoint, the newspaper can be seen as a cultural meeting point that makes visible our invisible time conceptions in an interesting way. Especially, in the current information society where traditional temporal order has been called into question, the newspaper makes visible the overall cultural role and position in the on-going renegotiation of time. In doing so, the study takes part into the discussion of “context”, considering it not as semantic context, or as a specific social context, but in terms of larger cultural context.

Second, while previous studies have discussed the relationship between rituals and advertising and media, have concentrated either on exploring rituals and media usage or rituals and advertisements. This study views the media as a seamless, throughout cultural product. This kind of viewpoint makes possible to address its overall cultural role and position in the on-going re-negotiation of time. In doing so, the study takes part into the discussion of “context”, considering it not as semantic context, or as a specific social context, but in terms of larger cultural context.

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“Daddies, Assistants and Fools–Differentiation of Male Representations in Present-Day Advertising”
iLisa Uusitalo, Helsinki School of Economics, Finland
Brett Martin, University of Auckland, New Zealand
Topi Saari, Helsinki School of Economics, Finland

This paper explores the way men are represented in present-day advertising. Most gender related studies have concentrated in studying women in advertising and claim that men are still represented as the dominant gender and in more active, independent and functional roles than women. This paper asks whether this still holds for advertising in the beginning of 21st century. Many cultural changes may have broken the earlier stereotypes, for example changes in the family life, attitudes toward various sexual identities, concepts of masculinity and femininity, and changes in cultural style.

Background

It has been claimed that advertising relies on stereotypical images and reproduces certain sexist or racist attitudes. Both by its style and rhetoric it tends to treat women as sexual objects, representing them as inferior to men, or if equal, as something threatening to men. Especially, in portraying women, the women body is underscored as the site of femininity (Venkatesan & Losco 1975, Skelly & Lundstrom 1981, Artz & Venkatesh 1991, Goldman 1992, Schroedel & Borgerson 1998, Cortese 1999). Women are often visually portrayed in a position of children (Goffman 1979), and elderly women are represented as somewhat foolish, comical creatures. In short, it is claimed that women have been looked predominantly through the ‘gaze of men’.

Most studies based on American advertising show a higher frequency of men than women portrayed in advertising (Belkaoui & Belkaoui 1976). However, in European countries the difference is smaller. Associating men with products has been based on their authoritative, argumentative role as expert or interviewer rather than a less knowledgeable product user (McArthur & Resko 1975). Studies show only minor changes in male representations: men are portrayed more often in recreational life spheres and slightly more than earlier as decorative, objectified models. Sill they are not portrayed as taking up any family or household work (e.g. England & Gardner 1983, Wolheter & Lammers 1980). A few recent studies support the persistence of strong masculine stereotypes in advertising, but these studies are not based on as broad media samples as the earlier studies (Brosius, Mundorf & Staab 1991, Kolbe & Albanese 1996).

In contrast, some Nordic studies show changes at least in women’s position (Penttilä & Vilikki 1990). In addition to the traditional, subservive roles, women are displayed in dominant, independent and professional roles. Often they also represent the mythic strong women familiar from the stories of the Greek mythology or a national epos. Based on the recent changes in the representation of the female gender in the Nordic context, we can assume corresponding changes in male representations.

Postmodern cultural tendencies in advertising style mean increasing emphasis on the visual aspects and embedded, connotative meanings. Contemporary body culture is an example of the narcissistic identity seeking based on visual characteristics. Bodies have often become projects to work on, and people assume that there is a strong link between bodily development and social status (Joy & Venkatesh 1994, Patterson & Elliott 2002). Postmodern advertising may also turn upside down the familiar attitude (Petersen 1998). By way of mockery men can be portrayed as submissive in their relationship to women, or as workforce for women, or they can be portrayed otherwise in foolish, self-ironic positions.

Data

The data consist of 62 printed advertisements portraying male images in a sample of 21 Finnish magazines that appeared in 2000-2001. The magazines included a broad scale of family, business, women, sports and other leisure magazines. Finland is a good representative of Europe, because advertising expenditure per capita has long been among the highest in the world, as are the readership figures for magazines and daily papers. Based on a qualitative analysis of the images, twelve distinct categories of representing men were identified.

Results

The results show that men are portrayed in traditional dominant roles and positions, but also in new equal and submissive positions. Moreover, some male images clearly portrayed new sexual identities (androgyous or homosexual). Postmodern tendencies such as body culture and ironic attitude were revealed by several new categories.

The categories ‘Polished triumphant’, ‘Samurai-man’ and ‘Don Juan’ support the conventional gender images. The ‘polished triumphant’ is a wealthy, well-dressed, fashionable and successful man with a masculine outlook. He is often surrounded by, or carries leisurely some status symbols. ‘Samurai man’ is a continuation to the classical male image based on the mythical lonely heroes of the Western films. It clearly reflects the social tendencies toward individualism, personal fulfillment, and desire for exciting experiences. ‘Don Juan’ is a conqueror, seducer and lover of woman. The role division is traditional, the man playing a dominant part. New elements are the direct way of showing sexuality by denotative sexual acts instead of more hidden references. This type consists of two subcategories: the passionate lover and the romantic dreamer.

Men in equal or submissive positions are represented by categories ‘Daddy’, ‘Woman’s assistant’, ‘Low-paid worker’, and ‘Equality advocate’. ‘Daddies’ are fathers who like to be with their family and children and value highly the time spent at home. Daddies are not necessarily ‘soft’ in a feminine way. When men are portrayed as ‘Woman’s assistant’, the usual role distribution in which men are in functional and women in decorative roles has been turned upside down. Portraying men as ‘Low-paid-workers’ also contrasts the earlier way of representing men as professional experts, managers or skilled, high-paid workers. Men and women in advertisements can be deliberately portrayed as equal. Thus, men acting as ‘Equality advocates’ are doing some housework or sports together with their partner. Often the habitual of both sexes is very similar.

Diffusion of sexual identities is shown by categories ‘Woman’s imitator’ and ‘Minority advocate’. Masculine images are picking up some feminine features. ‘Woman’s imitator’ portrays the man as having so many feminine features that he starts to remind a woman. Some male figures in this category could be named also androgyous. Men are portrayed as having feminine appearance, or being interested in activities considered feminine. ‘Minority advocate’ refers either to sexual or racial minorities. Earlier there were hardly any references to homosexuality in advertising. Still now the references are rare and hidden and maybe noticed only by sexual minorities themselves. Also advertisements that emphasize body culture include both hetero- and homoerotic suggestions.

The postmodern body culture can be clearly identified. The category ‘Eros’ shows that also men are displaying their bodies as beautiful esthetic or sexual objects. A new feature is the narcissistic
way to look at and care for the body. Another version of the narcissistic body culture, the ‘Trimmer’, is more related to body exercise and training and includes fewer sexual references. To this trimmer-category we also accounted men who were ‘trimming’ their appearance. Postmodern cultural style has also brought about a new category of ironic male portrayals, ‘Fools’. Advertising that portrays men in an ironic, foolish position may reflect relaxing attitudes toward male authority.

Our results contradict and challenge earlier studies. They show that men are portrayed in a far greater variety of roles than was found earlier. In addition to the traditional representations showing male dominance, there are several new ways of representing men in non-dominant, non-masculine, and subordinate roles, or in positions they are portrayed equal to women. Especially the men’s new role as child-caring fathers is a rather dominant new trend. Moreover, men (male bodies) can be objectified, and men are as much as women treated as sexual or romantic objects to women or to other men. There is also an ongoing diffusion of sex and gender characteristics. References to homosexual identities are still vague but show that alternative identities or sexual orientations may be breaking through.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY
Personalization and Decision Support Tools: Effects on Search and Consumer Decision Making
Kristin Diehl, University of South Carolina, USA

With the emergence of the Internet, the amount of information available to users at low search costs has increased dramatically. Without sophisticated search and decision support tools, however, “the contents of the Internet might be likened to the contents of the Library of Congress, without call numbers, and dumped out on the floor.” (Burk 1999). In fact, Alba et al. (1997) argued that personalized screening is the most important development in online shopping, comparing such screening agents to a super-salesperson with excellent knowledge of both the qualities of the inventory and the taste of the consumer. The thriving academic and commercial interest in “personalization” technology attests to the potential benefits such personalized agents and similar decision facilitating tools can have online (e.g., Ansari, Essegaei and Kohli 2000; Gershoff and West 1998; West et al. 1999). Initial research in this area has focused on demonstrating the benefits that screening and comparison tools can provide (Häubl and Trifts 2000; Lynch and Ariely, 2000). Their research shows that personalized search and decision support tools allow consumers to find options that are of higher quality, while at the same time reducing the decision maker’s effort.

The research presented in this session builds on these initial findings, but provides a more advanced and nuanced perspective on the effects that personalization and decision support tools have on consumer search and decision making. Specifically, the three papers investigate important moderators that alter the effect of such tools on decision quality as well as search behavior. While the first two papers demonstrate the positive effects that online decision tools can have, the third papers reveals boundary conditions when decision tools lead consumers to make worse choices.

The paper presented by Nina Mazar contrasts the different decision environments consumers face online vs. in the brick and mortar world. It investigates the effects that a decision support tool such as a comparison matrix will have on attribute importance weights, product choice and customer satisfaction online compared to how information is presented in a more traditional environment. Empirical results show that contrary to fears of ruinous price competition in interactive environments, supporting consumers’ use of comparative decision tools can increase consumer loyalty and retailers’ profit.

Barbara Fasolo’s work demonstrates how negative inter-attribute correlations affect information acquisition, and consumer satisfaction for choices made from web-based comparison tables, opinion portals, and decision-facilitating sites. She shows that when attributes are negatively related consumers search comparison tables more by product than for positively correlated attributes. However, they find choice to be more difficult and dissatisfactory. Also on opinion portals, where options are accompanied by summary star ratings, negative correlations make choice more difficult. The same is true for decision web sites that facilitate an attribute-wise elimination-by-aspect strategy. When decision sites facilitate a simple compensatory process like MAU, however, negative attribute correlations make choosing easier and more satisfying.

This research shows how important it is for online decision tools to support the frequent and unpleasant cases where attributes are negatively related.

The paper by Kristin Diehl shows that under certain conditions, decision tools can lead consumers to make worse decisions. This research demonstrates that when options have previously been screened by an ordering tool, reducing search costs can lead to lower quality choices. This effect is caused by consumers considering inferior options and consequently making worse choices. Similar to what Hauser (1978) has shown, considering inferior options in the first place has much stronger effects on the final decision than selectivity among these considered options. Findings also show that trying to be more accurate can exacerbate this effect. When search costs are low, a strong accuracy goal can motivate consumers to consider a wider array of alternatives and further decrease choice quality.

Taken together, these three papers present a detailed and multi-faceted view on how personalization and decision support tools affect consumer search and decision making. The research presented here initiates discussion on the topic of personalization and decision support tools as well as the real conceptual differences between online and brick and mortar environments by identifying factors that affect search behavior and decision quality.

“Consumer Decision Making at Online Retailers as Opposed to Traditional Offline Retailers: The Role of an Interactive Comparison Matrix”
Nina Mazar, Johannes-Gutenberg Universität, Germany and MIT, USA

The paper examines the effects of a very simple interactive tool that can tailor information extremely fast: the interactive comparison matrix (CM). This research shows that the CM has the potential to represent a useful and practicable solution matching the needs of both, consumers and retailers. On the one hand, it increases consumer welfare and gives consumers more control over the environment. On the other hand, it gives retailers the possibility to influence consumer choice and escape the threat of increased consumer price focus.

“The Role of Attribute Correlations in Online Decisions”
Barbara Fasolo, Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Germany

Negative inter-attribute correlations affect decision processes and satisfaction for choices made from consumer websites. Consumers are shown to search comparison tables more by product when attributes are negatively related, and more by attribute when attributes are positively related. Search by product in negative-correlated environments is accompanied by increased dissatisfaction and difficulty of choice. Negative correlations make choice more difficult also on opinion portals, where products are accompanied by summary ratings, and on sites facilitating an attribute-wise elimination-by-aspect strategy. With negative correlations, choice is easier and more satisfying when decision sites facilitate a simple process that integrates conflicting attribute information.

“Tempted by the Cheap and Easy: The Negative Effects of Low Search Costs in Ordered Environments”
Kristin Diehl, University of South Carolina, USA

One of the most cited benefits from technology changes has been the reduction in consumer search cost. This research shows that with access to personalized orderings, factors that stimulate search, such as lower search cost or more recommendations,
actually lead to worse decisions. When options are ordered, investigating more options yields little benefit in terms of finding better options. At the same time, more search decreases the quality of the consideration set while increasing the complexity of the decision, leading to more superficial processing. Findings show, these factors can decrease the quality of a consumer’s decision.

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SESSION OVERVIEW

Word-of-Mouth (WOM) is the informal communication between private parties concerning the evaluation of goods and services (Westbrook 1987; Singh 1988). It is a key marketing phenomenon that has been found to facilitate the sales of a wide range of products including professional services (Smith and Meyer 1980), movies (Mizerski 1982), automobiles (Swan and Oliver 1989), travel destinations (Gitelson and Crompton 1983), and innovations (Rogers 1983). Given the powerful impact of WOM, companies can greatly benefit from knowing how to encourage consumers to give WOM, and what effects WOM messages have on WOM recipients. This session focuses on adding to the current understanding of WOM motivation, and the impacts of WOM. It includes three papers. The first two examine factors that motivate WOM behaviour. The third paper analyses how the presentation order of positive and negative information on a product within a WOM message can affect the recipient’s product attitude and purchase intention.

It has been commonly assumed that positive words come from consumers who like a product. However, product attitudes do not necessarily lead to WOM behaviour (Swan and Oliver 1989). Consumers may need to be motivated to give WOM, in addition to having positive opinions about the product. Relatively little research has been conducted on the motivation of WOM. Some existing studies identify factors that motivate WOM but do not systematically test them (e.g., Dichter 1966). Also, the effectiveness of some popular WOM-incentive programmes for inducing WOM behaviour, such as recommend-a-friend programmes, has not been examined. The first two papers address these concerns.

In the first paper, Chung argues that by increasing personal relevance of giving WOM, marketers can encourage more WOM on products that consumers already like. The association between products and the self-concept, or self-relatedness, encourages consumers to give WOM for self-promotion purpose (Arndt 1967). In a series of studies, Chung finds a significant effect of self-relatedness on the amount of detail given in WOM, and the valence of WOM. Chung further explains how product ownership moderates the effects of self-relatedness on WOM valence. When the WOM giver owns the product, self-relatedness leads him or her to give more positively valenced WOM. This indicates an attempt to put himself or herself in a better light by exaggerating consumption experiences. Finally, Chung shows that when expecting a social evaluation on the WOM, the WOM giver talks more about the product he or she likes, and is more prone to exaggerating positive consumption experiences. In sum, this research shows that marketers can increase personal relevance of giving WOM by leading consumers to associate products with some important aspects of the self-concept, hence stimulating more WOM on these products.

In the second presentation, Chew, Tambyah, and Wirtz investigate consumer opinions on WOM-incentive programmes such as recommend-a-friend programmes, and their effectiveness. Through semi-structured interviews with consumers, the authors identify those who express either positive or negative attitudes towards incentive programmes, and obtain explanations for their attitudes. For consumers who view these programmes positively, incentives strongly motivate recommendation behaviour, particularly among strong-tie consumers. The motivation to recommend is even stronger when both the WOM giver and recipient receive incentives, thus creating a win-win situation. The authors also classify different commonly used incentive schemes based on data from the interviews, and discuss their popularity and appropriateness. Overall, the research by Chew et al. provides useful managerial insights into what types of incentive scheme to adopt for improving the effectiveness of WOM-incentive programmes.

Apart from being able to encourage WOM, marketers might find it useful to know the effects of WOM messages on the subsequent product evaluation and decision. WOM often has a greater impact on consumers than media-based communications, because it is considered more reliable and trustworthy (Day 1971). One survey, for instance, found that 60% of respondents bought products solely on the basis of personal recommendation, whereas only 29% suggested they had ever bought a product solely due to a TV advertisement (Glove and Mail 1999). Generally, positive WOM leads to positive product evaluations, and negative WOM, negative evaluations. Whereas the impact of either mainly positive or mainly negative WOM on product evaluation is well documented (Herr, Kardes, and Kim 1991; Wilson and Peterson 1989), the impact of mixed WOM is not. The effect of messages containing both positive and negative information has by and large been studied only in the psychology domain. It is pertinent to study this effect in the context of WOM because WOM messages frequently contain both positive and negative information. To the extent that the two types of information may affect product evaluations in opposite directions, different presentation orders of the information within the same WOM message may affect the eventual consumer decision. The final paper in this session examines this issue.

Ho and Chung report the results from two experiments that test the effects of mixed WOM on product evaluation. They vary the presentation order of positive and negative WOM from a single source on a restaurant, and measure product attitude and purchase intention afterwards. They find that regardless of subject involvement, the information appearing later in the message has a greater impact on product evaluation than that appearing earlier. The results differ from previous findings that demonstrated a recency effect only under low involvement conditions. The authors provide insights into how the WOM giver can arrange the order of positive and negative information in mixed WOM to achieve a maximum impact on the recipient.

Taken together, the three presentations in this session advance the understanding on WOM behaviour, which has been so far fairly under-researched. One conclusion is that marketers can motivate WOM to their advantage. However, the quality of products and services that they subsequently provide must live up to the WOM communicated. Otherwise, any overly positive WOM will backfire. Another insight is that since consumers may have personally relevant goals or incentives in mind while giving WOM, the resulting WOM may not always be as accurate and credible as it has been commonly believed. Finally, if a simple reordering of information within a WOM message can change product evaluation, avid WOM givers such as opinion leaders and market mavens can improve their persuasive power by strategically arranging the content of their WOM messages.
ABSTRACTS

“An Investigation on How Personal Relevance Leads to Greater Amount of Word-of-Mouth and More Positively Valenced Word-of-Mouth”

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Most marketers agree that positive word-of-mouth (WOM) helps sales and builds reputation. However, many also wonder how they can encourage positive words about their products or services. This three-study research examines factors that may motivate satisfied consumers to give WOM. First, products that are associated with some aspect of the self-concept are expected to motivate WOM better than those that do not. Study 1 examines this association. Second, ownership of products may moderate the impacts of this association on WOM. Study 2 tests for this moderation. Finally, an expectation of social evaluation on WOM may also motivate consumers to give WOM. Study 3 reports evidence on this prediction.

The author argues that when consumers find personal relevance in giving WOM, they will be more willing to provide details on products they like. In the realm of social judgement and decision-making, personal relevance is regarded as one of the most important motivational variables (Pettty and Cacioppo 1986). An issue or behaviour is personally relevant when it is related to important goals, or when it bears significant consequences. Personal relevance motivates a person to spend time and effort on information processing. He or she will attend to information that is relevant to the current issue, and try to comprehend and elaborate on it. The goal is to arrive at accurate and objective conclusions or behaviour. The information-processing goal can sometimes be directional in nature, when the information processor engages in defense or impression management (Chaiken, Giner-Sorolla, and Chen 1996; Kunda 1987). He or she will select or distort information for the purpose of defending the self against attacks, or for portraying a positive impression to others. Thus, directional goals often result in biased judgement and behaviour.

Translated into the context of WOM, personal relevance may prompt the WOM giver to spend relatively more time and effort on communicating product information. As such, WOM is expected to contain more detail. Additionally, when the goal is to promote the self-concept (Arndt 1967), or to show superiority (Dichter 1966), the WOM giver may be biased towards disseminating selective or even distorted product detail for the purpose of achieving his or her directional goal. Therefore, if the WOM giver has a positive attitude towards a product, he or she may be motivated to exaggerate the favourable aspects of the product. Given everyday discourse is frequently centred on products (Richins 1994), an association between a product and an important aspect of the self-concept should help to motivate self-promotion driven WOM behaviour. Furthermore, consumers regard some products as their “extended-self,” and a means to express personal values (Belk 1988). Ownership of a product is therefore expected to enhance a self-promotion goal, and moderate the effects of the product-self association on WOM behaviour. Finally, social feedback is an important source of self-esteem (Baumeister and Jones 1978). To the extent that the WOM giver likes a product and the product associates with his or her self-concept, an anticipation of social evaluation on WOM will encourage self-promotion, and lead to more WOM detail, and more exaggeration of positive consumption experiences.

Study 1 examined the effects of a product-self association on total WOM (i.e., the number of product-related details) and WOM valence (i.e., the difference between the number of positive and the number of negative evaluations on the product). Subjects were randomly assigned to either of the conditions in a one-factor (product type: self-related vs. not self-related) between-subjects design. Probed by a trained confederate, subjects gave WOM on either type of products towards which they have earlier expressed positive attitudes. More total WOM was given on products that were self-related than not (x̄=13.42 vs. 7.78; t(66)=2.44, p<.05). However, WOM valence did not differ across the two conditions (p=.15). Subjects gave relatively more of both positive and negative evaluations on self-related products, resulting in no difference in the valence between the two conditions.

Study 2 measured the same dependent variables, using a survey methodology that included a 2 (product type: self-related vs. not) by 2 (ownership vs. no ownership) between-subjects design. Total WOM on self-related (vs. not self-related) products was again greater (x̄=7.35 vs. 5.48; F(1, 65)=7.23, p<.01). When subjects owned the products, those that were self-related (vs. not) inspired greater WOM valence (x̄=3.94 vs. 1.88; F(1,65)=3.92, p=.05). Unexpectedly, when subjects did not own the products, those that were not self-related (vs. those that were) inspired marginally greater WOM valence (x̄=2.78 vs. 0.77; F(1,65)=3.85, p=.06).

The final study focused on the effects of social evaluation on the same dependent variables. Subjects were randomly assigned to one of the conditions in a 2 (social evaluation: expected vs. not expected) by 2 (advertising copy: self-related vs. not self-related) between-subjects design, and gave WOM on a bogus brand of snack mixes. Half of them were told that a panel of food experts would judge their WOM. The other half did not expect this evaluation. Half of them also read ad copy that associated the snack mixes to showing good taste (i.e., a desirable aspect of the self-concept as found in a pretest); half read ad copy without this association. The results showed that subjects who expected evaluation gave marginally more total WOM than those who did not (x̄=10.82 vs. 8.97; F(1,65)=2.95, p=.09). An analysis contrasting the not-expected/not-self-related group (x̄=.89) with the other three conditions partially confirmed that WOM valence was greater when the ad copy associated the snack mixes to the self-concept (x̄=2.76), when subjects expected evaluation on their WOM opinions (x̄=3.44), or both (x̄=1.94) (F(2,65)=3.37, p=.07).

Conceptually, this research offers initial evidence on how motivational goals such as self-concept promotion may encourage the WOM giver to give more WOM on products that they already like, and to even exaggerate this liking, resulting in more positively valenced WOM. Marketers may stimulate WOM to their advantage by appropriately associating some products to important aspects of the self-concept.

“The Role of Incentives on Recommendation Behaviour”

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Siok Kuan Tambyah, National University of Singapore, Singapore

Jochen Wirtz, National University of Singapore, Singapore

Firms have been increasingly using word-of-mouth (WOM) incentive programmes, such as recommend-a-friend programmes, in the hope of increasing their customer base. However, the effectiveness of such programmes has not been extensively investigated. Using semi-structured interviews, consumers’ opinions about these programmes, as well as their non-incentivised and incentivised WOM behaviour after a positive product or service experience, were examined.

Preliminary results show that respondents fall into two groups with regard to their beliefs and attitudes towards existing WOM
incentive programmes. About one-third of the respondents had a positive view of the programmes. The reasons are two-fold. First is the utility to the WOM giver. The WOM giver receives rewards for making recommendations and these serve as motivators, encouraging more of the same behaviour. Second is the utility to the WOM recipient. Some respondents felt that if WOM recipients purchased the products and/or services, they would fulfil a need and enjoy the benefits accruing from their purchase.

In contrast, about two-thirds of the respondents viewed current WOM incentive programmes negatively and refrained from participating in them. The reasons can be classified into programme characteristics and personal characteristics. For programme characteristics, there were three aspects that respondents disliked. The first was the respondents’ perception of why companies initiated these programmes. Respondents viewed these programmes as another “sales ploy” to attract customers at times when business was poor. The second aspect was the programme design. Some programmes required respondents to talk to their friends and obtain a certain number of names. This was viewed as a hassle and an inconvenience because of the time and effort needed to comply with such WOM requirements. Although some other programmes only required respondents to simply fill in a list of their friends’ contact details, it was felt that their friends would not welcome unsolicited contact by the firm. Third, the types of rewards were not attractive. For example, the reward was a product the respondents did not need or want, or the absolute amount of the rewards was too paltry.

For personal characteristics, there were three reasons why respondents were disinterested in the programmes. The first was what motivated their WOM behaviour. One motivator was the good product or service experience that respondents wanted to share with others. Another motivator was altruism. Respondents wanted to help the WOM recipient, with no motive for personal gain. Second, some respondents (e.g., working adults) were too busy to act on the incentives. Third, some respondents were simply not deal-prone, or they felt that they did not have the “pushy salesman” kind of character. So, they did not participate in the programmes.

For the respondents who held a positive view of current programmes, incentives were strong motivators for them to make recommendations, but the incentive-WOM relationship was moderated by tie strength. The non-incentivised WOM behaviour of these respondents can be divided into three categories: those who normally did not talk about their positive experiences; those who would only share spontaneously with strong ties, but needed to be prompted before they would share with weak ties; and finally, those who shared with both strong ties and weak ties, when prompted by conversations or direct questions. In general, if respondents did not at first give WOM, incentives motivated them to share with strong ties, but not weak ties. If they previously only shared with strong ties, incentives motivated sharing with weak ties as well. If they previously needed to be prompted to share, incentives motivated spontaneous sharing.

The discussion has so far been focused on programmes that awarded incentives to only the WOM giver. If incentives were also given to the WOM recipient, the majority of the respondents who showed a favourable opinion of current programmes would make more effort to recommend. These respondents felt that incentives given to both parties represented a win-win situation. It would be easier for them to make recommendations because they would not be the only ones benefiting. Also, the WOM recipient would be motivated to sign up or buy, since they would immediately receive a reward. However, more effort put in did not necessarily mean the WOM giver would tell more people. Some might, but others might try harder to persuade the same group of people they would have told when the incentive was only given to the WOM giver.

For respondents who had a negative opinion about current programmes, an incentive that was of the desired kind would motivate only a small number to become positively enthusiastic about making recommendations. Nearly two-thirds of the group would talk to others, but would not put in too much effort, or go out of their way to recommend in order to receive an incentive. Most of them reiterated that they were motivated more by altruism, than by incentives that were “immaterial.” About nearly one quarter of this group would still not be motivated by the various forms of incentives. However, if incentives were given to both the giver and the recipient, some of those who were less enthusiastic about incentivised WOM would be more positive about making recommendations.

As can be seen, having the desired kind of incentives can motivate incentivised WOM. The desired kind of incentives as suggested by the respondents can be classified into four types. The first was cash, and the second was products or services related to their purchase, like discount vouchers, cash rebates, and free meals. The third kind was desirable hedonic products, which may be unrelated to their purchases, like getaways and spas. The last kind was special offers and privileges that could not be purchased. These could be talks about interesting subjects open to a selected few, or tickets to a sneak movie preview that was not shown elsewhere.

In conclusion, the findings provide some interesting managerial implications related to the types of rewards offered, as well as the design of incentive programmes. Rewards relevant to the products and services purchased, as well as those given to both the WOM giver and recipient, are relatively more effective in encouraging WOM behaviour and referrals.

“WOM to Attract Customers at Times When Business Was Poor”

Ho Lai Ying, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
Cindy M.Y. Chung, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

When seeking opinions prior to purchases, it is not uncommon for consumers to hear positive and negative comments about the product. Similarly, consumers sometimes provide positive and negative opinions when asked for their views. Existing word-of-mouth (WOM) literature has documented consumers’ generation of WOM (Richins 1983) and reliance on WOM (Reingen and Kernan 1986), and has shown that WOM information often has a major influence on consumer decision-making (Bayus 1995). However, previous studies mainly investigated the effects of positive WOM (PWOM) and negative WOM (NWOM) separately, presenting subjects with either PWOM or NWOM (Mizerski 1982; Smith and Vogt 1995). Haughtvedt and Wegener (1994) was the only marketing study in which subjects obtained PWOM and NWOM in a single message, but nevertheless from two different sources. Research involving messages with positive and negative information from a single source has mainly been conducted in the psychology domain (Ganzach and Schul 1995; McNeilly & Russ 1989). Therefore, the current research seeks to examine the effects of such messages on the WOM recipient’s product attitude and purchase intention. The findings are expected to add to marketing researchers’ and practitioners’ understanding of this vital source of product and consumption information.

Existing research shows that subjects gave favourable product evaluation when given mainly PWOM, and unfavourable evaluation when given mainly NWOM (Herr, Kardes, and Kim 1991; Wilson and Peterson 1989). Haughtvedt and Wegener (1994) found that product evaluations were dependent upon subject’s motivation and ability (i.e., involvement) to process information that contained both positive and negative information. In their study, high-in-
volvement subjects gave greater weight to earlier than later information. As such, a primacy effect occurred whereby a strong position developed after reading the earlier information, leading to a resistance to later information. Low-involvement subjects, on the other hand, were more influenced by the later than earlier information. A recency effect occurred here because a weak position was initially formed, leaving room for later information to overwrite it. However, given that the earlier and later information came from different sources, and given the lack of counterbalancing, this research might have confounded the information presentation order effect with the credibility of the two sources.

The current research attempts to separate out the information presentation order effect from source credibility by presenting information using only one source. Its major prediction is that subjects will give greater weight to earlier (later) information under high (low) involvement.

Study 1 used a one-factor between-subjects design to initially test for an effect of information presentation order on product attitude and purchase intention. Subjects were randomly assigned to one of the six conditions (Table 1), and were presented with information and evaluation on a restaurant by attributes (e.g., service quality, price) as provided by a friend. Subjects imagined having just met up with this friend, and were deciding on a dining place on the spot. Hence, the experimental context was of fairly low involvement.

Two separate one-way ANOVAs showed a presentation order effect for both product attitude (F(5,331)=53.53, p<.001), and purchase intention (F(5,331)=39.82, p<.001). Further cell comparisons showed that subjects in the “P” condition had more favourable attitude and higher purchase intention than those in the “N” condition (p’s<.001), replicating previous findings (Table 2). Most of the cell means for the mixed valence conditions were significantly different from “P” and “N” for both dependent variables. In addition, “NP_R” subjects showed marginally higher purchase intention than subjects in “PN_R” (p=.10). There is initial evidence that presenting PWOM later versus earlier could result in better purchase intention.

Study 2 used a more complete design to measure product attitude and purchase intention. Subjects were randomly assigned to one of the conditions in a 2 (involvement: high vs. low) by 4 (presentation order: P vs. N vs. NP vs. PN) between-subjects design. Two different scenarios in which subjects rated a restaurant were used to manipulate low (same as in Study 1) and high (in preparation of celebrating grandma’s 75th birthday) involvement.

Two separate two-way ANOVAs showed a presentation order main effect for product attitude (F(3,194)=214.04, p<.001), and purchase intention (F(3,197)=106.22, p<.001). Further cell comparisons showed that subjects in the “P” condition had more favourable attitude and higher purchase intention than those in the “N” condition (p’s<.001), replicating previous findings (Table 2). Cell means for the mixed valence conditions for both dependent variables were significantly different.

### TABLE 1
Experimental Conditions in Study 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Presentation Order of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>1neu; 4p; 1neu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1neu; 4n; 1neu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>1neu; 2n; 2p; 1neu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PN</td>
<td>1neu; 2p; 2n; 1neu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP_R</td>
<td>Same as in NP, except that negative attributes in “NP” are described as positive, and positive attributes in “NP” are described as negative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PN_R</td>
<td>Same as in PN, except that negative attributes in “PN” are described as positive, and positive attributes in “PN” are described as negative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a* neu=neutral fact (included to make the WOM message more realistic)

*b* p=positive attribute

*c* n=negative attribute

### TABLE 2
Cell Means for Attitude & Purchase Intention in Study 1 and Study 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>P</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>NP</th>
<th>PN</th>
<th>NP_R</th>
<th>PN_R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study 1</td>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>1.85a</td>
<td>-2.12b,c</td>
<td>-0.42b,d</td>
<td>-0.73b,d</td>
<td>-0.73b,d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purchase Intention</td>
<td>1.73a</td>
<td>-1.79b,c</td>
<td>-0.82b,d</td>
<td>-1.00b,e</td>
<td>-0.95b,c,f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study 2</td>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>2.13a</td>
<td>-2.38b,c</td>
<td>-0.50b,d</td>
<td>-1.16b,d,e</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purchase Intention</td>
<td>1.91a</td>
<td>-2.10b,c</td>
<td>0.11b,d</td>
<td>-0.81b,d,e</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A vs. b, c vs. d, and d vs. e, all p’s<.001

NOTE: Comparisons are among cells within each row.

*p* a vs. b, and c vs. d, both p’s<.001; c vs. e, p<.005; and f vs. g, p=.10.
from “P” and “N” (p<.001). Also, subjects in “NP” had more positive attitude and greater purchase intention than subjects in “PN” (p<.001). There was no involvement main effect, or involvement by presentation order interaction effect.

In summary, Study 1 presented subjects with both PWOM and NWOM in a single message from the same source, and obtained initial evidence on a recency effect in purchase intention. Data from Study 2 showed that product attitude and purchase intention were subject to a recency effect regardless of involvement. Results obtained therefore differ from previous findings, indicative of a need for further inquiry.

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Exploring Organic Food Consumption: Issues, Findings and Prognoses

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ABSTRACT
This paper is intended to stimulate discussion and further research on the consumption of organic foods. First, the authors offer a review of the literature pertaining to consumer attitudes toward organic foods. We then suggest future research should be directed toward better understanding of the interactive and dynamic social, economic and political processes that affect the consumption, production and marketing of organic food. We also hint that lucid and effective food policy must address not only the aforementioned processes, but also the cultural and historical contexts that further affect consumption of organic food products and the stakeholders of the growing organic foods movement.
Hidden Mountain: The Social Avoidance of Waste
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Lisa O’Malley, University of Limerick, Ireland
Maurice Patterson, University of Limerick, Ireland

ABSTRACT
This paper addresses the relatively neglected area of disposition, and specifically examines the nature of our relationship to waste. Interviews conducted with consumers and with actors within the waste management industry suggest that waste is viewed primarily as an inevitable consequence of economic progress. Further structuring these views are civilizing processes that underline our need to control the environment in which we live and participate. The paper argues that in order to maintain control we are encouraged to keep waste in its place; out of sight and out of mind. This is achieved through systemic smoothing mechanisms such as our socialization against waste, the role of rubbish bins and the activities of bin men.
Analyzing the Discourse of Liberation Through Consumption
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ABSTRACT
A focus on consumption as an expression of individual freedom is not only embraced in a number of recent articles in the field of Consumer Behavior, but indeed is one of the most prevalent themes in advertising today. Instead of celebrating fragmentation and insisting on a rupture from modern metanarratives, this article seeks to instead make sense of consumer emancipation as part of a broader social discourse reflecting free-market ideologues. By briefly analyzing three recent advertisements, my intent is to develop a constructive basis to assist others in understanding how advertising promotes a destructive consumer ethos.

INTRODUCTION
Under the rule of a repressive whole, liberty can be made into a powerful instrument of domination. The range of choice open to the individual is not the decisive factor in determining the degree of human freedom, but what can be chosen and what is chosen by the individual... Free choice among a wide variety of goods and services does not signify freedom if these goods and services sustain social controls over a life of toil and fear—ther is, if they sustain alienation. (Marcuse 1964, p 7-8)

If consumption is to be viewed as a political act containing the possibility for some sort of self-emancipation, such a reconceptualization of modern notions of freedom and democracy needs to be addressed and seriously considered. A prevailing trend in ‘postmodern’ approaches to consumer society and individual free-will is to place a great amount of emphasis on finding examples in which consumption can be celebrated for displaying a certain degree of self-expression and rejection of hegemony as such. (e.g., Firat and Venkatesh 1995, Kozinets 2002, Schouten and McAlexander 1995, Thompson and Haytko 1997) It is noteworthy to recognize that there are numerous examples of critique embedded in such research, with authors occasionally alluding to the ‘modern’ market as predominantly repressive in its naturalization of self-interest and hindrance to the development of communities and social relations outside of market relations. Such research however too-readily abandons a critique of current social problems and possibilities for the development of more effective and socially constructive political acts regarding consumption. Examples include movements such as Culture Jamming (Lasn 1999), WTO/IMF protests, ‘Buy Nothing Day’ and ‘TV-Turnoff Week’ (see www.adbusters.org), and a general critical awareness facilitating an introspective approach towards understanding the ways consumption affects our everyday lives. But taking a critical theoretic perspective leads us to focus on an informed and empowered public rather than on an idealized postmodern portrait of freedom through the open to the individual is not the decisive factor in determining the degree of freedom of human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge” (1977, p.28). Foucault’s historical analyses provide a plethora of data and are effective in understanding discourse as a fluid concept. Individuals internalize and rework ideology, becoming their own oppressors. For example, in discussing the transformation of the form of punishment from one of explicit torture of the body to more subtle and powerful domination of individuals over themselves, he notes that ‘discipline’ makes place in which depoliticized freedom and self-expression flourish.

VISUAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AS METHOD
Choosing a particular methodology makes a strong statement regarding what we as researchers wish to know and problematize. Hegemony and power can be theorized at many levels including an examination of their implications on social discourse as well as how individuals incorporate and resist such power in their individual lifeworlds. While hermeneutical approaches are effective in generating discussions of power as mediated by individuals, it would be premature to abandon investigations of social structure and the various ideologies through which such structure come to be dominant. Grant McCracken (1988) is but one voice cautioning the “alienable, movable, manipulable quality of meaning” (p.89) and reminding us that, while we may actively create meaning out of objects in our social worlds, those self-same social worlds in which such objects are found remain bound to power relations.1

Rose (2001) defines discourse as “groups of statements which structure the way a thing is thought, and the way we act on the basis of that thinking. In other words, discourse is a particular knowledge about the world which shapes how the world is understood and how things are done in it”, (p.136) Visual communications, thus, can help clarify the current dynamics that shape an ever-metamorphosing social discourse. One such prevalent discourse is what Thomas Frank (1999) calls ‘market populism, or the free-market ideology so prevalent in the 1990s:

...in addition to being mediums of exchange, markets were mediums of consent. Markets expressed the popular will more accurately and more meaningfully than did mere elections. Markets conferred democratic legitimacy; markets were a friend of the little guy; markets brought down the pompous and the snooty; markets gave us what we wanted; markets looked out for our interests’ (p.xiv)

The advent of discourse analysis as a theoretical framework is attributed to Foucault’s research approach and his emphasis on the historical contingency of power relations, focusing on how discourse becomes internalized while still maintaining its ideological nature. What Foucault calls ‘body politic’ is described as, “a set of material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, relays, communication routes and supports for power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge” (1977, p.28). Foucault’s historical analyses provide a plethora of data and are effective in understanding discourse as a fluid concept. Individuals internalize and rework ideology, becoming their own oppressors. For example, in discussing the transformation of the form of punishment from one of explicit torture of the body to more subtle and powerful domination of individuals over themselves, he notes that ‘discipline’ makes...

The author would like to extend his deep appreciation to both Stephen Brown and one anonymous reviewer for their helpful comments inspiring a more considerate discussion of discourse, power, and the actively mediated understanding of individuals.
individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and instruments of its exercise... it is a modest, suspicious power, which functions as a calculated but permanent economy” (p.170).

While Foucault is often celebrated as one of the first postmodern theorists, he is also firmly entrenched in modern notions of subject/object and the interplay of institutionalized power and its internalization by the individual.

Power relations still can be widely understood by looking at unequal material distributions, or in other words class interests. In fact, the two processes— the accumulation of men and the accumulation of capital- cannot be separated; it would not have been possible to solve the problem of the accumulation of men without the growing of an apparatus of production capable of both sustaining them and using them... The growth of a capitalist economy gave rise to the specific modality of disciplinary power. (Foucault, 1977p.221)

In Foucault’s work we do not see an abandonment of capitalist critique and, as the above quotation demonstrates, the economy was seen as a dominant factor in shaping modern discourse. Far from celebrating plurality and hailing the abandonment of metanarratives, his critique and emphasis on relevant causal origins for contemporary social and political problems places Foucault much more in line with the modernist tradition. As Best and Kellner (1991) note, Foucault increasingly tended to “align his work with aspects of the Enlightenment tradition and specified both continuities and discontinuities between modernity and the era that followed it”. (p.31).

The application of Foucault’s discursive approach is an effective framework for understanding consumer ideology today. There are signs all around us whose thematic cohesion demonstrates an emphasis on perpetuating a belief in the market as a place to emancipate oneself from social constraints and political discontent. One approach towards developing a conceptual understanding of such a theme is in advertising. Mass media is a rich source of visual material that can be employed to exemplify how consumption as ideology takes shape in its current discursive application.

There are a number of approaches to media analysis, including semiotics, content analysis and discourse analysis. While semiotics has potential for analyzing symbolic consumption (Mick, 1986), such an approach has been criticized for the unintended consequence that “historic and dynamic construction of discourses within a force-field of social practices is obscured and ignored in order to focus on the negotiations of meaning carried out within the ambit of the text and the moment of reading. The hallowed terrain of bourgeois criticism remains, while the groundwork of materialist theory is not begun” (Slater, p. 302). Content analysis as a research method, on the other hand, often results in positivistic portrayals of quantitatively proven truths. By solely focusing on the image, such an approach tends to also ignore that “there are the two other sites at which an image’s meanings are made: the site of its production, and the site of its audience”. (Rose 2001, p.67).

The advantage of examining social phenomenon through the lens of discourse analysis is an ability to capture both what Stuart Hall (1980) calls the “preferred meanings” of certain visual texts and their relation to ideological interests, along with ways in which such preferred meanings are either reproduced or contradicted in the actions and understandings of individuals. This is similar to Murray’s (2002) distinction between a research localizing examples of “sign experimentation” that focuses on “consumption as an ‘expressive moment’” and a case of “sign domination”, placing a greater focus on those social structures seen as “direct[ing] the meaning of things”. (2002, p.2) What has generally been lacking is an openly non-apologetic treatment of how symbolic consumption along with its potentially political aspects is a dangerous movement towards a depoliticized public realm along with a focus on the disastrous consequences this can have.

My intent is to provide examples of how ‘consumer freedom’ in the marketplace is a reproduction of a dominant ideological portrayal linking consumption and liberty in an apolitical symbiosis. As Holt suggests, dominant discourses can be tricky:

Consumers are revolutionary only insofar as they assist entrepreneurial firms to tear down the old branding paradigm and create opportunities for companies that understand emerging new principles. Revolutionary consumers helped to create the market for Volkswagen and Nike and accelerated the demise of Sears and Oldsmobile. They never threatened the market itself. What has been termed “consumer resistance” is actually a form of market-sanctioned cultural experimentation through which the market rejuvenates itself. (Holt, 2002, p.89).

Such hollow rebellion points toward a conflict between understanding consumption as individual emancipation versus understanding consumption as the inevitable reproduction of a dominant market logic in which humanity is redefined. While some will certainly respond that it is more complicated than such a black and white portrayal of a binary oppositional pair and that both occur concurrently, such an ambivalent theoretical limbo is disempowering as an analytical tool and is too-easily employed as an escape from deriving concrete normative implications for a disturbing trend to celebrate a freedom which is illusory.

**AD 1: BRAND YOURSELF A RADICAL**

When Nike sells itself as the “cool” alternative among shoes, when Macintosh encouraged us that it is selling a product perfectly in-line with those of us who “think different” and when a nude picture of John Lennon and Yoko Ono (taken as part of a larger protest against the Vietnam War) is used in an Absolut Vodka advertisement to signal a rebellious spirit, we encounter a phenomenon of greater import than simply the disintegration of a concrete relation between the signifier and signified. As symbols of radicalism, freedom, protest and the search for alternative social relations outside of the market become repeatedly co-opted, a particular understanding of liberty and dissent in a ‘democratic’ society imposes itself on youth culture. As the following advertisement demonstrates, a radical is defined by what he or she buys:

Thomas Frank is an important critical social theorist when discussing how rebellion is encouraged in its commodity form. In *Conquest of Cool* (1997), Frank notes the way 60s-style liberation is increasingly appropriated in corporate America’s struggle to present itself as the protectors of a new kind of welfare state, one in which we are free to consume and if we don’t like it... we buy Nike, Tommy Hilfiger, and Macintosh. In his more recent book, *One Market Under God* (2000), Frank provides a contemporary analysis of how Wall Street, Dot-Com fanatics and even radical academics contributed to the hype of ’market populism’, or the belief that “in addition to being mediums of exchange, markets were mediums of consent”. (p.xiv)

Only when people act within the marketplace, such thinkers told us, do they act rationally, choose rightly, and make their wishes known transparently. Only then could business give us what we wanted, cater to our freely expressed choices. Mar-
kets are where we are most fully human; markets are where we show we have a soul. To protest against markets is to surrender one’s very personhood, to put oneself outside the family of mankind. (Frank, 2000 p.xiii)

Thus one can see reflected in this advertisement (Figure 1) for the newest video graphics card a number of such radical symbols, anchored by the tags: “Brand yourself a radical...” and “This changes everything”. The young woman in the picture, we are informed, demonstrates such dissent and rebellion through her tattoo... which happens to be the corporate logo. It is not my intent to systematically treat each aspect of this advertisement and how each of the parts relate to the whole. Instead I think this serves as a powerful example of just how far advertising goes in appropriating difference and rebellion as yet another brand personality.

AD 2: NEOLIBERALISM AND EMANCIPATION

Post-September 11th media were saturated with the recurrent motifs of freedom and liberty and how a concerned and involved public could express their support. From ads offering 0%-financing on car loans to stimulate the economy, to heads-of-state encouraging us to help the country by going out and shopping (or flying to Disneyland), it became evident that by spending money we could feel secure in having done our part to ensure the recovery and supposed superiority of our nation-state. If it is true, as political theorist David Held (1996) states, that “democracy has become the fundamental standard of political legitimacy in the current era” (p.xi), it is important to see exactly how democratic discourse has used the market as a symbol of those freedoms guaranteed by the state.

Neoliberal political theory, most widely acclaimed and criticized in an era of “Reagonomics”, holds that a truly free market would negate the need for a welfare state and that economic expansion as encouraged and facilitated through liberal government policies ensures that class distinctions are erased. “Trickle-down economics” was proposed as the superior alternative to state interventionism in matters both economic and social. As Held discerned:

The New Right (or neo-liberalism or neoconservatism, as it is sometimes called) has, in general, been committed to the view that political life, like economic life, is (or ought to be) a matter of individual freedom and initiative. Accordingly, a laissez-faire or free-market society is the key objective, along with a ‘minimal state’. (Held, 1996, p. 253)

In the following advertisement by the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, such a neoliberal agenda can be identified and explored (Figure 2).

What does the American flag symbolize, if not a rhetorically encouraged notion of freedom and liberty? By simply adding two curved lines to the top of the flag, this campaign makes explicit exactly what such neoliberal political discourse implicitly assumes: American freedom is the freedom to consume. By holding our chins up high to those who threaten such liberty, we can proudly say that the terrorist attacks did NOT close down America because, after all, America remained “Open For Business”. Consider the following two quotations:
To enjoy liberty means not only to enjoy equality before the law, important though this unquestionably is, but also to have the capacities (the material and cultural resources) to be able to pursue different courses of action. (Held, 1996, p.263)

The growth of productive forces is not the same as the intention of the “good life”. It can at best serve it. (Habermas, 1968, p.119)

Is this no more than the eclipsed voice of Reason, inapplicable in a postmodern world in which “emancipation, if at all possible, must be conceived of as temporary and local” and “conjuring up an alternative social realm that convincingly appears distanced from, outside of, or subversive to dominant market logics is enough to unleash consumers’ liberatory potential…”? (Kozinets, 2002, p.17)

If the market becomes the final and omnipresent emancipatory space for consumers to liberate themselves, then we can truly postulate that ours is a ‘posthuman’ world.

PHOTO 3: LIBERTY DEFINED AND DEFENDED

This final example (Figure 3) serves as a sober reminder of how legitimacy translates into consent, that there are concrete repercussions to the expansion of a global marketplace with the free market as its model. The broad postmodern brush that paints ours as an age in which modern institutions have become futile, meta-narratives have become repressive, and Reason has become a myth of the Enlightenment, I can’t help but wonder if missiles and tanks have been overlooked. That is to say, modern institutions like the government, the military, schools, and courts, among countless others, still exist and still work to negotiate power locally, nationally and globally. What Althusser (1970) calls “Ideological State Apparatuses”, such public organizations still are in theory accountable to an increasingly depoliticized public realm.

To work properly, capitalism requires a symbiotic relationship between market prerogatives and the cultural frameworks that orient how people understand and interact with the market’s offerings. The cultural structuring of consumption maintains political support for the market system, expands markets, and increases industry profits. (Holt, 2002, p.71)

While consumer behavior research repeatedly emphasizes and in effect encourages the proliferation of a theoretical perspective that accepts the market as agency’s last stronghold, postmodern theory has little to contribute to an understanding of how current global political situations are to be understood if they are not accountable to an antiquated modernity. If ours is truly a postmodern world, then such institutions should not still be effective in creating, changing or sustaining power relations... bombs should fail to explode. There are however concrete implications to our relationship to the market

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Because discourse is fluid and socially contingent does not mean it cannot be made sense of. As a particular ideology, consumer emancipation threatens to conflate an important distinction between political action and cultural practices. Culture is not an autonomous realm that can be theorized and examined outside of a broader treatment of its relationship to social and political discourses. For Frank (2000) this reconceptualization of culture in academia not only reflects but also contributes to this dominant discourse:

What seems far more likely is that, as the politically committed drop by the wayside, cultural studies will evolve to a point where matters economic are simply defined away, where any transgression is as meaningful as any other, and where the new crop of cult studs can take the logical next step from academy to consultancy work for the growing number of hip ad agencies and ethnographic-based market research firms, celebrating the subversive potential of Sprite or the Catera without reservation or troubling doubt. (Frank, 2000, p. 304)

My intent then is to problematize the relationship between a strain of research that is fundamentally critical and a prevalent market ideology providing legitimacy to a neoliberal political agenda.

In researching the problematic of ‘consumption as freedom’, I suggest that the following three points be considered:

1) An over-emphasis on the sovereign consumer neglects both the material base of such sovereignty and its legitimizing nature. If consumption is equated with freedom, those who have more money
have more freedom. The dilemma of modernizing nations struggling to attain material success under the burden of structurally determined inequities demands more attention (as do the underprivileged classes within our own country). But we have also too readily assumed that freedom and abundance must mean material wealth. More attention must be given to alternative notions of what abundance could or should mean. The United States is not the world and its conceptualization of abundance is not global. Even within this country there are substantial movements challenging the expansion of a capitalist system perceived as inhumane.

2) If we are to describe consumption as primarily political, this must be problematized by contrasting it with more effective political participation. Obviously such an argument necessitates some sort of justification for implicitly assuming that some political acts are more effective (or more political) than others, and yet the evidence is all around us. From ad campaigns convincing us that rebellion is a commodity, to government mandates for high level consumption as patriotism, one might argue that the omnipresence of consumer society has reached a climax in which the political has been superseded. However, by localizing such ad campaigns, by pointing out how governments can use consumption to legitimize their function, and by focusing on anti-consumer movements and protests, a more constructive ground is laid for understanding power and how it is protected. Such an understanding, moreover, is still important to foster if we believe in the importance of a critically informed and politically empowered society. There is a danger in over-emphasizing the import of consumption as political in a defragmented postmodern society. By way of contrast, consider for example the following call to arms for liberatory postmodernists:

Libertatory postmodernism is a call to practice unabashedly the conditions towards microemancipatory ends— as opposed to grand emancipatory projects. However, postmodernism’s liberatory potential cannot yet be achieved. The reason for this delay is the growing influence of the market— which is a modern institution still operating according to the commercial principles and criteria of the “economic”.
(Firat and Venkatesh, 1995 p. 245)

There is neglect in such an approach of the ways in which postmodern microemancipatory consumer acts become couched in the modern market. Far from emancipatory, consumption often reflects Foucault’s recognition of ways in which ideological interests become internalized.

3) Structure and agency are both important in an attempt to understand how consumption both contributes legitimacy and creates meaning. By heralding agency as liberation, the more subtle argument of agency as ideology is neglected as are real material interests in current power relations. For Foucault, there is an important distinction to be made when confronting the politics of our actions: “It is not simply at the level of consciousness, of representations and in what one thinks one knows, but at the level of what makes possible that knowledge that is transformed into political investment” (Foucault 1977, p.185). Just as power produces knowledge, such knowledge must be analyzed as a reflection of power. While certain theorists (e.g. Frankfurt School) are discarded for having adhered to a form of cultural determinism that over-simplifies agency-structure interplay, this is, in my opinion, a drastic disservice to an attempt to situate culture in a broader socio-political context. Consider for example Kozinets’ rhetorical justification for the import of his own work:

This research does not simply rehash the old harangue about the perils of the market and its deteriorating influence on ostensibly pure and natural communities... This more sophisticated argument indicates that sharing, caring consumer communities can counteract certain market influences...(Kozinets, 2002, p.14)
Theorists of social behavior invariably will struggle with the degree to which agency or structure is emphasized as the determining feature by which we can understand the meaning of consumption; presenting a particular approach as 'more sophisticated' effectively discredits a sociological approach towards understanding the structural determinants of a pervasive trend towards over consumption.

CONCLUSION: STARTING TO ACT

While academic discussion and debate is extremely important in helping us to create more informed opinions and stances as pursuers of knowledge, I don’t think that we should shy away from using that knowledge to contribute to our local communities. I have recently been warned that this may easily be perceived as a form of “activist research” inappropriately involving some sort of political motive to encourage an involved citizenry; everything we do, however, is political - including the act of doing nothing and ‘simply’ contributing to the efficiency of business activities. Postmodern theory has the potential to lend insight into a pervasive malaise of current political and social life, but it discredits itself by emphasizing the destructiveness of ‘regimes of truth’ abandoning ‘metanarratives’. Cohesion is rejected, sense is denied and understanding is eclipsed by the strained celebration of individuality.

There are many ways in which our research, by focusing on constructive alternatives to empower people to make sense of media, can have a positive influence in stimulating critical thinking and encouraging a more active public. In a recent special issue of the Journal of Communication (Winter, 1998), the topic of Media Literacy was debated and discussed in regard to its potential contributions in helping youth and adolescents make sense of the media. The editor defined media literacy as “understanding the sources and technologies of communication, the codes that are used, the messages that are produced, and the selection, interpretation, and impact of those messages” (Rubin 1998, p.3). Perhaps it is due to my having worked as a 3rd-grade teacher in an impoverished Mexican community for several years, but I do believe in the medium of education and I am convinced that it is helpful to make sense of how media functions to produce endless and insatiable desire to consume without thought of repercussions. I am also absolutely convinced that the field of consumer behavior has great potential to contribute to such an activity, provided we first openly acknowledge a problem rather than striving to stress the liberatory potential of a fragmented and uninformed citizenry.

The issue regarding how Media Literacy should be addressed and taught in schools reflects a much larger debate regarding literacy as technical mastery vs. literacy as understanding ideology and power. Lewis and Jhally (1998) differentiate between a text-based and context-based approach, with the latter focusing on how “the unraveling of media texts takes place in the context of their production and reception” and encouraging “an awareness of why those messages are there” (p.111). Because of its largely grassroots basis, the large and multivocal population constituting the Media Literacy movement ranges from the religious right to the liberal left. The problem with such a broad constituency is that the issue of using media literacy as a window toward understanding the political economy of the media is often criticized as too political. Sut and Jhally (1998) worry that a focus on technical production of media (i.e. familiarity with video equipment and production conventions) neglects “an awareness of why those messages are there”. (p.111).

While in recent consumer behavior research a considerable amount of attention has been given toward how children’s consumer awareness as socially embedded and developmentally con-tinent (Roedder-John 1999, Friestad and Boush 1994), such experiments and reviews do little to elucidate and problematize a broader and more critical view of childrens’ media as social discourse. In regard to the question of what can be done (assuming we agree that some sort of corrective action is desirable), such approaches as PREEMPT (Pre-Adult Education on Marketplace Persuasion Tactics; Friestad and Wright 2001) focus on developmental aspects of how children learn to cognitively cope with persuasive messages rather than how they can make sense of such persuasive attempts at the more macro level of how such messages cumulatively foster high level consumption within a broader social context. In calling for “education interventions on marketplace metacognition and social expertise [which] best service the developmental needs of young children, adolescents, young adults, and mature or elderly lay adults” (Friestad and Wright 2001, p. xxxx), issues of power and ideology are entirely superseded by a focus on a positivist solution based on determining psychological constructs used in developing individual defense mechanisms to specific ads.

In this paper I have attempted to make sense of the ideological claim that individuality and freedom from constraint can be expressed through the act of consumption. By focusing on these several advertisements, a broader social discourse was called for in which such a celebration of the market lends legitimacy to political and legal decisions that increasingly favor the free-market or neoliberal ideology prevalent in the United States today. But such an understanding of how such ideology functions is rejected as yet another metanarrative by postmodern researchers who instead opt to focus on the lighter side of consumerism. This Western bias neglects the disempowered here as well as structurally disadvantaged nations in the Third World, not to mention the global environmental harm resulting from consumption ad absurdum. Critical Media Literacy is one field of research that is trying to explore constructive solutions to such dilemma by addressing the problem head on. While this paper is primarily conceptual, it would be extremely beneficial to look at how adolescents are affected by such themes as freedom in advertising and consumption as well as the effectiveness of developing a critical perspective based on research in the fields of communications, consumer behavior and marketing. Such academic community involvement presupposes the recognition, first and foremost, of a problem to be reckoned with and that is what I have tried to highlight in this paper.

I conclude with an excerpt from Benjamin Barber’s An Aristocracy of Everyone:

The fundamental task of education in a democracy is the apprenticeship of liberty - learning to be free. While we root our fragile freedom in the myth that we are born free, we are in truth born dependent. For we are born fragile, born needy, born ignorant, born uninformed, born weak, born foolish, born unimaginative - born in chains... As a consequence, we must learn to be free. That is to say, we must be taught liberty. (Barber 1992, p.4)

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There can be little doubt that the concept of social systems is central to marketing if we are, as Latour (1993) notes, increasingly enmeshed in hybrid networks of social, ecological, and informational systems. Yet it is surprising to find such a paucity of marketing and consumer research addressing it. This paper advances the idea of social systems in marketing. A social system is what emerges as soon as an actor or his action seeks to refer to a phenomenon (Luhmann 1966). A social system organizes, for an observer, the relation between freedom, blindness and dependence: a social system is free in the way of drawing its distinction, it is blind for the consequences; and for the success of its distinction dependent on everything it excludes. A social system is a way of establishing control through communication. To best reveal the idea of social systems in marketing, I explore and develop the tetralemma of the system, an analytical framework for systemic structuration, which is used to discuss two important social systems: brand systems and protest systems. Findings demonstrate that social systems reveal formerly neglected important socio-cultural insights into the study of branding and consumer protest behavior. Further implications for marketing and consumer research are discussed in a concluding section.

“We need a theory that shows how the system remains a system even as systemness is challenged.”
- Grant McCracken, *Plenitude* 2.0 (1998)

Social systems make a difference. Their notion is central to social thought (e.g. Ashby 1956, 1961; Bateson 1972, 1979; Bourgine and Varela 1992; Durkheim [1893] 1933; Glanville 1979, 1982; Günther 1962; Habermas 1984; Hegel 1830; Lévi-Strauss 1966; Löfgren 1977; Luhmann 1984; Maffesoli 1996; Marx [1867] 1946; McCarthy 1991; Parsons and Shils 1951; von Foerster 1981; Wiener 1948). Social systems, once suggesting that there is more order in the world than any of us is able to account for, immediately shatter any illusion of order today and instead remind us to look at everything excluded by them. Social systems distinguish between system and environment states and address the ongoing oscillation between them (Baeccker 2002). There can be little doubt that the concept of social systems is central to marketing if we are, as Latour (1993) notes, increasingly enmeshed in hybrid networks of social, ecological, and informational systems. Yet despite their widely acknowledged significance, especially in the context of consumption, social systems have rarely been explored in the marketing literature. Such a lack of understanding is highlighted by recent calls for a balanced consideration of the dialectical interplay between agency and structure (e.g. Murray 2002). This research seeks to address this peculiar absence.

I explore the idea of social systems in marketing. A social system is what emerges as soon as an actor or his action seeks to refer to a phenomenon (Luhmann 1966). A system is “the matrix that embeds” (von Foerster 1997) the relation between freedom, blindness and dependence: a system is free in the way of drawing its distinction, it is blind for the consequences; and for the success of its distinction dependent on everything it excludes. A social system is a way of establishing control through communication. In doing so, it presents a powerful analytical concept of social analysis for market researchers.

To best reveal the idea of social systems in marketing, I will first specify an epistemological imbalance within current market-
social determinations that shape their particular view of things (e.g. Brown 1996, p. 179; Scott 1992; Sherry 1991; Thompson 1993). Yet, as Rasch and Wolfe (2000, p. 16) passionately advocate, such a position is “purchased at the expense of incoherence, since it simultaneously endorses and disavows the very representationalism that it bridles against”. This, after all, may be “the crisis of representation” that is challenging marketing and consumer behavior research (e.g. Denzin 1997; Sherry 2000; Sherry and Kozinets 2000): the urgent suspicion that marketing research has an ontological center from which it prefers to operate, leads to the even stronger suspicion that, if realism is lost, so is relativism.

In the current social and critical moment, no project is therefore more overdue than a “poetics of desire” (Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin 1990) that moves beyond the limitations of the representationalist framework and instead commits to questions of epistemology within Latour’s (1991) “hybrid networks” of social, informational, and ecological systems in which we will find ourselves increasingly enmeshed. The time is ripe for market researchers to acknowledge these systems and reformulate the way they think about the relations between markets and consumer culture, consumer agency and marketplace empowerment. In what follows, I will explore the notions of social systems in marketing. I will (1) review the tripartite notion of social systems, control and communication; (2) introduce an analytical framework for systemic structuration in marketing; (3) discuss two different systems in marketing and consumer research; and (4) develop the implications of this paper for our understanding of the relations between consumption, culture and social systems. By exploring and problematizing the notion of social systems in marketing, this paper helps market researchers reformulate the way they think about the cultural structuring of marketing and consumption.

CONTROL AND COMMUNICATION

‘System’ is a complex and many-sided notion in social thought. Its intellectual history is lengthy and abundant. Systems were a prominent concern of the great social theorists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (e.g. Durkheim [1893] 1933; Hegel 1830; Marx [1867] 1946) and have continued to be so among contemporary contributors (e.g. Ashby 1956, 1961; Bateson 1972, 1979; Baudrillard 1968; Bourgine and Varela 1999; Glanville 1979, 1982; Günther 1962; Habermas 1984; Lévi-Strauss 1966; Löfgren 1977; Luhmann 1984; Maffesoli 1996; McCarthy 1991; Parsons and Shils 1951; von Foerster 1981; Wiener 1948). Although some scholars have used ‘system’ to macrologically systematize the world of goods and marketing (e.g. Baudrillard 1968, ‘system of objects; Douglas and Isherwood 1979, ‘goods as information system’; Moyer 1967, ‘changing marketing systems’; Arndt 1981, ‘the political economy of marketing systems’; Savitt 1984, ‘comparative marketing systems’), the notion of ‘social system’ as it is used in sociological systems theory (e.g. Baecker 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 2001, 2002; Luhmann 1984, 1997) is not explicitly theorized. For the purpose of this study, I am relying on the tripartite systemic notion of social systems, control and communication, the tenets of which I will briefly review.

The sociological concept of systems is historically situated in modern society’s attempt to monitor and control itself (e.g. Wiener 1948; Hayles 1999). Control means to establish causality ensured by communication (Baecker 2001), i.e. control presupposes communication. It implies a negotiation, a kind of contract to be concluded. This contract is not based on ideal speech and historically grounded reason (e.g. Habermas 1984; Bannet 1993; Ray 1993). Rather it is based on a specific relation between causes and effects. This specific relation can then be referred to as the system (and its environment), emergent from communication and self-selected by an observer who distinguishes it from the heteroglossia of causes and effects all around him. But why the observer? This issue is explicitly addressed by Varela (1979) who discusses the fundamental cognitive act of distinction:

“...[T]he establishment of system boundaries is inescapably associated with what I shall call a cognitive point of view, that is, a particular set of presuppositions and attitudes, a perspec-
In other words, the demarcation of a social system is contextualized with respect to the observer effecting the demarcation. After all, the fundamental epistemological tenet of the systemic perspective is that: ‘Everything said is said by an observer’ (Maturana and Varela 1980, p. xix). For an observer, then, a social system is a way “to communicate control if there is no other way to control but to communicate” Baecker (2001). If control based on communication describes a system’s attempt to set its own causality in relation to other social systems’ causalities, what kind of communication makes this “split causality” possible?

We may turn to Shannon and Weaver’s (1949) Mathematical Theory of Communication. As Baecker (2001) sets out, “almost everybody trained in the humanities or social sciences is quick to dismiss [Shannon and Weaver’s theory] as a purely technical vision, which fails to take into account the semantic, let alone the pragmatic, aspects of communication” and goes on to say: “It is easy to quote [them], both of whom are eager to put brackets around the questions of semantics. Yet one should know that questions in brackets are not really questions left aside. Rather, they are tackled in a different and perhaps completely new way, following the old perception that problems cannot be resolved by attacking them directly but only by circumventing them and doing something else, which results in dissolving the problem or at least in posing the question differently.” Shannon and Weaver’s theory thus offer an insightful perspective on communication beyond sender, receiver, noise and channel.

Shannon and Weaver simply define a message as “one selected from a set of possible messages” (p. 31). Accordingly, a receiver can only read a “C” if he knows that it belongs to the Latin alphabet and if the context tells the receiver that it is not the number “100” but the letter, which is relevant. The set of possible messages “A, B, C,…, Z” must be technically defined before “C” as one possible message out of this set makes sense. In the case of social communication, its semantics and pragmatics, the set of possibilities is not technically but socially defined, i.e. constrained. The important point is that a receiver does not understand a message by looking at the “transmitted” content but by looking at the selection being made among a set of other possibilities. A selection, in turn, requires a distinction to be drawn between the selection and what is left aside. In this way, communication can be understood as the concatenation of selections, i.e. operations of drawing distinctions and observations of these operations performed by drawing other distinctions. The idea of systems reveals two insights about communication. As Baecker (2001) notes, “systems first of all explain that there are sets of possibilities before any specific possibility can be selected at all. And secondly, they explain that the set of possibilities is not a given one but is reproduced by the very selections being feasible which recursively constitute (by being remembered, forgotten and re-invented) that set of possibilities.” Communication therefore means production of redundancy (Bateson 1972, pp. 406–407). It defines both the message being selected and the set of possibilities from which it is selected. Communication consists in checking out that redundancy, and that is why it is stimulated both by non-knowledge and by knowledge, by what has been said and by what has not been said, by the determinate and by the indeterminate, and by the meaning included and by the meaning excluded (Luhmann 1997a, pp. 37-8; Baecker 2001). In the next section, I will translate these insights into an analytical framework for systemic structuration in marketing, the central topic to which the paper now turns.

**THE TETRALEMMA OF THE SYSTEM**

In the previous section, I have theorized systems as being emergent from communication, the concatenation of operations of drawing distinctions and observations of these operations performed by drawing other distinctions. Social systems present, for an observer, (1) the possibility of drawing a distinction, (2) the environment as distinguished from the system, and (3) the distinction itself as the relation between the social system and its environment. Social systems organize the relation between freedom, blindness and dependence: a social system is free in the way of drawing its distinction, it is blind for the consequences; and for the success of its distinction dependent on everything it excludes (environment).

To further explore these insights, I introduce the tetralemma of the system (cf. Varga von Kibéd 2000; Baecker 2002), an analytical framework for the systemic structuration of marketing and consumer behavior. The tetralemma of the system is a cycle diagram that shows how a social system is emergent from and brought forth by communication. The Spencer-Brownian (1969) mark 
 indicates “is distinguished from” (see Figure 2). The arrows demonstrate the recursive movement of the reflection and, finally, the re-entry of all single elements into the social system. Accordingly, the “freedom, caprice and imagination” of position 1 coincide with the “wisdom” of position 5.

Let us briefly go through each position of the tetralemma of the system: (1) A social system is emergent from communication (as was discussed in the last section). (2) A social system is a system within its environment. (3) In the ways of negotiating inside and outside state, a social system is intelligent if and as long it is able to reproduce itself. Intelligence, then, is the system’s ability to “reflect on an environment” (Günther 1962, p. 318; see also Baecker 1994; Lacan 1949; Wiener 1948, p. 162), i.e. to substitute its own knowledge with the non-knowledge of its environment. (4) Both the social system and its environment are set in the implicit context, a causally non-related social realm. (5.1) In the medium of meaning, the social system does not communicate with but about its environment. (5.2) In the medium of rationality, the social system reflects the distinction that it draws. The idea of rationality in position 5 formulates that the re-entry of a distinction into the realm of the distinction (Spencer-Brown 1972) does not claim Truth but rather another distinction—a position of reflection—that sets itself in relation to the “freedom, caprice and imagination” of position 1.

The tetralemma of the system thus expresses the oscillation between five analytical positions that help explore and develop some of the key features of social systems in marketing and consumer research.

**SYSTEMS IN MARKETING**

So far, I have presented (1) an epistemological critique of current representationalist approaches in marketing and consumer research, discussed (2) the tripartite sociological notion of social systems, control and communication, and introduced (3) the tetralemma of the system, an analytical framework for systemic structuration. We are now equipped to delve into the substance of different marketing related social systems that are currently on the rise and of interest to marketing researchers. I will now exemplarily discuss two different social systems in marketing and consumer research: brand systems and protest systems. In the concluding
section I will then develop the implications of this paper for our understanding of the relations between consumption, culture and social systems.

Brand Systems

Brands are central to marketing. Yet despite almost universal experience with brands (e.g. Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000; Biel 1992; De Chernatony 1993; De Chernatony & Dall’Omo Riley 1998; Gordon 1991; Kapferer 1993; Keller 1998; Marder 1997), they remain poorly understood. Conventional concepts of branding are ill-equipped to guide the creation of brand leadership when consumers socialize. Therefore scholars have recently begun to move thinking away from the traditional consumer-brand dyad to the consumer-brand-consumer triad (e.g. Muniz and O’Guinn 2001; Holt 2002). Yet much more theorizing remains to be done in order to thoroughly understand brands on the cultural level of analysis. While current research provides a useful insight into the complex cultural processes underlying the construction of brands, it remains silent about the dialectical interplay between agency and structure. Marketing theory is unequipped to answer questions about what Jeff Murray (2002) recently described as “the tension between sign experimentation and sign domination” (p. 42) involved in the cultural construction of brand meaning.

I propose to theorize brands as social systems. In contrast to Douglas and Isherwood (1979, p. 38), who ‘systematize’ the entire world of goods as an information system making visible and stable the categories of culture, I ‘systemize’ brand specific communication (position 1) as a brand system. A brand system is the “matrix that embeds” (von Foerster 1994) consumers’ and producers’ brand specific communication to establish control over consumption. A brand system organizes, for an observer, the relation between freedom, blindness and dependence: a brand system is free in the way of drawing its distinction (position 2), it is blind for the consequences (position 4); and for the success of its distinction dependent on everything it excludes (position 3). As Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) report:

“…[M]any members of the Macintosh brand community derived an important aspect of their community experience from their opposition to PCs, PC users, and PC software giant Microsoft. This opposition to Microsoft is an important source of unity among Macintosh brand community members. Evidence for this assertion comes from both the face-to-face data, as well as the computer-mediated communication data. The existence of a common enemy against whom to unite makes this brand community particularly strong. The threat from this enemy is made all the more real by the fact that it had succeeded in displacing the Macintosh and assimilating many former Macintosh users by appropriating aspects of the Macintosh operating system.” (p. 420)

As the above statement amply illustrates, a great deal of understanding of brand systems can be derived from looking at what they exclude. “The existence of a common enemy against whom to unite” makes not only this particular Macintosh brand community strong, but also hints at the intelligence of the larger Apple brand system in which it is set. Brand systems distinguish between brand system and brand environment states and formulate the ongoing oscillation between them. Brand systems are different.

Understanding the brand system’s intelligence means to understand the relationship between what the brand system communicates to be and what it rejects (position 3). Market researchers have been slow to see this relationship and slower still to take stock of its significance. Understanding brands means, first of all, looking at what they are not.

Brand systems do not only explain the brand’s social constructedness (e.g. Muniz and O’Guinn 2001; Schouten and McAlexander 1995). They also serve as a cultural resource. In his dialectical theory of consumer culture and branding, Douglas Holt (2002), for instance, concludes that, “brands will become another form of expressive culture, no different in principle from films or television programs or rock bands. Brands that create worlds that strike consumers’ imaginations, that inspire and provoke and
stimulate” (p. 87). In the idea of the brand system we find articulated Holt’s (2002) dialectical relationship between consumer culture and branding. Brand systems are a cultural resource, when they formulate some kind of difference, which they do, to argue with Jeff Murray (2002), if and as long as they articulate the tension between sign experimentation and sign domination (position 5.2). Quite literally, brands are alive when they communicate.

Conventional marketing wisdom holds that image brands succeed when “they make an emotional connection with consumers” (e.g. Tybout and Carpenter 2000, p. 88). But how is this emotional connection achieved? Brand systems reflect the tension between how brands are communicated and how an observer sets himself or herself into relation to this communication. Brand systems are, for an observer, “pregnant with meaning” (Turner 1967, p. 44) because they make a difference (Bateson 1972). Yet this difference is subject to a constant shift of attributions (e.g. Heider 1958). As the tetralemma of the system clearly illustrates, the recursive construction of a brand system through communication brings time into play. Brand meaning, therefore, is highly unstable and merely predictable in its effect and associability. Once the emotional connection with the consumer is subject to such dynamism, the concept of brand image turns out to be impoverished. The insight that ontology conceives the static duality of all being (something either is or is not), leads to the even stronger insight that, if representationalism is lost, so is the idea of brand image. A brand is a mobile array of meanings. Instead of residing in the ontological realms of brand image, market researchers can now strive for and ontogenetical vision of, what I call, brand flow. How do brand systems evolve over time? How are brand systems created, maintained and eventually destroyed through communication? And consequently, how does the brand system’s environment evolve over time? In this way, understanding brand systems and their brand flow could be a critical step in truly actualizing the idea of dynamic brand leadership.

Protest Systems

Another remarkable phenomenon of current interest to marketing researchers can be summarized like this: some consumers protest. They engage in consumer boycotts and resistance (Friedman 1985, 1995, 1999; Kozinets and Handelman 1998), different forms of market subversion (Penaloza and Price 1993; Dobscha 1998; Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Thompson and Haytko 1997; Kates and Belk 2000), and ultimately emanate themselves from the restrictive influences of the dominant market culture (e.g. Firat and Dholokia 1998; Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Giesler and Pohlmann 2003a, 2003b; Kozinets 2002, 1999; Murray and Ozanne 1991). Investigating the complex processes involved in the struggle for marketplace empowerment, consumer agency and consumer emancipation, consumer researchers have provided a useful, yet incomplete picture of communally enacted protest behavior.

To distance themselves from their (market dominated) social environment, I propose, consumers construct protest systems. A protest system is understood as an ongoing process of ensuring “outsider status” (Schouten and McAlexander 1995, p. 58; Hebdige 1979) through social communication (see Figure 2). Similar to Victor Turner’s (1978, p. 250) notion of communitas, a protest system is of antistructural character but not necessarily “full of unmediated communication, even communion, between definite and determinate identities, which arises spontaneously in all kinds of groups, situations, and circumstances.” For the success of its distinction, a protest system simply depends on everything it excludes. In his investigation of consumer emancipation at Burning Man, Rob Kozinets (2000) observes that, “it is as if by keeping the market centered in the cultural crosshairs, its alleged evils will be exorcised” (p. 26). Giesler and Pohlmann (2003b; see also Luhmann 1999) theorize this observation as the paradox of consumer emancipation. Although (especially because) the protest system offers an alternative protocol to the mainstream market environment (e.g. through consuming music at Napster as a gift and NOT (distinction) as a commodity), it paradoxically re-imports the social relation between itself and the rejected social entities (position 5.2). Therefore, Kozinets (2002) suggests that, “the urge to differentiate from other consumers drives participation at Burning Man, and does not release them from grip of the market’s sign game and social logics” (p. 36). However, Kozinets goes on to theorize consumer emancipation in hypercommunity context and suggests that consumer emancipation, if possible at all, has to be perceived of as temporary and local. Although Kozinets observes the urge to differentiate as the driving force behind Burning Man (position 1), he fails to close the systemic cycle (position 5 → position 1) and the inherent protest rationality. As a result, his concept of hypercommunity fails to acknowledge the role of communication (position 1) and protest intelligence (position 3) for the success of consumer emancipation. A protest system is successful not necessarily if its temporary and local but if and as long it is able to reproduce itself, i.e. to “reflect on an environment” (Günther 1962, p. 318; see also Baecker 1994; Lacan 1949; Wiener 1948) that is different. Although the Burning Man festival is temporary and locally bound, the Burning Man protest system and its potential for consumer emancipation are not as long as communication takes place (e.g. on the Burning Man Website, the Burning Man Newsletter or in this paper). In this way, understanding protest systems could be a critical step in truly actualizing the idea of consumer emancipation.

CONCLUSION

Social systems make a difference in marketing. This research has developed and evidenced some of its key facets. It has clearly demonstrated that social systems are an evocative analytical technology that contextualizes a myriad of socio-cultural relationships in marketing and consumer behavior. Social systems in marketing address the socially constructed nature of marketing and consumption as something more than just the summation of images, meanings, norms and values. Social systems in marketing hold that consumer culture is not given and marketing knowledge not constituted—as in the traditional, representationalist framework—but rather brought forth in the dynamic interaction of observer and observed.

We do not experience culture as an arbitrary set of meaning making conventions. Instead, it appears to us, for most of the time, invisible to the social world it constructs for us. But this does not give us license to “see through” and ignore the patterned quality of social life. Representationalist marketing and consumer research offers many important insights into contemporary marketplace behavior but it fails to let us account for the miracle of modern life, namely, that although we are living in this culture of commotion, we continue to function as a social life world. As Grant McCracken (1998, p. 120) notes, “we are living somewhere between chaos and order, not in the former's clutches. We need a theory that shows how the system remains a system even as systemness is challenged.” To do so, this research has demonstrated, theoreticians have to go beyond representationalism and acknowledge, as Gregory Bateson (1972) did, that things are only the epiphenomena of the relations between them. Working with the concept of social systems in marketing means trying to understand the interfaces of relationships, the pattern that connects and the matrix that embeds the plenitude
of social, ecological, and informational systems and their environments all around us.

Given Jeff Murray’s (2002) recent call for a balanced consideration of the dialectical interplay between agency and structure, the concept of social systems in marketing presents one possible strategy to pursue this goal in service of a more critical poetics of consumption. In the idea of systems in marketing we find articulated the dialectical and discursive tension between modern society’s attempt to monitor and control itself and the postmodern struggle for consumer agency and marketplace empowerment. Social systems reveal that, as Baeccker (2001) noted, “control cannot be mentioned without communication.” This research has amply illustrated that social systems are fundamentally social entities, created as much by consumers as by marketers in an effort to reduce marketplace complexity through deciding self-referentially over outside reference. Market researchers can now reformulate the way they think about the relations between markets and culture, and consumer agency and marketplace empowerment using the concept of systems.

So far, only few marketing scholars have been willing to brave the profound theoretical issues associated with the study of markets and consumption using the concept of social systems (Giesler and Pohlmann 2003a, 2003b). This hesitancy may stem from the fact that, as Brown (1995) recognizes, “the definition of what constitutes marketing ‘knowledge’ has enormous practical implications for the pedagogic process, publication opportunities and, not least, the career paths and employment prospects of individual researchers” (p. 170). During the past decade, most market research has operated within the representationalist framework. And of course, the importance of emphasizing, especially the humanistic, phenomenological, textual and rhetorical generation of marketing knowledge is indisputable. However, thematic imbalance can also reinforce disciplinary boundaries rather than encourage vigorous interdisciplinary dialogue about the nature of knowledge and the problem of interpretation. At this very moment, the social sciences and humanities share a common set of fundamental epistemological problems: logical circularity, paradoxical self-reference, unpredictable recursivity and self-organization, to name just a few (e.g. Davis 1998; Haraway 1991; Hayles 1999; Latour 1993; Serres 1981). The concept of social systems in marketing demonstrates the cross-fertilization of humanistic and social-scientific theories; it is 1981). The concept of social systems in marketing demonstrates the

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ABSTRACT

Drawing upon sensemaking theory, we argue that consumption stories form part of a broader, hermeneutic autobiographical act to produce and reproduce a consistent self as we participate in fragmented and changing social environments. Using material from a multi-method ethnographic study, we analyse two undergraduate management students’ stories of suit purchase. We argue that suit purchase is a ritual within a life passage between childhood and family and organisation and work. We show how this purchase is storied individually to achieve a consistency of self at this moment of disjunction drawing together a past self and anticipated self around persistent and satisfying storylines.
Consumption, Role Transitions and the Re-construction of the Self: An Exploratory Study of Social Capital within the Context of Transitional Consumers

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ABSTRACT

We examine how women use consumption to negotiate their identities and reconstruct their sense of self as they experience major role transitions and the associated disruption to the networks which represent their social capital. We investigated the “lived experience” of mothers whose grown children had recently left home. A multi-method approach, which combined in-person interviews with netnography, was used to explore women’s feelings, behaviour and experiences. We identify the distress experienced through the loss of tasks associated with the parenting role; the diminution of social capital which follows from the re-configuration of their familial roles; and how these empty nest women use consumption to help them re-negotiate their identities in this period of transition. We discuss how transitional consumers represent a valuable ‘site’ for exploring issues of identity creation.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper we examine how women use consumption to negotiate their identities and reconstruct their sense of self as they experience major role transitions and the associated disruption to the networks which represent their social capital. Transitions have been described as “a limbo between a past state and a coming one, a period of personal ambiguity, of non-status, and of unanchored identity” (Schouten 1991:49) and represent valuable sites for exploring the relationship between consumption and identity creation. Transitions can also be linked to changes in roles and disruption to networks, which are central to the location of the self in the social world.

Structural changes, role adjustments and alterations in social capital can be associated with a number of different familial transition points in adult-child relationships (Kell 1992) (e.g. starting school; changing school; first school trip). We concentrate on the empty nest stage where previous attention has been largely focused on economic aspects (e.g. spending habits) to the relative neglect of consumption linked to psycho-social needs. However, the empty nest stage also represents a potentially rich site for researching consumers in periods of transition. This interpretive study explores how women use consumption to negotiate this transition phase and their adjustment to new identities and roles; their re-configuration of roles, tasks and networks; and their experience of and response to the disruption to their social and emotional capital. We briefly review the literature on social capital and the associated themes of networks, foci of activities and friendships.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social capital

There is considerable debate about what constitutes social capital. Some key definitional issues revolve around “sociability, social networks and social support, trust, reciprocity, and community and civic engagement” (Morrow 1999). These are all central to family life; and in particular to the ‘work which women do’ (Bruess and Pearson 1996) within the family in terms of generating and enhancing social capital.

Firstly, social capital denotes a number of important connections to social networks and social network theory (Scott 1991); the strength of weak ties (Granovetter 1973) and embeddedness (1988); relationships (Duck); friendships and foci of activity (Allan 1979; Adams and Allan 1998); and emotional capital (Nowotny 1981) and emotion work (Hochschild 1975; Hochschild with Machung 1989). Second, social capital has been seen as ‘currency’ (Astone et al 1999:1) and relates to “the resources that emerge from one’s social ties” (Portes and Landolt 1996:26). Thirdly, social capital has been defined as “access to time and money, help from friends and family” (Boisjoly, Duncan and Hofferth 1995:609). Coleman (1988) made a distinction between “social capital inside and outside the household, with a primary source of intrahousehold social capital consisting of the time parents spend with one another and with their children” (cited in Boisjoly, Duncan and Hofferth 1995:609). Allatt (1993, 1996) similarly identifies the contribution which women make, in terms of such resources as the investment of time, in building both social and emotional capital (Nowotny 1981:148) in the home, most noticeably for their children (Morrow 1995:755).

Morrow (1999) argues for conceptualising “social capital as a set of processes and practices that are integral to the acquisition of other forms of ‘capital’ such as human capital and cultural capital (i.e. qualifications, skills, group memberships, etc.)” (Morrow 1999). In this context, the family can be seen as the ‘factory’ for the production of social capital (Allatt 1993, 1996; Collins 1992) as mothers introduce their children into social networks; teach their children how to acquire, maintain and enhance the networks which constitute social capital; and help their children acquire the skills necessary for building their own networks. In one study Allatt (1993) found that parents encouraged a range of qualities in their children, including ‘responsibility, individualism, hard work, effort and pleasure in achievement, social competence and access to critical social capital networks’ (1993:157). She showed that parents try to develop children’s agency and indeed saw this as an aim and outcome of their parental investment” (Morrow 1999:756). Parents also used their social networks on behalf of their children— in other words they taught their children both how to use social capital and how to create their own social capital. Morrow concluded ‘This is a critical transfer, since such aspects of social capital have to be recreated with each new generation’ (1993:143). These transfers of social capital have both micro and macro implications with resulting far reaching ramifications.

Roles, networks and foci of activities/friendship

Scott (1991:30) argued that “roles, together with their role sets are defined through networks of interdependent activities”. Families have interlocking networks with interdependent activities—and the degree of interlocking is linked to the variety of roles, which in turn are the source of identity and self-esteem. Where self-esteem is dependent on multiple roles (e.g. parenting, motherhood), adjustment to a role loss tends to be easier, especially when the change in the parenting role leads to diminution of social capital, and reduced access to some networks as sources of social capital.

The variety of networks and the associated foci of activity and friendships that one is involved in seem to be important for adjusting to changes in relationships. Network density relates to “the number of different focus sources underlying the network—more sources means lower density (Feld 1981; Fischer 1982a)”
Feld and Carter (1998:146). Feld and Carter (1998) argue for the importance of looking “beyond the overall density to the number and nature of the continuing foci of activity to understand how participation in each of those particular foci of activity facilitates or hampers adjustment” (ibid). This links to Simmel’s argument about the importance of “intersecting rather than overlapping social circles” when adjusting to disruptions to networks based on activities or friendship groups (Feld and Carter 1998:148-9). Important linkages can therefore be mapped between social capital, networks and roles so that social capital encompasses *inter alia* “sociability, social networks and social support” (Morrow 1999:744).

**RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS**

Our objective was to study ‘consumers in transition’ from the subjective perspective of individual women. We sought to better understand the lived experience of empty nest women and how they use consumption to negotiate their role transition. We used a mixed-method research design that combined in-person, unstructured interviews with netnography. We collected two separate data sets using an interpretive methodology.

**First data set:** Our first data set consisted of twenty-one in-person unstructured interviews with empty nest women whose children had left the parental home within the last 18 months. Participants were recruited via friends and acquaintances using a snowball sampling method (Miles and Huberman 1994). An informal approach was adopted for the interviews, with the researchers using a broad topic list covering key issues including: changes to daily activities; lifestyle; social networks; consumption patterns; and their role as a mother. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim, resulting in approximately 300 pages of data. Themes were identified independently and then discussed amongst the team members.

**Second data set:** The second data set was collected by participating on two Internet on-line bulletin boards, using netnography (Kozinets, 1997, 1998). Data was collected through participant observation to develop a better understanding of the experiences of empty nest women and to attempt to better understand how they negotiate this transition in their lives as expressed via cyber-space bulletin boards. The sites selected were specifically designed for women dealing with the day-to-day experiences of recently becoming empty nesters. Following the research ethics suggested by other researchers involved in ethnography (Sharf 1999), we announced on the bulletin board our presence as researchers interested in the topic of empty nest women, and of our plans to prepare research papers on this topic. We believe that we benefited from the fact that the three members of our research team are women, and that two of the three team members are themselves empty nesters negotiating the same role transition as the participants on the bulletin board. The second data set resulted in approximately 200 postings to the bulletin board, which was organized and analyzed using qualitative data analysis software.

Both data sets are international in nature. The in-person interviews were conducted in the U.S., England, and Ireland. The bulletin board sites contained postings from participants from numerous countries with English speaking populations, reflecting the international landscape of many online communities.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In the analysis and interpretation of our data sets three main themes emerged: the distress caused by this role transition and identity transformation; the evaluation and redefinition of the self which flowed from this experience of role status change and identity transformation; and the disruption to the networks of these respondents, with the subsequent diminution of their social capital. We deal very briefly in this paper with the first two themes that have been reported elsewhere in detail (Curasi, Hogg and Maclaran 2001) in order to provide a context for the more detailed discussion of the third theme. Our findings are discussed in relation to the changing patterns of consumption and are illustrated with representative quotes that specify whether the informant participated via the cyberspace bulletin board or through an in-person interview.

**Role Transition, Identity Transformation and the Redefinition of the Self**

The empty nester phase clearly represents a liminal state (van Gennep 1961). We found that informants’ adjustments were complex, idiosyncratic and affected by many factors including: their relationships to others, especially their children; roles occupied outside the home, including employment, and involvement in church or other organizations; and the length of time spent adjusting to this transition.

Many of the women interviewees and all the bulletin board participants articulated difficulty dealing with this transition e.g:

“‘This year hasn’t been bad. It’s the second year. The first year was… just devastating for me. … I mean, I stopped eating. I stopped sleeping…. we took her to school and I thought I was going to die. I cried all the way home. I literally made it from her dorm room to the elevator, which was probably about 6 yards and completely came unglued”. (In-person interview)

Many empty nester women openly questioned just what their roles were. Most women commonly asked about their role as a mother, and what their identity was, now that their child-raising role seemed to lie behind them:

“My nest has been empty for about one and a half years…. So many pieces of my life that now are part of the past. I am not the me I understood myself to be. I love being a Gramma but I miss being the mom I was.” (Empty Nest Syndrome Bulletin Board) [emphasis added]

“I loved giving up the mommy duties (food, clothing, worry), so I thought I had escaped the dreaded Syndrome. Now, I’m not sure. If I’m no longer a nurturer—my most satisfying role thus far in life, what am I? Has anyone else been through this? Any suggestions?” (Empty Nest Syndrome Bulletin Board)[emphasis added]

**Establishing, Maintaining and Developing Networks and Social Capital**

Our informants experienced the loss of the important tasks (caring for and caring about, De Vault 1991) attached to the key mothering role in their lives as their children move away. One major task was teaching children how to create and use social capital. They described the consumption of all the resources (e.g. time, money, emotion) committed to fulfilling this aspect of their paren-}

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**Establishing, Maintaining and Developing Networks and Social Capital**

Our informants experienced the loss of the important tasks (caring for and caring about, De Vault 1991) attached to the key mothering role in their lives as their children move away. One major task was teaching children how to create and use social capital. They described the consumption of all the resources (e.g. time, money, emotion) committed to fulfilling this aspect of their paren-
ated with the production of sociability (De Vault 1991). In many cases informants’ lives had revolved around such activities while the children were at home.

“I guess the biggest changes were due to the fact that both of my sons were very active in sports and played soccer for many years. So our weekends were pretty much tied up with their activities, because we followed every activity as much as we could, or every one that wepossibly could. And, all of a sudden there weren’t any games to go to as frequently. We had a lot of extra time on our hands... we’re not as actively involved in our children’s lives as we were when they were younger” (In person interview)

From this participant’s description we can see how her family’s consumption of leisure time activities had changed when her sons left home; and the impact which it had had on one of the key household resources: time.

Many had taken part-time or flexible working hours to accommodate the balancing act that was required to maintain these activities. Even those who had pursued a career still had to find some way of organising such activities, albeit by frequently delegating to others. Indeed, for career women, their own social capital networks can become even more vital to ensuring the smooth running of their children’s networks as they shared these tasks on a reciprocal basis with other mothers. The following quote from one informant whose children have just finished college typically illustrates the multiple roles that women adopt, and their juggling lifestyles (Thompson 1996):

“I worked the whole time my kids were growing up but I still did everything. I was the PTA mom, the cheerleading mom, football mom, wrestling mom, gymnastics mom, softball mom, baseball mom, diving and swimming mom. I volunteered and did it all.” (Empty Nest Bulletin Board).

Whether working outside the home or not, most women conveyed a sense of arranging their lives around their children’s and prioritising their children’s activities over their own.

In terms of consumption and provisioning, household rituals were often established around the maintenance of such activities, for example, having meals at particular times on certain days to accommodate children’s busy schedules. Rook argues that the family “is the source of numerous and highly variable rituals that animate mealtime, bedtime, and birthday and holiday celebrations. Within a family unit, ritual practices cement relationships and foster joint participation in household activities” (Rook 1985:255). This echoes Allatt’s (1993, 1996) idea of the interlinking of social and emotional capital. We can clearly see a strong emotional involvement accompanying the various mothers’ roles and rituals that contribute to the development of children’s social capital. Kathleen, for instance, related how she would dutifully prepare the evening meal every morning before she left for work, when her children were at home. Kathleen is a good illustration of the importance placed on the family meal (Miller 1998). Significantly, mealtimes provide a good opportunity for family communication and can therefore play a crucial role in the development of the children’s social capital (Putnam 2000). However, significant changes in provisioning—and thus in patterns of consumption—followed the children leaving home. Kathleen described how the routine of family mealtimes changed in the empty nest setting. Therefore all the routines associated with ‘feeding the family’ (De Vault 1991) changed in the empty nest setting, and had a concomitant impact on patterns of consumer behaviour (e.g. foodstuffs bought; retail outlets patronized; re-allocation of resources of time and money from provisioning the family to other pursuits).

Loss of Social Capital Structures

For many women, however, the changes often produced deep role insecurity as suddenly they found themselves with more time on their hands. Days that had once seemed so full of activities were frequently referred to as “empty” by many informants.

“I miss watching her [eldest daughter] perform, singing, and dancing the most. She was so good. It seems I’m having trouble finding something I enjoy as much as watching her perform. I do plenty of hobbies, churchwork, and have 3 other girls, but the first one is hard. It seems all the activities I said I would do when I didn’t have to drive her anywhere anymore just don’t seem to be as inviting as I thought they would.” (Empty Nest Bulletin Board)

This informant’s story highlights the switch in leisure activities within the pattern of consumption from ‘consuming’ her daughter’s performances, and also consuming ‘vicariously’ her daughter’s success and achievement in those performances; to other patterns of leisure time consumption (e.g. hobbies, church work).

One woman even used the term “dreamy” to describe how her pattern of life had changed. And adjustment was clearly more difficult for those women who had not worked outside the home. They were especially vulnerable to feelings of insecurity at this point. Mandy recalled her feelings as she realised that she was “losing” her kids, her uncertainty over her new situation is evident:

“I had arranged my life around them, and it was unconscious, actually, but my money, my time, projects that I worked on, I would check their schedules first. So now that they are gone, it’s very confusing at times, the emptiness that I think is invigorating, for the most part, most days but then it’s the other part about what I didn’t do with my life to prepare myself now.” (In person interview).

Mandy highlights again the important switch in resources of time and money when children leave home, and the impact not just on financial but also on social aspects of consumption. Having spent so much time and energy developing their children’s social capital (the production of sociability, De Vault 1991), it seems that many women do not have their own social capital resources to fall back on. Suddenly they find that networks held together through their children and their children’s activities have diminished and that they have nothing with which to replace these networks. A switch in consumption patterns from being based around their children’s lives to being located around neighbourhood activities and clubs (e.g. golf) is visible in Mary’s description:

Mary: “it was just like you have to build a whole new base of friendship because all of your friendships were based on what your kids did, and that was hard.”

Interviewer: So, how do you make friends now?

Mary: “Work, and we’re involved in a few more activities... stuff in the neighbourhood, just a few more clubs, golfing a little more, just getting into a few more activities that the children’s time didn’t take up.” (In person interview)

Our findings suggest that many women neglect their own social networks during their years of child rearing. Consequently, feelings
of loss and emptiness were commonly expressed. Such feelings were particularly acute with several women who had also moved their residence during their transition to an empty nest. They found themselves cut off from their old social networks and in a situation where it was more difficult to generate new ones. This was often because friendships had hinged around the maintenance of their children’s social networks. Helen’s story is a good example of how a woman can suddenly find herself isolated. Her two children are both at college and she and her husband have moved to a smaller house in a more rural area. Although this is only three miles from the town where they used to live, Helen now feels very alone, and is finding it very difficult to keep up with her old friends or make any new ones. She puts this down to the fact that her children’s activities held her social networks together:

Helen: “Our social life has definitely changed because everyone else’s families that we know have gone away. You tend to lose contact with the parents because the children aren’t there. We only went to see Mike and Dee and various other couples because our children were friends with theirs. But now their children have gone away we don’t have as much contact.”

Interviewer: So you actually find your social lives diminished?
Helen: “Oh, definitely.”
Interviewer: Have you made any new social contacts then?
Helen: “Not really, no–we sound really boring don’t we!” (In-person interview)

Although she has always worked part-time, Helen is not coping well with the adjustments that are required of her at this life-stage and she is suffering from a related depression that further hinders her ability to be more proactive in developing new opportunities for herself.

Other women made a more deliberate effort to overcome their feelings of loss by searching out new social networks for themselves. Like Helen, Anne works part-time but much happier with her situation than Helen because she has recently taken up golf, an activity she can also enjoy with her husband. This, in turn, has helped her build a new social network. She considers that she has much more freedom than when her children were at home, and a much wider circle of friends that relate to her as a person in her own right rather than to her role as a mother:

“Before they left you were taxiing them everywhere. You really are a lot more involved before they go away. But you just have to move on. I mean I was like a taxi driver for years running them to the guides or the brownies or whatever–elocation, piano lessons. Your life does revolve around them and then suddenly, I don’t know, I think it’s just nice to have time for me and my husband now….We now go on more golfing weekends and we have a holiday now and again in South Carolina for two weeks’ golfing. I mean this has just come up since the kids have gone and we would never dream of doing that before and we’ve met friends through that.” (In person interview)

Helen’s story is rather similar to Mary’s (see above) and again the changing location of consumption away from children’s activities towards her and her husband’s own (e.g. golfing, holidays) can be traced in her words. In a similar way, Jean has coped well with the adjustment by re-building her networks around social activities that she now wants to do, rather than her children’s activities:

“Yes, it was an adjustment but I adjusted very well I think. I had activities that I wanted to do. I wanted to pursue playing tennis, which I had just taken up about two years before my daughter graduated. I wanted to be a gardener. I love the outside and having more time to just spend there rather than being a chauffeur, so to speak, to the kids.” (In person interview)

Here the changing patterns of consumption can be seen in the explicit contrast which Jean draws between child-centred activities (e.g. chauffeuring children around) and a series of adult-centred leisure activities (tennis and gardening). Of course it must be acknowledged that these two examples of good adjustments come from middle class married women who lead relatively affluent lifestyles that enable them to have more choices in taking up new activities. Clearly for many women in this lifestage, family and economic circumstances will not always easily facilitate the building of new networks.

A moving illustration of this came from the bulletin board where a single parent who is disabled and living on income support discussed the implications of her children leaving. When her children move out she will lose the associated child benefits and no longer be able to maintain her apartment. She will not only lose her children but also her home. Her plight, whilst extreme, illustrates well the deep reliance a woman’s own social (and, indeed, economic) capital can have on her role as mother.

“Oh Lord, where do I begin. My 19 yo son moved out 2 months ago and my 17 yo daughter is pregnant and moving in with her boyfriend and his parents in June. These are my only kids. I’ve been a single parent for the past 16 years and those children are my life. I’m disabled and on a fixed income which means I’m going to be losing not only my children but benefits and child support monies which have enabled me to provide a home for ourselves over the years. Now I’m about to lose my apartment too. And all this within a 6 month period. (Empty nest bulletin board)

This is an example where the empty nest does not represent a positive change in patterns of consumption because of an increase in resources such as time and money, but rather represents a negative change in patterns of consumption because of a decrease in resources (e.g. money, housing).

Support/Lack of Support Through Social Networks

We can see from the previous section that as the social networks that have been dependent on children dwindle, many women experience a concomitant crisis in role identity. Scott (1991) argues that the diversity of networks and their linking to a variety of roles are a major source of self-esteem and that adjustment is easier if not dependent on one role. Thus, consistent with role identity theory (Thoits 1983; White and Edwards 1990) one of the major factors to influence the extent of this crisis in role identity depends on whether a woman has her own independent social networks that allow her roles outside of her mothering home-based ones (Thoits 1983; White and Edwards 1990). Varied social networks, if independent from those of the children, can offer a stronger support system. These networks may be career, hobby or community-related. For example, several women described the solace they found through their professional activities, their voluntary work, church group, or health club. For others such as Lea, it was a regular coffee morning with friends that had been meeting for many years and had been established prior to her having children.
We have already described some of the ways that women sought to establish new networks to help overcome their feelings of loss. In this respect the online bulletin board can be represented as a form of social capital in terms of the social support that women can receive from others in a similar situation. This notion is reinforced by Putnam (2000) who highlights the potential of virtual communities to increase the otherwise diminishing social capital in American society. It also converges with Miller and Slater’s (2000) view that the Internet is embedded in mundane social structures and relations and, as such, represents an extension of a person’s social world rather than a world apart. The empty nester online community appears to provide a support system that is otherwise lacking in many of its members’ lives. Here they are able to find others who can relate to their problems and with whom they can share their feelings. However, the board is more than a support system, it is a place to seek and build friendships. Women chat regularly about their children’s activities, swap confidences about their partners, ask advice about decisions they have to make, and generally treat the board as a social arena.

**CONCLUSION**

We used a study of the lived experiences of women in empty nest households to explore how individuals use consumption to renegotiate and reconstruct their sense of self when faced with major changes to their roles and with significant disruptions to their social networks. These changes, notably children leaving home, prompt alterations to tasks and family responsibilities linked to different aspects of the various roles (e.g. mothering). We explored how they coped with the associated dislocation and disruption of their social ties and social networks—in effect, the diminution of their social capital (represented by their ties within and beyond the family setting to the wider social context of their community). The levels of distress experienced seem to be directly related to the variety and degree of enmeshment of the different role sets and associated networks that represent their social capital. What seems to happen in the empty nest stage is that these two sets of social capital start to be ‘decoupled’ and the experience of that decoupling process is more or less painful depending on how ‘enmeshed’ these sets of networks are.

We investigated transitional (empty nest) consumers because we felt they provided a valuable site for examining the relationship between consumption and identity creation. This study deals specifically with consumption, roles, networks and social capital which are major and interlocking themes within ‘identity/identification work’ and which provide clear links between the micro/individual and macro/social aspects of life projects, consumption and identity creation within the context of the empty nest household (c.f. for instance Hawe and Shiell’s (2000:871) call for research in social capital to investigate further “the underlying constructs, in particular the qualitative difference between the macro/context level and the micro/individual level”). This exploratory study supports earlier arguments that during transitional or liminal states (Turner 1969, 1974, referenced in Schouten 1991) identity is reconstructed following re-evaluation of the self and extensive changes to patterns of consumption and social capital within the family setting.

**SELECTED REFERENCES**

A full list of references is available on request from the authors.


Towards a Suturing Theory of Identity and Consumption
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ABSTRACT

It is now axiomatic within consumer research and the social sciences in general to advocate that consumption is increasingly important to identity construction. Identity is now primarily conceived as a process of identification, something that the individual must actively pursue. We have no given, preordained or fixed identity anymore (if we ever did) and so the argument goes that it is the responsibility of the individual to construct one from the symbolic resources (made) available (by and through the market). In this paper I develop a view of the process of identification that draws on developments in social and cultural theory, and in particular the work of the Stuart Hall. In this view identity is conceived of as a process of attachment to discursively produced subject positions that we are hailed by and unconsciously or consciously invest in (partly through consumption) and reproduce. Given the dynamic nature of identity construction, peoples’ record collections were identified to be an archaeological site of the representation of these processes. The inherently social nature of identification reinforces a view that the links between people (i.e. social relations) are more important than things (i.e. products).
ABSTRACT

Vacations spent doing volunteer work are growing in popularity. This relatively new form of tourism blurs traditional understandings of vacations as the opposite of work and poses the question of what we seek in such vacations and why we spend our precious money and vacation time working. Four in-depth interviews suggest that volunteer vacations help participants to construct their identities; provide a vehicle for accumulating cultural capital; and offer an opportunity for social interaction and creation of meaning in their lives.
A New Perspective on Hedonic Consumption
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ABSTRACT
Holbrook and Hirschman proposed hedonic consumption perspective (HCP). Their HCP is opposite of information processing perspective (IPP), because their HCP focuses on consumer pleasure experience, especially enjoyment of arts or games, while IPP focuses on consumer problem solving. However, the pleasure concept remains vague in their HCP. By examining the pleasure concept in philosophy, this paper defines it as “experience of subjectively desirable emotion.” “Pleasure,” defined as such, includes desirable emotions attributed to problem solving, in addition to enjoyment of arts or games. This paper proposes a new HCP that is not opposite of IPP, but includes IPP.

INTRODUCTION
The idea of hedonic consumption was born in the early 1980s. In 1982, Holbrook and Hirschman (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982) proposed hedonic consumption perspective (HCP) as an opposite perspective of information processing perspective (IPP), which has been the dominant perspective in the consumer research field since the late 1970s.

IPP views a consumer behavior as a series of cognitive activities for problem solving. It assumes that a consumer processes the product information in order to solve product-related problems, that is, to make the rational purchase decision.

Holbrook and Hirschman pointed out that from IPP, we cannot explain the consumer behavior such as enjoyment of arts or games. According to Holbrook and Hirschman, IPP focuses mainly on the functional utility of the product, and rarely considers pleasure experiences through appreciation of arts or watching sports games. HCP was proposed to stimulate the investigation of consumer’s pleasure experiences.

However, Holbrook and Hirschman’s HCP seems to lack a clear definition of the key concept, “pleasure.” Is it reasonable to regard HCP as the opposite perspective of IPP? We cannot answer this question without clarifying the pleasure concept.

This paper first examines the previous discussion on HCP and points out a problem of the pleasure concept. Second, this paper examines and defines the pleasure concept by referring to the arguments in philosophy. Third, this paper proposes a new HCP based on the proposed definition of “pleasure,” and discusses the coverage of new HCP in explaining consumer behaviors.

THE REASON WHY THIS PAPER IS BASED ON PHILOSOPHY
Before this paper begins its examination according to the above mentioned line, it is needed to explain why this paper focuses on the arguments in philosophy.

Many consumer researchers seem to consider that the scientific study needs the empirical data. We can admit that many consumer behavior studies are empirical ones, that is, including data collection, whether the data are qualitative or quantitative. However, data collection is not the only requirement for the scientific study. As Stegmüller (1969) argues, “the clarification of concepts is a prerequisite to any serious scientific endeavor (p. 273).” Stegmüller points out as follows:

One of the most important ways of introducing concepts in a scientific system is through the medium of so-called definitions. According to traditional logic, we must distinguish between nominal definitions and real definitions. The former are simply a matter of linguistic stipulation; the latter involves statements concerning the essence of objects. (Stegmüller, Main Currents in Contemporary German, British, and American Philosophy, 1969, p. 273)

This paper will deal with Stegmüller’s “real definitions” rather than “nominal definitions.” Then, what kind of method can we adopt for clarifying the “real definitions”? Stegmüller, by introducing Carl Hempel’s classification, shows three methods for clarifying “real definitions.” They are: 1) analysis of meaning (breaking down the concepts into their components), 2) empirical analysis (giving the necessary and sufficient conditions for application of the concept through empirical tests), and 3) explication of concepts (citing certain examples that contain the meaning to be explicaded, as well as further examples, deviating from these, in which other meaning of the expression are given) (Stegmüller, 1969, p. 277-8).

“Examples” mentioned in the third method is not the actual human behaviors described by the concept, but the written phrases which include the concept.

Among the above three, this paper will adopt the third method. That is, this paper will cite certain arguments in the philosophy field for clarifying the concept of pleasure, because, in the philosophy field, arguments on “pleasure” have been one of the most important themes since the ancient Greece era. Philosophers and thinkers on hedonism have considered “pleasure” as the essential element of the good human lives. Thus, we can consider that the philosophical arguments offer insightful examples for the fundamental understanding of the pleasure concept.

In addition, it needs to be noted that the word “philosophy” in this paper dose not designate “methodology.” In the consumer research field, the theme of methodology is often discussed referring to philosophy. For example, Hudson and Murray (1986) argue about the method of hedonic consumption study referring to philosophy.

In the consumer research field, themes other than methodology have rarely examined in relation to philosophy. However, the research themes that relate to philosophy are not necessarily limited to methodology. Studies on the fundamental meaning of concepts for explaining consumer behaviors also seem to have relationship with philosophy.

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1This paper is an advanced study based on my doctoral dissertation thesis submitted to Kyoto University, Japan, entitled “In Pursuit of ‘Hedonic Consumption’ (‘Kairakushohi’ no Tsuikyu” in Japanese).” It was published by Hakuto Shobo, Inc., Tokyo, Japan. The author greatly acknowledges the valuable comments of Professor Emeritus Fumio Kondo, Professor Masao Tao, and Professor Yasunaga Wakabayashi at Kyoto University, Japan. The author also greatly acknowledges the valuable comments of the two reviewers of the present paper.

2Although we can consider the human behavior such as appreciation of arts or watching sports games as consumer behavior, IPP rarely paid attention to this kind of behavior.
PREVIOUS HCP
As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, since the late 1970s, the major perspective for explaining consumer behaviors has been IPP. In the consumer research field, it has been widely accepted that IPP is appropriate to explain consumer’s purchase decision making.

However, Holbrook and Hirschman pointed out that IPP is not sufficient for explaining consumer behaviors. They paid attention to consumer behaviors such as appreciation of arts or watching sports games, and argued that from IPP, we cannot fully explain these consumer behaviors. They cautioned against the over-emphasis on the purchase decision making in the consumer research field in those days. As mentioned before, in 1982, Holbrook and Hirschman proposed a new perspective for explaining consumer behaviors, in their two papers (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982).3

They held that the experiential aspects are worth considering for explaining consumer behaviors such as appreciation of arts. When we focus on the experiential aspects of consumer behaviors, pleasure experiences emerge as important research themes.4 Consumer’s pleasure experiences that Holbrook and Hirschman regarded as representative are summarized as the three “F” s: Fantasies, Feelings, and Fun.

Holbrook and Hirschman contrasted their HCP with IPP in various aspects of consumer behaviors. For example, they contrasted the product features within their HCP framework against those within IPP framework, and indicated the former as subjective and the latter as objective. In consumer resources, Holbrook and Hirschman indicated that the former is time, while the latter is money. In the output of consumer behavior, Holbrook and Hirschman indicated that the former is fun, enjoyment, and pleasure, while the latter is useful function.5

Holbrook and Hirschman’s arguments provoked a new movement in the consumer research field, although their perspective did not seem to be supported by the most researchers in this field. Several consumer researchers who have doubts about “computer metaphor” or “rational economic man hypothesis” appeared to have supported their perspective.

AN UNRESOLVED ISSUE
The idea of HCP proposed by Holbrook and Hirschman was epoch-making at least for the researchers not subscribing to IPP, and many empirical studies have been carried out based on Holbrook and Hirschman’s HCP. For example, demographic surveys of the

art market, studies on the determinant factors (predictors) of the enjoyment of arts or games, studies on the development of scales for measuring hedonic aspects of products, and studies on consumer emotions including pleasurable ones, have been carried out (Horiuchi, 2001). However, the knowledge obtained from such empirical studies seemed to be specific to the kind of games or arts, and to construct the general principles or theories of HCP seemed to be difficult (Horiuchi, 2001). This is a serious problem for the advance in hedonic consumption study as a social science discipline.

An important reason for this problem is the vagueness of the key concept of pleasure (Horiuchi, 2001). As early as 1985, Ahtola pointed out a similar problem to this and argues that overall picture of the HCP remains fuzzy. Hudson and Murray (1986) also pointed out that the previous hedonic consumption studies “miss the rich foundation of the conceptualization” (p. 346).6

Previous hedonic consumption studies have often used the concept of pleasure according to the everyday ordinary usage without strictly defining it. “Enjoyment” has often been regarded as the typical pleasure. Previous hedonic consumption studies have often dealt with the consumer’s enjoyment of arts or games as the typical theme.

Certainly, we can admit that “enjoyment” is a pleasure. However, to show the typical examples such as “enjoyment” is not sufficient to define “pleasure.” Is “enjoyment” the only theme that hedonic consumption studies should deal with? How about a sense of relief or that of mental healing? How about a sense of achievement or that of fulfillment? Could we not consider these experiences as “pleasure”? But the previous hedonic consumption studies did not consider these experiences.

The above questions can be summarized in the following simple question: What is pleasure? This question, which is the logical starting point of hedonic consumption studies, needs to be considered (Horiuchi, 2001).

EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF PLEASURE
In order to clarify the essentials of the concept of pleasure, this paper examines the concept by referring to arguments on “pleasure” in the philosophy field, based on Horiuchi’s arguments (2001). Arguments from the ancient Greek hedonism philosophy to the utilitarian socio-economic thought, to the modern utilitarian philosophy, are considered.

“Pleasure” in the Ancient Greek Hedonism Philosophy
How is the concept of pleasure explained in the ancient Greek hedonism philosophy? Epicurus is a Greek philosopher who argued about this concept as follows:7

When, therefore, we maintain that pleasure is the end, we do not mean the pleasures of profligates and those that consist in sensuality, as is supposed by some who are either ignorant or disagree with us or do not understand, but freedom from pain in the body and from trouble in the mind. For it is not continuous drinkings and revellings, nor the satisfaction of lusts, nor the enjoyment of fish and other luxuries of the

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3Although the related arguments have been published before 1982, we can consider that the papers in which they proposed a new perspective are these two (Horiuchi, 2001).

4As Horiuchi (2001) points out, meanings of consumer behaviors also emerged as important research themes, based on Holbrook and Hirschman’s HCP. However, as the theme of meaning goes beyond the theme of the present study, it is not mentioned here.

5Actually, the author thinks Holbrook and Hirschman’s scheme of contrasting HCP with IPP is not reasonable, as the author has pointed out elsewhere. According to their scheme, HCP is located on the opposite end of IPP on the same dimension. Thus, if their scheme is reasonable, HCP would be explained within IPP framework. Within their scheme, we can consider that HCP is not a different perspective from IPP, but the extended perspective of IPP. HCP can be a different perspective from IPP only when we can detect consumer behaviors that can be explained within HCP framework, but never can be explained within IPP framework.

6Hudson and Murray (1986) attribute the cause of this problem to using inappropriate method of hedonic consumption studies. Thus, their argument develops focusing on the examination of the methodology rather than that of the concept itself, as this paper attempts.

7Epicurus is not the only Greek philosopher who thought about “pleasure.” But his thought seems to be especially insightful for exploring its fundamental meaning.
From the discussion cited here, we can understand that when Epicurus uses the word “pleasure” as the goal of human activities, he does not mean sensory or sensual enjoyment, but prudence that is free from pain.

**“Pleasure” in the Utilitarian Socio-economic Thought**

Bentham and J. S. Mill are representative thinkers of “pleasure” in the utilitarian socio-economic thought through the 18-19th centuries. Although Bentham’s and Mill’s utilitarian arguments differ from each other in many points, their essential understandings of the pleasure concept are similar.

As shown in the following argument, Bentham described the concept of pleasure in reference to the concept of utility.

By utility is meant that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness, (all this in the present case comes to the same thing) or (what comes again to the same thing) to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil, or unhappiness to the party whose interest is considered … . (Bentham, 1970, First published in 1789, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, p. 12)

Mill’s position below was similar to Bentham’s in the description of “pleasure” and “utility.”

Those who know anything about the matter (i. e., utility) are aware that every writer, from Epicurus to Bentham, who maintained the theory of utility, meant by it, not something to be contradistinguished from pleasure, but pleasure itself, together with exemption from pain; and instead of opposing the useful to the agreeable or the ornamental, have always declared that the useful means these, among other things. (Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 1998, First published in 1861, p. 54, parenthesis added by Horiiuchi)

A review of Bentham’s and Mill’s utilitarian thought brings one to understand that they did not consider both “pleasure” and “utility” as opposing to each other. Rather, Bentham and Mill used both concepts for almost the same meaning. The pleasure concept in Bentham’s and Mill’s arguments is much broader than the concept in our everyday usage. They used the pleasure concept for not only enjoyment of games or arts, but also satisfaction with functional utility. This kind of pleasure was not considered within previous HCP.

Thus, we can state that the usage of “pleasure” in previous HCP covers only a small part of the original usage of it. The present study proposes applying the philosophical broad usage of “pleasure” to study hedonic consumption, because, using this broad definition, we can understand the concept of pleasure at its fundamental level.

**PROPOSING A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON HEDONIC CONSUMPTION**

In this section, this paper proposes a new definition of “hedonic consumption,” based on the examination of the pleasure concept in philosophy. Then this section examines the coverage of new HCP in explaining consumer behaviors, and discusses the relationship among IPP, previous HCP, and new HCP.

**A New Definition of Hedonic Consumption**

In the previous section, this paper proposes a definition of pleasure as “experience of subjectively desirable emotion.” Based on this pleasure definition, this paper proposes a new definition of “hedonic consumption”: hedonic consumption is the experience of subjectively desirable emotion, obtained from consumer behaviors. The newly proposed hedonic consumption includes not only enjoyment of the arts or games, but also various experiences of positive emotion through consumer behaviors, such as being relieved by the ingredient information of seemingly harmful food products, joy caused by obtaining a hard-to-obtain product, being cheered up by attending a pop music concert, etc.

**Coverage of New HCP in Explaining Consumer Behaviors**

Based on the present argument, IPP, previous HCP, and new HCP are summarized as shown in Table 1.

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8This definition is also consistent with Hudson and Murray’s argument (1986) on the method of hedonic consumption study. In that argument, they maintain that hedonic consumption study needs the subjectivist approach rather than the objectivist approach. Their argument is in line with the present paper’s definition of “pleasure,” because the present paper regards “pleasure” as the subjective experience. However, Hudson and Murray’s usage of “hedonic consumption” seems to be limited to enjoyment of arts or games. Thus, it appears that their “hedonic consumption” covers a smaller area in consumer behaviors than that in the present study.

9In Horiiuchi (2001), the pleasure concept is defined as “subjective desirability,” according to Sidgwick (1907).
Based on the summary (Table 1), this paper examines the coverage of new HCP in explaining consumer behavior, in relation to that of IPP and previous HCP.

Figure 1 shows the relationship among the three perspectives.

The darkened circle (A) in Figure 1 indicates the consumer behavior covered by IPP. This perspective focuses on problem solving, where the problem mainly concerns functional utility.

The shaded area (B) in Figure 1 indicates the consumer behavior covered by previous HCP. This perspective mainly focuses on consumer’s enjoyment of arts or games.

IPP (A) and Previous HCP (B) are mutually exclusive. Previous HCP (B) does not explain consumer’s satisfaction with the functional problem solving.

The outer circle (C) in Figure 1 indicates the consumer behavior covered by new HCP. This perspective deals with not only consumer’s enjoyment of arts or games, but also various experiences of subjectively desirable emotions.

IPP (A), based on the assumption of problem solving, is subsumed in new HCP (C), when a consumer desires a problem solving. A consumer may experience a kind of pleasure through buying or using a product that can solve the problem, or through disposing a product that causes the problem.

Let us consider a typical IPP explanation of consumer behavior: when a consumer have a serious trouble with the personal computer and buy a new one, then the consumer may solve the problem. But at the same time, the consumer may experience pleasure such as satisfaction or relief, because the problem is solved.

In this example, we can explain the consumer behavior not only from IPP (A), but also from new HCP (C). In this case, we can even use a word such as “rational pleasure” within new HCP framework, because the consumer experiences pleasure attributed to the product’s usefulness.

In Figure 1, we can find that there exist the subjective desirable consumer behaviors that cannot be covered by either IPP (A) or previous HCP (B). Subjectively desirable consumer behaviors without either any problem recognition or any experience of enjoyment belong to this area. Such consumer behaviors are indicated as (c)−{(A) + (B)} in Figure 1.

For example, we cannot explain the consumer behavior such as buying a seemingly useless toy like a tiny doll of a cartoon from either IPP or previous HCP, because we cannot find either any problem recognition or any experience of enjoyment. However, through this consumer behavior, the consumer may experience mild amusement, which is included in the present expanded concept of pleasure. We can explain this type of consumer behavior from new HCP (C).

10This idea was inspired by Yasunaga Wakabayashi, mentioned in the first footnote.

| TABLE 1
| Summary of the Three Perspectives |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Information Processing Perspective (IPP) | Consumer’s problem solving is examined. “Problem” is mainly functional. |
| Previous Hedonic Consumption Perspective (Previous HCP) | Pleasure, experienced through consumer behavior, is examined. “Pleasure” mainly means enjoyment of arts or games. |
| New Hedonic Consumption Perspective (New HCP) | Pleasure, experienced through consumer behavior, is examined. “Pleasure” means not only enjoyment of arts or games, but also various experiences of subjectively desirable emotions including satisfaction with problem solving. |

**FIGURE 1**
The Relationship among the Three Perspectives

(A) IPP
(B) Previous HCP
(C) New HCP
Thus, new HCP (C) covers a wide variety of consumer behaviors that are not limited to appreciation of arts or watching sports games, as in previous HCP (B).11

CONCLUSION

This paper has proposed a new HCP based on Horiuchi’s argument (2001), and it has discussed the relationship of new HCP with IPP and previous HCP. This paper has asserted that new HCP is not opposed to IPP. Rather, the former includes the latter.

The possible contribution of the present argument to the empirical hedonic consumption studies is that it can expand the possibility of explanation of consumer behaviors from the point of pleasure. Explanation of a wide variety of consumer behaviors that could not be explained within previous HCP becomes possible within new HCP.

Comparing the explanation of the consumer’s problem solving within IPP and the explanation of it from the point of pleasure experience also becomes possible when we adopt new HCP. This comparison becomes possible, because IPP and new HCP are not mutually exclusive, but share the certain area in explaining consumer behaviors (Figure 1).

Furthermore, the present argument may serve to raise meaningful empirical research questions on hedonic consumption. For example, exploring the reason why we sometimes experience “rational pleasure,” such as joy experienced through buying a good-value-for-money product, is a possible research question based on the present argument.12

However, the present paper does not examine the problems brought by introducing new HCP into the explanation of consumer behaviors. For example, the present paper does not examine whether new HCP can encompass all IPP, as shown in Figure 1, or not. For example, a consumer who does not experience any kind of pleasure when the problem is solved might exist. In such a case, we would explain the consumer behavior from IPP, but we would not explain it from new HCP.

We can point out another example of the unresolved problem in this paper. This paper does not fully examine the relationship between the newly expanded concept of pleasure and the related concept of utility. The concept of utility is not the concept specific to IPP, when we adopt new HCP. Further efforts for clarifying “pleasure” and the related concepts such as “utility” seem to be important not only for hedonic consumption studies, but also consumer research in general.

REFERENCES


11The present argument does not mean that new HCP can cover all consumer behaviors. From new HCP, we cannot explain consumer behaviors without any desirable emotion such as compulsory purchases.

12This question is based on a question the author received at a past conference on social psychology, held in Japan, which is mentioned in Horiuchi (2001).
Unnecessary Purchases: Creating Artificial Buying Pressure Through the Use of Coupons
Rebecca Walker, University of Texas at Austin, USA
Rajagopal Raghunathan, University of Texas at Austin, USA
Suresh Ramanathan, University of Chicago, USA

ABSTRACT
Research has shown that consumers make decisions about whether to purchase unnecessary products (e.g., to stockpile) based on the availability of future discounts. Our research shows that consumers do not necessarily take this information into account. Instead, the artificial buying pressure induced by coupons forces consumers to superficially evaluate the utility of a discounted purchase as positive—without considering other decision factors (opportunity costs, amount of inventory at home etc.). Our studies show that discounted products are purchased regardless of a consumer’s need for the product or familiarity with the brand. Consistent with our predictions, artificial buying pressure effects vanish when consumers are fully informed of the consequences of purchasing the unnecessary product.
Bricks & Clicks & the Buying Impulse: An Investigation of Consumer Impulse Buying Behavior in an Online and a Traditional Retail Environment

Jacqueline J. Kacen, University of Houston, USA

ABSTRACT

A revolution is underway in the grocery industry. The Internet has brought new meaning to the term “browsing the aisles.” Impulse purchases are a mere click away. This study examines the impulse buying behavior of 34 consumers who alternately shopped online and at a traditional grocery store once a week for a period of seven weeks. The impact of promotional activities and consumers’ impulsive purchases of new products was also investigated. Overall, the results indicate that consumers shopping for their comestibles online made fewer impulse purchases than when shopping at a traditional store. Implications for online retailers are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

A veritable revolution is underway in the grocery industry. Grocers are moving their comestibles online and waiting for their pot of gold that the Internet promises. Headlines in The Wall Street Journal proclaim that “Tesco’s Internet Home-Delivery Unit Discovers Success All Across Britain” (Hall 2002). Marketing Week (2001) announced that “UK Grocery Retailers Lead the Way Online.” Datamonitor (2001) forecasts that the US online grocery sector will reach a market value of $26.8 billion by 2005.

Of course, the naysayers are less optimistic about the riches promised by the Internet. These killjoys are dancing on the graves of the Webvans and HomeRuns: “Traditional Grocers Feel Vindicated by Demise of Online Grocer Webvan” (Spurgeon 2001), “HomeRuns Is Latest Failure Among Online Grocery Companies,” (Wall Street Journal 2001), “What Killed Webvan Was Bricks Not Clicks” (Rufat-Latre 2001). Who is a grocer to believe? Do consumers really “prefer to walk the aisles” as PricewaterhouseCoopers’ (Clarke 2000) insists or will online grocers “succeed eventually” (Juptner 2000) as more consumers twig on to the ease and convenience of shopping for groceries online?

One important issue in the long-term success of online grocery retailing is whether online stores can stimulate the same level of consumer impulse buying behavior as traditional grocery stores. It is not a trivial question. Impulse buying in traditional stores is a major part of retail industry sales. Over 60% of purchases in some grocery categories are the result of impulse buying (POPIA 1995). Others have found impulse buying accounts for almost 80% of purchases in certain product categories (Abrahams 1997; Smith 1996). In a cross-national study (Abratt and Goodey 1990), impulse purchases accounted for 23% of non-food grocery store impulse buying in South Africa compared to 20% in the United Kingdom and 47% in the USA. Purchases of new products, it has been suggested, result more from impulse buying than from prior planning (Sflilgoj 1996). An estimated $4.2 billion in annual store volume is generated by impulse sales of things like candy and magazines (Mogelonsky 1998).

Promotional activities designed to capture consumers’ interest and attention, including packaging design, end-of-aisle displays, shelf placement, in-store product sampling, and other point-of-purchase marketing efforts are a major part of the grocery retailing process. By limiting shoppers to representational contact with their offerings, do online retailers miss out on a “whole world of no-will-power buying” (Brown 1999)? While Internet retailers do offer consumers greater accessibility to products, and a potentially larger selection of items, it is unclear whether these virtual shopping alternatives are able to actuate consumer impulse purchases without the benefit of three-dimensional, multi-sensory promotional activities. Does impulse buying behavior depend on consumers’ ability to “walk the aisles” of a store, interacting with the sights, sounds, and smells of the retail environment? Or, is the buying impulse so ubiquitous that the bountiful array of products available online is enough to stimulate a spontaneous purchase?

Several studies have looked at impulse buying behavior in a traditional retail environment, but to date, none have explored differences in impulse buying behavior when consumers are shopping in an online store. Since many of the studies of impulse buying examine grocery store purchasing behavior, this study compares impulsive consumer buying behavior in an online grocery store with impulse buying behavior in a traditional bricks-and-mortar grocery store in order to provide marketers with a better understanding of the retail environment factors that influence consumer impulse purchasing behavior.

IMPULSE BUYING DEFINED

Impulsive buying behavior is a common phenomenon among consumers. Impulse purchasing behavior occurs “when a consumer experiences a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately” (Rook 1987, p. 191). It is unexpected and characterized by intense feelings and the need for action, i.e., purchase or possession of the object. It tends to be spontaneous and without reflection. Impulse buying involves no prior intentions to buy the product or fulfill a specific buying task (Beatty and Ferrell 1998). Unplanned “reminder” purchases, e.g., items out-of-stock at home, are not true impulse purchases. For this study, an impulse purchase is defined as one in which the decision to purchase is made spontaneously in the store and there is no previously recognized general need for the item, consistent with what Kollat and Willett (1967) refer to as a “pure impulse purchase” in their typology of impulse purchasing behavior.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Most of the studies of consumer impulse buying are linked to in-store buying environments, where shoppers are exposed to a variety of physical stimuli. Rook (1987, p. 193) indicates that the sudden urge to buy something is “likely to be triggered by a visual confrontation with a product or by some promotion stimulus.” Phillips and Bradshaw (1993) argue that consumers’ active interaction with the retail environment is an important component in impulse purchase decisions. Visual exposure to products (Dholakia 1999, Hoch and Loewenstein 1991) and in-store browsing (Beatty and Ferrell 1998) stimulate the impulse buying urge among consumers. In-store stimuli such as shelf signage, price, special displays, and other point-of-sale material have been found to have a significant influence on impulse purchasing behavior (Abratt and Goodey 1990, Cobb and Hoyer 1986, Kollat and Willett 1969, McGoldrick 1982, McGoldrick, Betts and Keeling 1999, Prasad 1975).

Given that attention-getting three-dimensional displays in the store environment are effective in prompting impulse purchases, their absence in an online retail environment is likely to decrease...
impulsive buying behavior. Degeratru, Rangaswamy, and Wu (2000) looked at consumer choice behavior in online and traditional grocery stores and found that sensory attributes (visual cues such as package size) had less influence on consumer choice behavior in an online store compared to a traditional grocery store.

The delay between purchase and possession of the impulse item is another possible impediment to consumers’ impulse buying urges when shopping online. Informants in Rook’s (1987) study of impulse buying described feelings of having to possess or purchase something instantly. Similarly, Bayley and Nancarrow’s (1998) informants described feeling a sense of buying urgency to make the impulse purchase. The authors state that, “in the case of mail-order, catalogue purchasing and ‘shopping channels,’ the merely representational contact with the product and the time lapse between buying and receiving does threaten to disrupt the usual process of the impulse purchase.” (Bayley and Nancarrow 1998, p. 107). The absence of three-dimensional, multi-sensory stimuli in an online retailing environment and the lapse in time between purchase and possession is hypothesized to negatively impact consumer impulsive buying behavior, reducing the total number of impulse purchases made from an online grocer compared to a traditional grocer.

H1: When buying groceries, consumers will make fewer impulse purchases from an online grocery store than from a traditional grocery store.

While online retailers are limited in the amount and forms of sensory stimuli they are able to present to consumers, these retailers can, and do, use sales promotions and other marketing promotions (e.g., coupons, rebates) similar to traditional retailers. In a study of consumer supermarket purchase decisions, Burke and his colleagues (1992) found that study participants were more sensitive to in-store price promotions in a computer-simulated store than they were in an actual grocery store, selecting more items on sale in the computer-simulated store. However, Degeratru et al.’s (2000) comparison of the choices of online shoppers and shoppers at a traditional grocery store found that the combined effects of price and promotion were stronger in traditional stores than in an online store. Donthu and Garcia’s (1999) study of Internet shoppers and Raijas and Tuunanen’s (2001) study of online grocery shoppers in Finland also found less price sensitivity among online shoppers compared to non-Internet shoppers.

While online shoppers appear to be less price sensitive than traditional store shoppers, which may result in fewer purchases of sale items, these findings may be due to income differences in the sample of consumers used in the studies. In the Degeratru et al. (2000), Donthu and Garcia (1999), and Raijas and Tuunanen (2001) studies, the comparison of online and “off-line” buyer behavior is based on separate, independent samples of consumers rather than matched samples. In each of these studies, the online shoppers had higher incomes than traditional store shoppers.

In the impulse buying literature, the effect of price is somewhat mixed. A study by McGoldrick (1982) of pharmacy customers in a traditional store found that price did have an influence on consumers’ impulsive buying behavior, but price factors were not “the main reason” for the purchases (p. 30); rather, in-store advertisements and displays seemed to have the greatest relative importance. Similarly, Abratt and Goodey (1990) found that the most important influence on consumer grocery impulse purchases were shelf displays, price, and special displays respectively. In another study, impulse buyers were not particularly price sensitive nor did they shop for deals in their local grocery store (Cobb and Hoyer 1986). Narasimhan, Neslin, and Sen (1996) found a positive, but non-statistically significant relationship between featured promo-

tional price cuts and impulse buying among grocery store shoppers. Overall, the results of impulse studies indicate that impulse buyers respond more to visual displays and other attention-getting stimuli in a traditional retail environment than to special prices.

Although the findings from the impulse buying literature indicate that price is not a major factor influencing impulse purchase decisions in traditional retail stores, it is likely that an online retail environment where in-store displays and other three-dimensional stimuli are limited may prompt more particular focus on price promotions. In this multi-sensory stimuli-poor environment, price promotions will be more prominent and therefore more likely to prompt consumers’ impulse buying behavior (e.g., Reibstein [2002] found that online shoppers cited price as the most important factor in attracting them to an online store). Consistent with the Burke et al. (1992) study where participants were more sensitive to in-store price promotions in a computer-simulated store than they were in an actual grocery store, it is hypothesized that consumers will make more impulse purchases of sale items from an online grocery store compared to a traditional grocery store.

H2: When items are on sale, consumers will make more impulse purchases of sale items from an online grocery store than from a traditional grocery store.

Research suggests that online buyers may be more innovative and risk-taking (Bellman et al. 1999, Donthu and Garcia 1999, Kwak, Fox and Zinkhan 2002) compared to the general population of non-Internet buyers. But does shopping in an online grocery store encourage impulsive product trial as much as shopping in a traditional grocery store where in-store advertising and product displays, as well as in-store sampling and other promotional activities are used to encourage consumers to try, and buy, grocery products they otherwise might not consider (see Abratt and Goodey 1990, Cobb and Hoyer 1986, Kollat and Willett 1969, McGoldrick 1982, McGoldrick, Betts and Keeling 1999, Prasad 1975)?

In the Burke et al. study (1995) of consumer choice decisions in virtual and traditional store environments, the authors argued that consumers would be less likely to experience the desire for novelty or variety in the simulated store environment. As expected, their study participants engaged in more routinized behavior in the computer-simulated store, including fewer brands in their choice set, and switching brands less frequently, compared to their behavior in a traditional grocery store. Similarly, in a study of grocery shoppers in Finland (Raijas and Tuunanen 2001) online grocery shoppers (those who used an online grocery store at least once a month) were less likely to try something new than non-users (those who experimented with online grocery shopping but were not regular users of the service). Overall, the research suggests that an online retail environment discourages shoppers from trying new products.

The impulse literature is silent on the issue of new product trial and consumer impulse buying behavior. Certainly, impulse purchases of never-before-tried products occur. However, to date, none of the impulse studies have focused on reporting first-time trial impulse purchases. Consistent with the findings from the online grocery buying studies by Burke et al. (1992) and Raijas and Tuunanen (2001), it is hypothesized that consumers will make fewer first-time trial impulse purchases when shopping in an online grocery store compared to when they are shopping in a traditional grocery store.

H3: When buying groceries, consumers will make fewer first-time trial impulse purchases from an online grocery store than from a traditional grocery store.
In sum, it is expected that the online retail environment will reduce the amount of consumer impulse buying that occurs, and will curtail impulse purchases of never-before-tried products compared to a traditional grocery store. However, due to the more limited amount of visual stimuli that is present in the online store, consumers are expected to make more impulse purchases of sale items from the online retailer compared to the traditional grocery store.

METHOD

In Spring 2001, 35 MBA students from a large Midwestern University in the United States were recruited as part of a class project to purchase their groceries from a traditional grocery store and an online grocer on alternating weeks for a period of seven weeks. Each week, students turned in a grocery report that included information about their shopping trip—where they had purchased their groceries, the time spent traveling to the store (or the website), the time spent selecting items and paying for the groceries, and the total amount of money spent. In addition, panel participants indicated for each item purchased whether it was a planned, unplanned reminder, impulse item, sale item, first-time trial, and whether a coupon was used. Students were required to attach a grocery receipt to their reports (as an independent check on their reported information), and they were asked to indicate whether there were any items they wanted to purchase but did not. They were free to include any additional comments about their shopping experience. Before beginning the project, students filled out a questionnaire that contained items about their grocery buying habits, as well as demographic questions.

A total of 34 students completed the project. Reports for six weekly grocery shopping trips (three online and three in traditional stores) were obtained.1 Half (50%) of the participants were male, 50% were female. The average age of participants was 29 years old (range: 23 to 50 years). The majority (80%) were single and had incomes less than $50,000 (73%). Table 1 summarizes the background characteristics of the study participants.

RESULTS

Impulsive Buying Behavior

Participants purchased three times as many items on impulse from their local grocery store compared to the online grocery store. Overall, 75% of the total number of impulse purchases in this study were made in a traditional retail store (see Table 2). Across the six buying occasions, on average, significantly fewer impulse items were purchased on online (M=2.4) compared to the number of impulse items purchased from traditional grocery stores (M=6.5; t(33)=4.90, p<.001). Hypothesis 1 is supported.

Consistent with Degeratu et al. (2000), the lack of multi-sensory attributes available in an online grocery store appears to have reduced participants’ impulsive buying behavior in this study. Given that a significant number of consumers’ purchases from a traditional grocery store are impulsive (POPAI 1995), this reduction in the amount of impulse buying in an online environment has serious negative implications for overall sales and long-term profits for online retailers.

Sales Promotions

One hundred and eighteen impulse purchases were made of items that were on sale or at a special promotional price, representing 37% of the total number of impulse purchases made. Participants were more likely to make an impulse purchase of a sale item when shopping online compared to shopping at a traditional grocery store ($^2 (1)=13.80, n=318, p<.001), supporting hypothesis 2 (see Table 3). On average, participants made more purchases of impulse items on sale when shopping online (M=0.54) compared to shopping at a traditional grocery store (M=0.31; t(316)=3.78, p<.001), supporting hypothesis 2 (see Table 3).

Consistent with the Burke et al. (1992) study, consumers appeared to be more attracted by promotional prices when shopping.

1A “trial” online shopping report, containing the data from students’ first-time use of the online grocery website, was also completed by all students to ensure a baseline familiarity with the online grocery website. The data from that trial are not included in the results here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1</th>
<th>Characteristics of the Study Participants (N=34)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not married</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income less than $25,000</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000–$49,999</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,00 and above</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in an online grocery store compared to shopping in a traditional grocery store. Given that consumers made fewer impulse purchases overall when shopping online, the fact that they are more responsive to online price promotions points to one method by which retailers can encourage more impulse buying among online shoppers.

Consumer Product Trial

Consumers’ impulse purchases of products that represented a first-time trial of the item was hypothesized to be reduced in an online retailing environment compared to a traditional grocery store. Across all shopping occasions, 11% (n=36) of the products participants purchased on impulse were items the impulse buyer was trying for the first time. However, there was no significant difference in the likelihood of an impulsive purchase of a new product whether participants were shopping online or at a traditional store (χ² (1)=1.32, n=318, p=ns). Hypothesis 3 is not supported (see Table 4). On average, there was no statistically significant difference in the number of impulse purchases of first-time trial products when buyers shopped online (M=0.15) compared to when they shopped at a traditional grocery store (M=0.10; t(316)=-1.14, p=ns).

While the majority (89%) of participants’ impulse purchases were familiar repeat-purchase products, a slightly higher proportion of shoppers’ impulsive new product-trial purchases were from the online store compared to a traditional store, suggesting that online stores are able to encourage consumers to try new products despite their more limited visual and promotional capabilities. Apparently, the lack of multi-sensory attributes available online did not significantly reduce participants’ willingness to try a new product compared to when they were shopping at a traditional grocery store. Of course, online retailers may be able to promote awareness and trial of new products by featuring them more prominently on the website, and by offering sales incentives (coupons and sale prices). One-third (4 out of 12) of the online first-time trial impulse purchases involved a coupon whereas only 4% (1 out of 24) of the traditional store first-time trial impulse purchases involved a coupon. Future research should investigate the ability of website promotions to encourage consumers to try new products.

TABLE 2
Online and Local Store Impulse Purchases By Product Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product category</th>
<th>% Traditional Store</th>
<th>% Online Store</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perishable (produce, bakery, dairy, meat/fish, prepared foods)</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonperishable (canned goods, dry staples)</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverages (soda, juice, water, beer, wine)</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks (crackers, crisps, candy)</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frozen foods</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household (cleaners, health &amp; beauty, other)</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of impulse items</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 3
Impulse Items Purchased on Sale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Traditional Store</th>
<th>% Online Store</th>
<th>Total n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On sale</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not on sale</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION

In this study, the impulse purchasing behavior of consumers was different when they shopped for groceries from an online grocer compared to their shopping behavior at their local grocery store. Participants significantly reduced their impulse buying when shopping online, a finding that suggests impulse buying is critically linked, in some way, to the multi-sensory stimuli available in traditional retail environments, consistent with the prior studies of impulse buying (e.g., Bayley and Nancorow 1998, Dholakia 1999, Phillips and Bradshaw 1993, Rook 1987). Impulse buying behavior appears to require a greater degree of sensory stimulation than is
The ability to store environment had a positive influence on consumer impulse store. Beatty and Ferrell (1998) found that browsing in a traditional industry remains viable for the local bricks-and-mortar grocery characteristics in the study of online impulsive buying behavior.

Future research also should investigate impulse buying behavior in different types of online retail environments. For example, does impulse buying of clothing items occur to the same extent from online clothiers that it does in traditional stores? Are certain categories of products susceptible to impulse buying urges online?

What about consumers’ psychographic characteristics (e.g., sensation seeking, trait impulsiveness)? Do these consumer traits moderate online impulsive buying behavior to the same extent that they moderate impulsive buying behavior in traditional retail environments? Future studies might want to incorporate consumer characteristics in the study of online impulsive buying behavior.

In sum, the results of this study suggest that the grocery industry remains viable for the local bricks-and-mortar grocery store. Beatty and Ferrell (1998) found that browsing in a traditional store environment had a positive influence on consumer impulse buying. The ability to “just look around” must contribute to impulse buying behavior. As long as impulse purchases are prompted by the physical presence of an item, and the multi-sensory stimuli provided by a traditional store is not matched by an online store, the local grocer will continue to thrive.

### REFERENCES


### TABLE 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Traditional Store</th>
<th>% Online Store</th>
<th>Total n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-time trial</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat purchase</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Prasad, V. Kanti (1975), “Unplanned Buying in Two Retail Settings,” *Journal of Retailing*, 51 (Fall), 3-12.


Grocery Shopping on a Low Income: How do People Cope?
Sally Hibbert, Nottingham University, UK
Maria Piacentini, Lancaster University, UK

ABSTRACT
The paper explores the potential contribution of theories of coping to understanding how impoverished consumers respond to exchange restrictions in the marketplace. Literature on grocery shopping behaviour is examined within this theoretical framework and an argument set forth that comprehensive understanding of consumer responses to exchange restrictions can be achieved by more detailed attention to problem-solving and emotion-focused coping strategies and the mediating appraisal processes. The article is a first step towards a psychological model of disadvantaged consumer coping that will compliment existing work on macro-social influences.

INTRODUCTION
In the UK it is estimated that between 13 and 14 million people live in poverty and that a third of children are born into poverty. While there are many issues associated with poverty, of particular interest to consumer behaviour researchers is the restrictions that it imposes on accessibility of consumer goods and services (Alwitt and Donley, 1996). It is well documented that people on restricted incomes experience limitations in accessing housing, transportation, utilities, financial services, health and educational services, work and leisure facilities, and good quality foodstuffs (see Lee and Murie, 1999 for a review). In this paper, we focus specifically on problems surrounding access to quality foodstuffs, although many of the issues discussed herein are applicable to other sectors in which low-income consumers experience restricted access.

Environmental and structural factors play an important role in limiting physical and financial access to goods and services. With respect to grocery shopping, changes in the retail structures and competition over the last two decades have led to a dramatic decline in small and local food stores. This trend has exacerbated problems of retail access, in rural and deprived urban contexts (Beaumont et al., 1995). Yet those who experience exchange restrictions vary considerably in their response to these circumstances. Indeed, studies of shopping behaviour have documented that consumers living in deprived areas have quite heterogenous experiences of disadvantage and the accompanying stresses and strains (Piacentini et al., 2001; Williams and Hubbard, 2001).

In this paper, we take a closer look at experiences of and responses to exchange restrictions encountered by low-income consumers in relation to grocery shopping. Adopting the conceptual framework of coping behaviour (Lazarus, 1991; Carver et al., 1989) we identify a range of shopping-related activities that cause stress for low-income consumers and explore their coping responses. The paper starts with a brief summary of Lazarus’s (1991) conceptualisation of coping followed by a review of literature on consumer coping. It then proceeds to consider research on disadvantaged consumers and shopping behaviour that offers insights into aspects of coping in the context of impoverished consumers’ grocery shopping.

CONSUMER COPING
Prominent authors that have provided the foundations for research on coping behaviour include Lazarus (1991), Lazarus and Folkman (1984), Carver et al. (1989) and Carver and Scheier (1994). Lazarus (1991) defines coping to “consist of cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and internal demands (and conflicts between them) that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (p. 112). Coping is closely linked to emotional processes. Emotions and the desire to change feeling states experienced may stimulate coping responses. Accordingly, coping affects subsequent appraisals and is therefore an antecedent of the resulting emotions (Carver and Scheier, 1990).

Lazarus (1991) argues that emotions result from two types of appraisal: primary appraisal in which a person evaluates whether the situation is relevant to his or her goals and secondary appraisal, which involves an assessment of the individual’s ability to confront the situation given personal resources available. In other words, secondary appraisal is the prospect that the person can adequately cope with the situation. Two types of coping are distinguished: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping involves taking action that will resolve a problem and thus dissipate the negative emotions. In reality, the emotional distress is not always dispelled and in some circumstances it actually intensifies. In contrast, emotion-focused coping involves cognitive activity rather than action-based solutions. Psychological distancing (denial) and avoidance both seek to deal with the emotional distress by changing the meaning of an emotional encounter. There is some overlap between appraisal and emotion-focused coping, as both the appraisal and the coping response influence the emotional meaning of the event. Lazarus (1991) notes that emotional coping is indeed an appraisal in its own right although it is self-generated and often ego-defensive.

Consumer behaviour researchers have turned their attentions to coping relatively recently (most notably in the later 1990s) and there have been only a few studies of consumer coping. Given that stress and coping responses are often stimulated when there is conflict between the demands that people face, researchers have identified a number of aspects of consumption that create conflict. Otnes et al. (1997) examine consumer ambivalence (experienced during wedding planning). Mick and Fournier (1998) concentrate on the paradoxes of technology (e.g. efficiency/inefficiency, fulfills/creates needs) and Luce (1998) focuses on the conflict experienced in making difficult trade-offs during the decision process.

Otnes et al. (1997) and Mick and Fournier (1998) conducted qualitative research to identify antecedents of conflict/ambivalence and anxiety/stress in their respective research contexts and distinguish consumer coping responses (before, during and after consumption). Sujan et al. (1999) also examined coping through qualitative research but they regarded it within a more general context. They focused on how levels of stress and self-efficacy relate to coping responses, with a view to distinguishing between more and less efficacious consumers. Stress commonly related to choice and in-store ambience and coping behaviour was determined by interactions between stress and self-efficacy. For example, in high choice stress situations both problem solving (planning, prioritising, searching for and processing information) and deferral strategies are used. The specific problem solving strategies adopted varied with perceptions of self-efficacy such that those with high perceived self-efficacy were more prone to plan compared to those whose perceived self-efficacy was low but less likely to search for and process information.

Nyer (1997) and Luce (1998) conducted a series of experiments to test the relationships between cognitive appraisal, emotions and behaviour as represented in theories of coping. Nyer
DISADVANTAGED CONSUMERS

Early work of Caplovitz (1967), who claimed that “The Poor Pay More”, provides the foundation for much of the research into disadvantaged consumers. Since, prominent contributions to our understanding of impoverished consumers have been made by Andreasen (1975), Hill and colleagues (e.g. Hill and Stamey, 1990; Hill and Somin, 1996; Hill and Macan, 1996), Alvitt and Donley (1996) and Crockett (2001) (see Darley and Johnson, 1985 and Andreasen, 1993, for reviews). In the UK, disadvantaged consumers have attracted the attention of consumer researchers over the last decade but by far the greatest interest has been in relation to retailing (e.g. Bromley and Thomas, 1995; Hare et al., 1996; Williams and Windebank, 2000; Williams and Hubbard, 2001; Piacentini et al., 2001; Wrigley et al., 2002).

Although much research into disadvantaged groups implicitly considers coping behaviour, rarely have researchers explicitly incorporated a conceptualisation of coping into their study. The extant literature clearly identifies the structural restrictions on exchange, which include financial, physical and psychological access (Lumpkin et al., 1985; Leather, 1992; Bromley and Thomas, 1995), and behavioural responses to such restrictions. Despite wide acknowledgement that low-income consumers’ experiences of disadvantage are heterogeneous (e.g. Piacentini et al., 2001; Williams and Hubbard, 2001), the absence of an explicit conceptual context has resulted in a lack of clarity in the differentiation of behavioural responses to exchange restrictions. Moreover, there has been limited consideration of intervening variables in the exchange restriction–coping behaviour relationship.

Recent literature in which coping behaviour among impoverished consumers is explicitly recognised includes Hill and Stephens (1997) and Crockett (2001). In both cases coping is conceptualised as a response to the macro-social causes of poverty. For example, Hill and Stephens (1997) advanced a model of impoverished consumer behaviour that suggests a causal relationship between exchange restrictions, consequences (e.g. isolation, loss of control) and coping strategies. Hill and Stephens (1997) suggested that coping involves problem-focused strategies, such as shopping with friends, ‘subbing’ each other, generating illicit income and exploiting the environment (e.g. collecting discarded items to sell on for recycling) and emotion-focused strategies such as distancing (‘I’m not like those….’), fantasising and future planning. Similarly, Crockett (2001) reports a range of response strategies, although he differentiates between ‘resistance’ and ‘coping’ strategies. Resistance aims to alleviate structural problems associated with disadvantage (e.g. out-shopping for groceries to broaden the range of quality foods available) and coping strategies are designed to make disadvantage ‘less impactful’ (e.g. checking expiry dates on goods purchased at a neighbourhood store to ensure a minimum quality level is achieved despite being unable to alleviate the structural constraints) (p156).

These studies provide a useful starting point for considering the coping behaviour of disadvantaged consumers. However, there remains a substantial gap in the literature with respect to the psychological processes that explain heterogeneity in consumer response to disadvantage. Yet understanding of these factors is essential to gain appreciation of why some consumers cope reasonably well while others suffer severe consequences from living under such restrictions.

In the following section we review literature on disadvantaged consumers within the framework of the coping concept with a view to build more detailed understanding of differences between consumers who have to cope with exchange restrictions. In developing this discussion we take grocery shopping as a focus. It is widely acknowledged that poverty impacts upon diet and health (Townsend, 1979; Blaylock, 1991; Dobson et al., 1994; Hill, 1996; Dowler, 1998). Poor health has such a profound impact of the lives of the poor, and consequences for public services beside, that the issues has been a prime focus of concern in policy circles (e.g. Department of Health, 1996; 1999). Besides proposing health care interventions, policy documents in the UK have also devoted substantial attention to distribution systems for groceries (Wrigley et al., 2002). In particular, concern has been expressed about low-income consumers’ access to quality foodstuffs and lack of skills such as food preparation. Moreover, because there is a reasonable body of research into the grocery shopping behaviour of disadvantaged groups it is possible to draw on extant research to develop plausible research propositions.

STRESS AND SELF EFFICACY

The model of coping advanced by Lazarus (1991) highlights that coping behaviour varied depending on the level of stress experienced in relation to a consumption-related task and the efficacy of the consumer in dealing with that stress. These two aspects of coping related to a person’s primary and secondary appraisal of the situation.

Primary Appraisal

Primary appraisal is the evaluation of the behaviour in terms of the well being it will bring the individual. It is at this stage that the individual considers the impact of the behaviour in terms of their goals. The three main aspects of the primary appraisal in relation to goals: goal relevance, goal congruence and goal content (Luce et al 2002:62). Goal relevance is the assessment of the relevance of the behaviour to a person’s goals, that is, their level of involvement. Goal congruence refers to the assessment of whether the behaviour is likely to involve positive or negative outcomes, and hence whether positive or negative emotions will result. Finally, goal content involves the assessment of the particular goals at stake, influencing the exact form of the emotional experience. Within the goal-directed frameworks proposed by Bagozzi & Dholakia (1999), the individual is guided in their behaviour by life goals and themes, life projects and current concerns. The consumer purposefully determines these goals, giving consideration to the relation between goals and considering the implications of satisfying one goal for the achievement of another. Another aspect of primary appraisal that will influence emotional processes is conflict among goals and the competition for resources. Goal theorists (e.g. Heckhausen, 1991) have emphasised that people need to prioritise goals in order that resources can be devoted to those that are most pressing. This has significant consequences for subsequent behaviour.
Grocery shopping is part of the work-role of the homemaker (Campbell, 1997) and it is generally regarded as an essential chore that people just want to get through as quickly as possible (Mintel, 1986). Yet, many people who are not in employment, such as senior citizens and those out of work, regard grocery shopping as an opportunity for social interaction, an activity to “get them out of the house” and as a means for satisfying hedonic goals (Piacentini et al., 2001). Primary appraisal of goal relevance for grocery shopping activities is likely to depend on the subjective relevance of food and nutrition and the role of homemaker to an individual, as well as other values that are served through grocery shopping (e.g. environmentalism, community spirit). Yet, attention should also be paid to salience of social and hedonic needs fulfilled through grocery shopping.

Secondary appraisal

Secondary appraisal involves an assessment of the individual’s ability to confront the situation given personal resources available. Evaluations related to the context, possible courses of action, the person’s coping potential and the likely consequences of engaging in the coping activity (Luce et al., 2002; Nyer, 1997). The individual assesses their own beliefs about whether or not they can improve their situation, as well as the reasons as to why they face this situation, similar to the concept of attribution described by Nyer (1997).

In the literature on low-income consumers it is well documented that grocery shopping situations present a number of challenges. Indeed, the most prominent theme in this body of research is that disadvantaged consumers, or at least some sub-segment therein, face financial, physical and social restrictions. Financial access is a fundamental cause of constraint. Low wages, insecure and unstable employment, inadequate state benefit, limited access to credit and other financial services and the high proportion of income spent on housing and utilities (Caplovitz, 1967; Hill and Macan, 1996, Hill and Stephens, 1997; Lee and Murie, 1999) leave millions of people struggling to meet basic dietary requirements. This situation has been exacerbated by developments in the marketplace, which follow lifestyle trends for mainstream consumers (Leather, 1992). In Western economies this tends to inflate prices for even basic goods and services and results in limited choice for people of low incomes.

Physical access to stores is another important restriction and its effects have been widely reported (e.g. Andreassen, 1975; Lumpkin et al., 1985; Bromley and Thomas, 1995; Kaufman, 1995; Hare et al., 1996; Crockett, 2001; Williams and Hubbard, 2001; Piacentini et al., 2001). Retail developments since the 1980s have resulted in a highly concentrated grocery sector such that UK consumers now purchase more than 80% of foodstuffs from large supermarkets that favour out-of-town retailing and edge-of-town/off-centre developments. As a result, there has been a decline in town centres and small, independent retailers face ever-greater competitive pressures (Smith and Sparks, 1997). Leather (1992) argued that this has exacerbated the position of disadvantaged consumers, especially low income groups that are often restricted in their mobility due to carlessness and concern has been expressed about consumers becoming stranded in “food deserts” (Lang and Carafera, 1998). In the 1990s, however, regulation, alternative forms of retail competition and government funding of social projects in deprived areas have all sought to better serve the needs of disadvantaged groups. (Wrigley, 1998; Dept. of the Environment, 1993; 1996; Cummins and Macintyre, 1999).

Privatisation of public transport and particularly bus services has also affected physical access to grocery stores for UK consumers. Carless households in rural communities have been most hard hit by this development. In contrast, for many living in deprived urban neighbourhoods public transport has improved because these communities offer a large market and there is competition among service providers. However, restrictions are still felt in relation to grocery shopping; bus routes determine the retail sites that can be accessed and the prospect of carrying heavy groceries to and from bus stops can be daunting. Indeed, for some it is near impossible when age, health problems or the fact that they also have small children in tow impairs physical mobility.

Finally, social factors are also suggested to play a role in constraining consumer shopping activity. There is evidence that disadvantaged consumers are turned off certain retail sites due to problems of interacting with particular groups of people (e.g. sales assistants, security guards, other shoppers) and feelings of “otherness” experienced when they sense that they do not “fit in” (Williams and Hubbard, 2001).

Coping Potential

An individual’s evaluation of his or her coping potential in face of these restrictions is suggested to relate to self-efficacy. While self-efficacy has been demonstrated to be a key determinant of consumer coping, motivation researchers (e.g. Cunningham, 1988; Thayer, 1989; Morris, 1992) have suggested that other ‘personal resources’—notably physical and social resources—also play an important role in coping. Research on disadvantaged consumers suggests that there is greater likelihood of each of these types of personal resource being scarcer than is typical for consumers in the mainstream of society. Moreover, there are interactions between types of resources such that the lack of one is exacerbated when it coincides with the lack of other resources.

Feelings of self-efficacy are a product of self-awareness, self-evaluation and memory (Bandura, 1986). They reflect an individual’s beliefs about how well s/he can employ her/his skills to achieve the behaviour, how much effort this will involve and how much time s/he is willing to commit to achieving this goal (Benjamin and Stewart, 1989). Low self-efficacy is often found amongst individuals living in disadvantaged communities (alongside a lower need for achievement, lower expectations of success, lower self-esteem, negative self concept and external locus of control [Allen, 1970, Furnham and Lewis, 1986]), and it is conceived as a relatively permanent attribute of individuals (Rosenbaum et al (2002:71). There are indications of low self-efficacy with respect to grocery shopping; some low-income consumers have suggested modern retail environments to be stressful due to size and layout (Wrigley et al., 2002), which challenge their experience. In contrast, others have a strong sense of control and perceptions of self-efficacy are high. One such example is reported by Piacentini et al. (2001):

“Some of the things, I could shop for at Newvale you know, I’m very thrifty, I could tell you the price of a pound of onions in that shop and a pound of onions in that shop, they are a penny dearer so we’d go in that one, that’s just me, I’ve always lived on a budget so I’ve always shopped on a budget”

Self-efficacy is unlikely to fluctuate to any great magnitude but it can be influenced to a degree by recent successes and failures.

Physical energy varies with temporary factors such as sugar ingestion, physical exercise and the use of drugs, for example caffeine, or with more stable influences such as age, health and metabolic rate (Morris, 1992). Physical resources are more likely to be restricted for low-income consumers in that temporary and more stable features of their lives are consistent with low physical energy
(e.g. poor nutrition, long-term illness). Awareness of physical resources appears to affect behaviour in that anxieties are aroused by crowding and security, particularly among older consumers, many of whom avoid city centres at the weekend when they are very congested and there are noisy and sometimes aggressive youths around (Williams and Hubbard, 2001). Thayer (1989)’s view of the role of biological factors was that there is conscious awareness of the state of the whole body at any point in time. He suggests that moods and emotions serve as the signal systems of resources and depletions, providing a continuing indication of readiness for action or the need for rest and recuperation, and possibly the need to avoid the situation altogether.

Finally, the role of social resources is recognised to influence goal-directed behaviour. Since humans are social beings they often depend on others to help them to achieve goals, and the availability of the help of others may also be a varying resource, again as a temporary or more permanent feature. The work of both Hill and Stephens (1997) and Crockett (2001), reported earlier, provide evidence of low-income consumers drawing on social report. Piacentini et al. (2001) also found that support from family, friends and neighbours makes a dramatic difference to how people cope in the face of restricted grocery shopping access.

Primary appraisal coupled with the perceived balance between situational demands and available resources results in higher or lower levels of stress. As grocery shopping is undertaken on a regular basis there are opportunities for trial and error in coping strategies and reappraisal. Over time, there is scope for people to improve their coping strategies and thus feel more content with their ability to cope. By association, the level of stress linked to grocery shopping activity might be expected to be low. However, where resources are highly restricted (e.g. time, money, mobility) even well rehearsed coping strategies often turn out to be inadequate. For example, Dobson et al (1994) demonstrated that while families that participated in their study had enough to eat there was evidence of self-denial, family stress and deterioration in diet and eating habits. Therefore, there are likely to be examples of consumers who experience low and high levels of stress in relation to grocery shopping.

Coping responses

Within the literature there are multiple examples of problem-solving strategies adopted by low-income consumers confronting each aspect of the grocery shopping event. Among them are illustrations of the range of problem solving approaches identified by Sujan et al. (1998) - planning, prioritising, searching for and processing information, exploiting social resources as well as simplifying strategies. Moreover, as these authors demonstrate, there are various combinations of strategies employed to address different aspects of shopping activity (choice of retail site and store, travel, product choice and managing interaction with social and physical retail environment). There is extensive evidence of simplifying strategies being employed in the choice of retail site. Researchers have documented that lower income and carless families are heavily reliant on local stores (Bromley and Thomas, 1995; Andreasen, 1975) and traditional (and often declining) retail sites such as independent stores, district centre and city centre (Williams and Hubbard, 2001). In some cases there is evidence of greater planning that involves accessing other resources such as social support. For example, higher levels of out-shopping are reported where a person’s core social network is strong (Crockett, 2001; Piacentini et al., 2001; Wrigley et al., 2002). Yet, simplifying strategies cannot be categorically regarded as inferior. It has also been found that interpersonal interactions are often greater in the local shopping environment (Choe et al., 1997), and this is an important aspect of the shopping experience for the low-income consumer (Hibbert et al., 2002). Thus, use of the local shopping area may in fact be a coping strategy directed towards satisfying social goals. With respect to store and product choice it has been reported that some low-income consumers select retail outlets that offer core lines at lower prices and to shop around quite extensively to acquire additional products that they require at reasonable prices (Piacentini et al., 2001). Further, some impoverished consumers shop together as a risk reduction strategy (Harris et al., 2000) and to alleviate some of the financial pressures (for example in sharing transport costs, share special deals). Shopping with friends can also help to reduce the stress of social experiences during the retail encounter.

There is also evidence of what appear to be emotional strategies, particularly distancing/denial. For instance many express that they are quite content with the retail environments in which they shop and their shopping habits (Williams and Hubbard, 2001; Piacentini et al., 2001) despite the fact that these sites are not regarded to provide attractive retail environment to most consumers. The strategy of overall avoidance of grocery shopping is likely to be rare because people have to eat. Choosing to eat out is a limited option for low-income consumers because of the cost, but meals can be provided through fast-food/takeouts and snacks (e.g. crisps and chocolate). Where restrictions are severe, as is the case for housebound elderly people, services such as meals-on-wheels may be sought. Avoidance strategies are more prominent for some aspects of shopping activity. For instance, people avoid social environments where they experience discomfort in interacting with sales people, security etc. (Williams and Hubbard, 2001).

As has been found in prior research into consumer coping (e.g. Luce, 1998; Mick and Fournier, 1998) some strategies serve both problem-solving and emotional ends. Shopping at discount retailers enables people to save money on core product lines but also avoids shopping in stores selling a range and quality of goods that are beyond their means, present money-wasting opportunities (Barratt, 1997) and heighten the risk of encountering embarrassing situations at checkouts (Wrigley et al., 2002).

Although a range of coping behaviours are documented in the literature on disadvantaged consumers’ grocery shopping, they are not clearly associated with the different aspects of the grocery shopping task. Moreover, there remains a lack of clarity in explanations of the differences among individual responses, which we feel can be illuminated by reference to theories of coping.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has elaborated on the concept of consumer coping with a view to providing more detailed insights into the way in which disadvantaged consumers cope with exchange restrictions. Relation of the coping concept to the context of impoverished consumers’ grocery shopping behaviour is a first move towards developing understanding of this issue with closer attention to psychological processes that mediate behavioural responses to restrictions on exchange imposed by structural conditions.

On the basis of foregoing discussion, qualitative interviews are being undertaken in order to validate some of the ideas advanced and to start developing research propositions and building robust theory in this area. Specifically we hope to identify a more comprehensive range of problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies that are adopted to confront the four key aspects of grocery shopping activity. Subsequently, we will look to the qualitative data to develop research propositions that identify relationships between primary and secondary appraisal processes, stress/emotions and coping responses.
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**The Construction of Post-Consumption Comparison Standards**

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**ABSTRACT**

This article argues that post-consumption comparison standards for the evaluation of service experiences are often constructed for comparative evaluation at the point an evaluation is made, rather than determined prior to consumption and invoked unmodified. A unifying framework for understanding consumers’ use of comparison standards is presented that contains various propositions derived from a constructive conceptualization. Existing conceptual and empirical support for this is amalgamated. It is theorized that the construction of standards is mediated by situational and intrapersonal variables. Conceptual and methodological implications are reviewed, including suggestions for further qualitative research on post-consumption reactions.

**INTRODUCTION**

A man might, indeed, argue that ‘much’ was the contrary of ‘little’, and ‘great’ of ‘small’. But these are not quantitative, but relative; things are not great or small absolutely, they are so called rather as the result of an act of comparison...The terms ‘great’ and ‘small’ indicate relation, for they have reference to an external standard. (Aristotle trans. 1928, p. 13-39, italics added)

From early philosophical writings through to contemporary research in social psychology, the axiom that evaluative responses to stimuli are inherently relative to some exogenous standard or context has influenced most conceptual frameworks which seek to elucidate human evaluation, appraisal, judgement, and assessments of affect. Nowhere is this fundamental principle more evident than in existing theories and models of consumers’ post-consumption reactions to experiences with products and services. Models of consumer satisfaction and service quality, for example, view these evaluative judgements as determined by explicit comparisons of performance to numerous and varying standards, including expectations, desires, and ideals. Significant conceptual and empirical contributions abound detailing the multitude of comparison standards that may be employed to determine consumer satisfaction. Yet no unified framework exists to explain the nature and function of the different standards that influence evaluative post-consumption responses.

It is asserted here that comparison standards are often constructed when an evaluation of a service experience is made, specifically at the post-consumption stage, rather than predetermined prior to consumption and automatically recalled for comparative evaluation. This thesis is positioned within the emergent constructivist perspective on evaluative responses and other cognitive phenomena (e.g. Reed, Wooten, and Bolton 2002). This paradigm conceives comparison standards as (re)constructed knowledge representations that are actively created via a dynamic, often purposive, process mediated by situational and intrapersonal memory factors. Based on this, we delineate a unifying framework for understanding the generic nature of the varying post-consumption comparison standards that consumers may employ, particularly when evaluating a service experience. The anticipatory assumptions of existing models of post-consumption responses are first analysed. A new framework is then proposed that integrates current thinking and findings on the constructive nature and function of post-consumption comparison standards. Propositions are outlined based on theoretical and empirical supports for the hypothesis that standards for post-consumption evaluations are often constructed on the spot. Several influences are described, including situational variables and intrapersonal cognitive states, which, from the constructive perspective, determine the standards a consumer instantiates. Finally, the implications of this perspective for understanding consumers’ evaluative and affective reactions to consumption are discussed.

**COMPARISON STANDARDS IN THE POST-CONSUMPTION LITERATURES**

Conventional cognitive models of consumer satisfaction formation typically view satisfaction as the result of an explicit, subjective post-consumption comparison between dimensions of perceived performance or consumption outcomes and varying pre-consumption standards, such as predictive expectations, interpersonal fairness norms, or experience-based norms (for a review, see Iacobucci et al. 1996). Operating in conjunction with performance perceptions, comparison standards are theorized to be the major influence on the direction and magnitude of satisfaction judgements.

Affective conceptualizations of product and, particularly, service satisfaction also view consumers’ emotional responses as determined by cognitive appraisals of disconfirmation of, or incongruity with, some standard. Recently developed models posit that consumers compare their actual arousal levels to their prior affective expectations (Wirtz, Mattila, and Tan 2001), or that they evaluate the discrepancy between affective expectations and experienced affect (Phillips and Baumgartner 2002). Moreover, appraisal theories of emotion view emotional responses as determined by an evaluative comparison of one’s actual state with a desired state (Bagus, Gopinath, and Nyer 1999). Therefore, whilst there may be a distinction between the evaluations that produce the affective response conceptualised as satisfaction, and satisfaction itself, this distinction does not diminish the importance of understanding evaluative comparisons to standards when seeking to comprehend the affective nature of satisfaction. As recently asserted, “a psychological comparison of some sort is a central component in the conceptualization of the satisfaction process” (Wirtz and Mattila 2001, p. 181).

In terms of other responses, regret is “influenced by the comparison between what is and what could have been” (Tsivos and Mittal 2000, p. 403), and the recently explored construct of delight is thought to result from “surprisingly unexpected pleasure” (Oliver, Rust, and Varki 1997, p. 329) where some expectancy is theorized to serve as a predictive or anticipatory standard. Consistent with the tenets of discrepancy theory, consumer perceptions of service quality are similarly postulated as determined by evaluations that compare performance referents with various preconsumption standards such as predictive, normative, and ideal expectations (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1994). Thus, most theorists appear to concur with two propositions. Firstly, experiences with

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goods and services have little evaluative meaning outside of the norms and standards invoked, either explicitly or implicitly, in appraising them. Secondly, the value consumers attach to the performance of consumption stimuli, and thus the way in which they react to these, are influenced considerably by the standards that contextualize evaluations.

Comparison Standards as Stable, Enduring Constructs, Determined Prior to Consumption

A key assumption of most satisfaction models is that preconsumption standards determine customers’ evaluative judgements. According to the expectancy disconfirmation model, “consumers are posited to form preconsumption expectations, observe product (attribute) performance, compare performance with expectations, form disconfirmation perceptions, combine these perceptions with expectation levels, and form satisfaction judgements” (Oliver 1993, p. 418). Indeed, a comprehensive review of early research on the determinants of the response concluded that “satisfaction is found to be determined by a pre-experience comparison standard” (Yi 1990, p. 111). Subsequent reviews have observed this trend continuing (e.g. Iacobucci et al. 1996), and contemporary research continues to emphasise comparisons of performance with pre-computed standards, such as pre-consumption desires (Spreng, MacKenzie, and Olshavsky 1996). The prevailing paradigm holds that prior beliefs and associated evaluations are recalled unchanged to evaluate comparatively at the end of an experience, irrespective of the focus of the actual evaluation or situational and intrapersonal influences.

Despite the acknowledged powerful influence of exogenous knowledge on post-consumption judgements, no coherent framework for understanding the instantiation of comparison standards currently exists in the literature. A still pressing need exists to identify which standards consumers use for satisfaction evaluations, and the situations in which one type of standard is used rather than another, as previously argued by Yi (1990). This issue has remained largely ignored in favour of proliferating support for different standards, whilst a lack of understanding of the operation of different standards has consistently been highlighted as a conceptual problem in need of address (e.g. Parasuraman et al. 1994). Consequently, an organizing framework that addresses some of these limitations from a constructive perspective is now presented.

A CONSTRUCTIVE PERSPECTIVE OF COMPARISON STANDARDS

The fundamental premise of this framework is that the comparison standards that influence evaluative outcomes, such as judgements of satisfaction, are often not determined prior to a consumer experiencing service performance in the way habitually theorized. Rather, comparison standards are often instantiated or constructed either during consumption, that is at the various points a consumer experiences and evaluates performance referents, or after consumption, whereupon a cumulative evaluation of the service experience is made. Where pre-consumption standards are explicitly formed, we argue that these may not necessarily be used to contextualize subsequent evaluations. The standards constructed at post-performance points may be qualitatively and quantitatively different from the standards that may be formed, and which are often conceptualised and measured, prior to the consumer actually evaluating a product or service. Moreover, we contend that the comparison standards invoked during an evaluation are often not established prior to consumption. It is assumed here that at some point soon after a service encounter, the consumer evaluates the experience as a bounded whole. That is, the experience is appraised as a distinct entity, based on its attributes or outcomes. Whilst services are evaluated at many, if not all, stages of consumption, evaluations made immediately after consumption, such as satisfaction judgements, assume a privileged position in influencing future behaviours.

Standard Construction is often Contingent upon Situational Determinants

Standards are often constructed for the purposes of a specific evaluation. Frequently, the comparison standards employed are not waiting to be discovered in the archaeological sense, but are constructed on demand during an evaluation, a process more metaphorically akin to architecture (after Bettman, Luce, and Payne 1998). From this perspective, the focus of the actual post-consumption evaluation will frequently determine the standard invoked. Once a salient performance referent is selected for directed evaluation, stored comparative representations are activated either purposively or via automatic processes. When the referent is a specific attribute, representations of similar comparative attributes, including exemplars or typical attributes from previous experiences, will be evoked for comparison. When the focal referent is an abstract dimension denoting outcomes or consequences, different standards need be employed from a higher level of the means-end hierarchy (see Gardial et al. 1994).

Miller and Prentice (1996) demonstrate that individuals may purposively select a comparison standard in a given evaluation by choosing amongst alternate potential sources of comparison. They argue that social norms and standards are “constructed as needed, rather than pre-stored and retrieved from memory” (p. 800). In this view, the standards consumers employ obtain the specific quantitative value accorded for comparison only when actually invoked and applied in the current evaluation. This situational weighting principle suggests that a comparative representation may be given different values when constructed in different contexts and situations. Evidencing this, comparison standards can be assigned higher values when applied in highly involved situations than when the same standards are invoked in low involvement situations (Bolfing and Woodruff 1988). We contend that this is due to the standard being constructed in the current context. Furthermore, because comparative representations are often invoked by the specifics of a situation, as the situation or context varies the resulting standards also vary. Cadotte et al. (1987) found that an exemplary best brand standard was applied by consumers to comparatively evaluate a formal restaurant experience whereas informal experiences were subject to less stringent comparisons to typical norms. If we consider satisfaction as the outcome of an evaluation, then one could argue that a consumer has as many potential satisfactions as they have comparisons to different standards (Tesser 1978).

Comparison standards are also best viewed as constructed since some standards can only be formed after performance has been experienced, such as counterfactual standards. Such standards cannot be determined prior to consumption, since counterfactuals are alternatives to performance, and a representation can only be an alternative to a known element. Tsios and Mittal (2000) demonstrate that a consumer’s motivation to construct counterfactual standards is determined by “situation-specific characteristics” (p. 404), such as outcome valence. Thus, given different situational characteristics, different comparison standards will be constructed, and these will result in differential effects on satisfaction judgements.
Standards Can be Constructed Based on the Performance Referents Evaluated

Perhaps the most fundamental principle of the current argument is that comparison standards are often devised and invoked based on the target performance referents being evaluated. This principle draws on the notion of backward processing, as emphasized by Kahneman and Miller’s (1986) norm theory:

Norms are computed after the event rather than in advance…each stimulus selectively recruits its own alternatives and is interpreted in a rich context of remembered and constructed representations of what it could have been, might have been, or should have been. Thus, each event brings its own frame of reference into being…Reasoning flows not only forward, from anticipation and hypothesis to confirmation or revision, but also backward, from the experience to what it reminds us of and makes us think about (p. 136-137).

We expound here how this principle contributes to a constructive perspective of standard use in consumption evaluations. Upon experiencing a service, a focal stimulus activates an evoked set of representations, or elements. These elements may be representations of similar objects or episodes, category norms, prototypes, or specific exemplars. For example, a specific experience with a service employee such as a bank clerk may activate from memory a previous similar experience with a bank clerk, such as one’s most recent experience, representations pertaining to typical attributes of the category ‘experiences with bank clerks’, or a specific past experience recalled as an exemplar for the category. Relevant attributes of these representations and their values may be summed to establish the norm for a dimension such as ‘employee helpfulness’ (Kahneman and Miller 1986), or a specific representation may be selected for evaluative comparison. Thus, experiences can be compared evaluatively to an ad hoc norm constructed from various representations. These are invoked at the point of interaction by the salient features of the stimulus being evaluated. Although the specific propositions of norm theory remain untested, preliminary support for the basic principle is evident (see McGill and Iacobucci 1992).

The influence of comparison standards evoked in momentary evaluations may also endure further than the immediate appraisal. Once a standard (e.g. an exemplary past service experience) has been activated for comparative evaluation, the association created between the target object and the standard invoked may increase the likelihood of further comparisons with this standard. Subsequent evaluations of different referents may be prone to comparisons with the previously activated representation and with other dimensions of this. Thus, constructed standards may exert repeated differential influences on consumers’ evaluations, either indirectly through their prior influences on retrieved evaluations, or directly via re-evaluations influenced by the enduring association formed between a target stimulus and a comparative representation.

Reconstructed Expectations as a Comparison Standard

Pre-consumption expectations are the predominant standard operationalized in models of satisfaction or service quality evaluations. Yet, one of the principle problems facing the prior-expectancy-as-standard conceptualization arises because the uncontaminated retrieval of prior expectancies is problematic once service performance has been observed. When the outcome of an event is known, consumers’ subsequent judgements of prior expectancies are backward assimilated towards outcome information (Oliver and Burke 1999). Moreover, several authors verify that hindsight expectations invoked and reported immediately prior to actual satisfaction evaluations explain significantly greater variance in both disconfirmation and satisfaction judgements than do prior predictive expectations (e.g. Zwick, Pieters, and Baumgartner 1995). These findings are particularly germane to the argument that comparison standards are (re) constructed at the point of evaluation.

Firstly, these authors’ results demonstrate that post-consumption standards influenced by performance perceptions and situational variables may be the standard which consumers actually employ to make disconfirmation and satisfaction judgements. These results persisted even under conservative conditions; in natural evaluations such stringent conditions may not exist. Prior expectations may often be indistinct, of low personal significance and comparison relevance once the purchase choice has been made, and may not be explicitly formed. Furthermore, the duration between prior expectation formation and post-consumption evaluation may be considerable, and consumers may not be explicitly motivated to accurately recall and employ prior predictive standards. Rather, given free choice of comparison, they may use a wide variety of standards conducive to current appraisal goals (see Gardial et al. 1994). Consequently, it is logically coherent to hypothesize that in many natural evaluations of services, the potential for the reconstruction of expectancy standards is even greater than that found by Zwick and colleagues.

We can also theorize that cognitive reconstruction is the mechanism most likely used by consumers to instantiate expectancy standards when the prior expectation presumed to exist is unavailable, inaccessible, or not salient to the current goal, since a re-judgement is necessitated in these circumstances. Thus, if a consumer did not generate a specific expectation relevant to the current evaluation target, then this must be constructed ad hoc. Since consumers commonly base evaluations on referents not central to pre-consumption goals, we argue that this is often the case. Moreover, several studies show that the effects of hindsight bias on judgements are largely due to reconstructive processes (e.g. Dehn and Erdfelder 1998).

Halstead (1993) provides evidence of a different kind of constructive process influencing consumers’ retrospective reporting of their expectations. In her study, consumers evidently made no attempt to accurately reconstruct initial expectations as a comparison standard, but used their satisfaction judgement as a reference point to infer that their expectations must have been consistent with their reaction. Finally, Ritov (2000) extends the notion of backwards processing discussed above to the function of expectancies in comparative judgement, reasoning that “expectations are often formed during the judgement process itself on the basis of an evoked set of alternatives” (p. 346). In sum, conceptualizing expectations as a standard reconstructed in the specific post-consumption evaluative context may present a more accurate view of the standards influencing post-consumption disconfirmation evaluations.

Purposive Construction of Comparison Standards

Many of the cognitive models explaining post-consumption reactions assume that consumers employ (mostly pre-consumption) standards to current evaluations in a manner which suggests that the process of instantiating a standard is pre-defined, or automatic, and that the standard hypothesized by a given model is the default standard employed (e.g. Spreng et al. 1996). From this standpoint, the consumer apparently exercises little volition over the choice of standard employed. This perspective, however, ignores the important role of current goals, processing objectives, and evaluative motivations.
Post-consumption evaluations are processed for varying motivations, and to achieve varying goals, such as guiding future approach/avoidance behaviours or defending one’s ego. Anderson (1990) suggests that the goals an individual is pursuing will constrain current cognitive processing, and that a crucial step in understanding a particular type of process is to comprehend the dominant goals which shape its processing. Might different standards be employed where different processing objectives are shaping an evaluation? In the social judgement literature, Miller and Prentice (1996) affirm that people exert considerable control over what they compare their experiences and possessions to, and outline the principle of motivated selection to account for this. Motivated selection propounds that evaluative comparisons are influenced by personal goals and motives, primarily self-enhancement and utilitarian motives. Viewed thus, consumers may exert two kinds of psychological control over the standards they use: selection of complementary standards and negation of superior standards.

Wills (1981) theorizes that individuals who experience negative events may actively engage in downward comparison to worse-off others where the evaluative goal is to improve subjective judgements of their own affairs. Buunk, Oldersma, and de Dreu (2001) note that engaging in downward comparison may boost relational satisfaction, and that “individuals often bring to mind others in comparison with whom they look better, think about dimensions on which they are still better than others, or cognitively create worse-off comparison targets” (p. 453), which often take the form of comparative exemplars. Similar goals may also restrict the instantiation of particular standards. Miller and Prentice (1996) note that, where an evaluative goal is self-enhancement, individuals may exclude from comparison norms, or minimize the weighting of, threatening standards, since these would result in judgement outcomes unfavourable to the experience and thus the self. Given such goals, if a consumption experience engenders high situational involvement, or elicits feelings of personal responsibility, standards such as ‘ideals’ or other paragon-like exemplars may deliberately not be employed for comparative evaluation.

Different evaluative processing goals, combined with different situational variables, may result in consumers invoking different standards. For instance, consider that consumers experiencing negative consumption outcomes are more likely to generate counterfactuals than those experiencing positive outcomes. Tsiras and Mittal (2000) reason that consumers motivated to avoid future similar negative outcomes construct more preferable hypothetical alternatives as guides for future decisions and behaviours. Their empirical results (study 4) suggest that the generation of counterfactuals as standards increased consumers’ regret and, consequently, that positive counterfactuals were generated with the guidance of future behaviours activated as the evaluative processing goal. In contrast, consumers motivated to alleviate the tension resulting from a negative affective state may be more likely to construct hypothetical worse outcomes as comparison standards to boost evaluative outcomes (Gilovich and Medvec 1995). Such findings suggest that the current motivations and processing goals determining evaluations may influence the standards actively selected, which will in turn influence satisfaction. The consumer is viewed here as a goal-directed, active participant in the satisfaction formation process, rather than as the passive bystander often portrayed in the post-consumption response literature.

Intrapersonal Factors Mediating the Construction of Comparison Standards

So far, we have considered that the construction of standards is governed by mainly situational factors. The balance is redressed now by outlining several intrapersonal factors that may influence the standards a consumer invokes for evaluative purposes, considering briefly knowledge activation and socio-cognitive individual differences.

It is increasingly understood that the standards that influence satisfaction judgements are varied, and may include exemplars from other categories, ideals, desires, and other norms. Whilst the use of a specific standard is heavily influenced by the evoking context, cognitive circumstances will also influence which standards come to mind and are activated for use. Where appropriate standards are not available for direct retrieval from memory, they must certainly be constructed, such as when fixed choice measures incorrectly assume prior expectations exist for specific attributes evaluated post-consumption. Further, Higgins (1996) purports that highly accessible and salient standards are more likely activated for comparison, where accessibility is determined by recent priming, chronic accessibility, and expectancies. The standards applied to judge one’s satisfaction with different service encounters would then shift over time where different representations become more salient or accessible in different contexts. A given standard is also more likely to be employed for comparative evaluation where it demonstrates both applicability, (relevant feature similarity to the appraisal target and current goals), and judged usability (Higgins 1996). In addition, Stapel et al. (1998) have shown that the selection of a standard is also governed by the comparison relevance and distinctness of the potential standards available for construction in relation to the specific appraisal target.

Interwoven with the above factors, the consumer’s degree of situational involvement and experience with a focal product may influence the standard used. Bolfing and Woodruff (1988) demonstrated that different standards are superior predictors of satisfaction in high versus low involvement situations. Here, consumers employed a favourite brand norm in low involvement situations, perhaps because this standard could be realised via the activation of an actual exemplar, requiring less cognitive effort to instantiate than the ad hoc construction of a product category norm. Construction of standards may also be influenced by a consumer’s degree of experience, and the influence of involvement may be mediated by this variable (see Park and Choi 1998).

Socio-cognitive individual differences may also influence the type and nature of standards invoked. We theorize that consumers high in the need to evaluate (Jarvis and Petty 1996) will be more likely to employ multiple standards when evaluating service experiences, since they are likely to undertake more evaluations of attributes and outcomes, both during and after consumption. In terms of repatronage behaviours, consumers who have a greater need to evaluate may also engage in further evaluations subsequent to post-consumption satisfaction appraisals (Petty, Jarvis, and Evans 1996). These may involve evaluative comparisons with new standards, and the resulting judgement outcomes may reshape repatronage intentions in the time between post-consumption satisfaction formation and any repurchase decision. Furthermore, low need for cognition customers may be less inclined to construct and employ ad hoc standards that require relatively high cognitive effort (Cacioppo et al. 1996), such as amalgamated typical product norms or counterfactuals. It is important to note, as we have attempted to do throughout, that the factors determining how consumers construct comparison standards are interrelated. Indeed, it is a key principle of the constructive framework that situational, contextual, and intrapersonal situational variables interact to determine the operation of particular standards. These factors, and thus consumers’ standards, are rarely constant across different contexts and experiences.
CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The framework proposed has a number of generic implications. Firstly, conceptualizing comparison standards as representations constructed during an evaluation is quite different from viewing standards as determined prior to consumption. We hope that one contribution of the article will be to stimulate greater study of the use and influence of ad hoc post-consumption standards, and the way in which the situational and intrapersonal factors highlighted determine consumers’ use of different standards, and thus influence satisfaction. Specifically, further research is needed to establish the influence of processing objectives on satisfaction evaluations, and how socio-cognitive differences mediate satisfaction formation through standard construction. Furthermore, the constructive view assumes that the standards that actually determine post-consumption responses are often not constructed until the evaluation is made, and may be constructed based on performance referents and situational factors. Consequently, models relying on pre-consumption or predefined standards may not reflect the standards that actually determine satisfaction unless mediating variables are controlled or otherwise accounted for.

Pre-specified fixed response measures, even direct disconfirmation measures used at the post-consumption stage, may create reactive demand effects such that measuring a standard primes it for use where otherwise, given a choice free from manipulation, different standards might have been employed. Qualitative post-consumption methods, which capture standards and referents at the point they are invoked and determine reactions, offer distinct advantages since they permit unconstrained response. Such methods have been employed only in limited ways thus far. Yet, adoption of these methods in discursive formats raises a further issue; namely distinguishing whether a standard is causally influencing the valence of an evaluation, or is invoked to justify the valency of a pre-established reaction. To this end, direct qualitative measures focussing on evaluations as they occur, rather than on describing them retrospectively, may be fruitful.

Finally, whilst we have argued that standards are often constructed, it is appreciated that the expectations, desires, and knowledge structures consumers bring to a consumption experience will influence the standards that are constructed to evaluate an experience. However, expectations and related anticipatory cognitions may not actually be the standards used, and to develop a more potentially realistic view of the way consumers evaluate consumption experiences, we must understand how standards are constructed ad hoc.

CONCLUSION

In responding to calls for theories bringing use closer to the psychologically dynamic nature of post-consumption reactions, a framework has been delineated that describes how comparison standards are often constructed at the point of evaluation. Our contribution is that, by pulling together findings and theoretical propositions from various literatures, we have outlined support for a constructive meta-perspective on how comparison standards influence evaluative reactions such as customer satisfaction. It is hoped that this will be useful for post factum interpretation, and that its propositions may influence new conceptualizations and guide future empirical work to build homeomorphic models of post-purchase reactions.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACT
This research examines how consumers process information in a stay-switch decision. The results suggest that consumers process different information and arrive at different conclusions based on how the decision is framed. In the first two experiments, using either consumers’ own behavior or scenarios, a switch frame increased the consideration of other brands and lowered repurchase likelihood relative to a stay frame. These results reveal an asymmetry in information processing across frames and also contradict the theory that anticipated regret associated with actions such as switching should increase, rather than decrease, repurchase, which is examined explicitly in Experiment 3.
Joy and Surprise as Guides to a Better Understanding of Impulse Buying Behaviour
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ABSTRACT
Meanwhile, affective processes have become a common key factor for the theoretical discussion of impulse purchasing behaviour. In our paper, impulse buying behaviour will be defined as stimulus-controlled, spontaneous buying behaviour that is accompanied by strong positive emotions and low cognitive control. The approach is based on the theoretical framework of Izard’s (1977) Differential Emotion Theory. An empirical approach which is clearly based on an affective definition of impulse purchasing in retail settings, differentiating this special type of unplanned purchases from other types, is still missing. A measurement approach that directly assesses the unplanned purchase-related positive emotions as well as low cognition is repeated in four empirical field surveys of different scenarios. The results reveal identical cluster patterns throughout the studies. Basically, two types of impulse purchasers were identified: One group’s impulse purchase is determined by joy, surprise, and low cognition (“surprised impulse purchasers”); the other group’s impulse purchase is accompanied by joy and low cognition only (“delighted impulse purchasers”). As expected, both groups of impulse purchasers agree strongly and significantly more to the prevalence of product related desire as reason to shop, than consumers in other groups of unplanned purchases.

UNPLANNED VERSUS IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOUR

Literature review
Despite contributions in literature on impulse buying ranging back to the fifties, a profound lack in understanding of this purchasing pattern still prevails. Authors of earlier contributions tried to explain impulse purchasing by addressing in detail the impact of external stimuli (e.g., Cox 1964, Kelly 1965) and product categories (e.g., Bellenger, Robertson, and Hirschman 1978, Kollat and Willett 1966). However, there was a lack in correspondence in research results, which made Kollat and Willett (1969) finally wondering whether the concept of impulse buying is useful in order to derive any insights for marketing strategies. The difficulties in research efforts may be due partially to the fact that impulse product choice has for a long time been implicitly or explicitly equated with unplanned purchases (e.g., Appelbaum 1951, Patterson 1963, Cox 1964, Kelly 1965, Kollat and Willett 1967, Kollat and Willett 1969, Bellenger, Robertson, and Hirschman 1978).

Kollat and Willett (1969) assume that other factors that have so far been neglected, might have a major impact on impulse buying decisions. They do not further discuss such factors, however, as one of the possibly neglected factors, Kollat and Willett (1969) suggest the perception process: The consumer is free to perceive some stimuli at the point of purchase (which might lead to an impulse purchase), and filter out others (which might prevent an impulse purchase).

Affective processes Stern (1962) implicitly points to, might also be such neglected factors. Stern (1962) distinguishes between four types of impulse purchases: One of these categories is “pure impulse buying” which he defines as a “novelty or escape purchase which breaks a normal buying pattern” (Stern 1962, p. 59). Such purchasing decisions are described as a buying behaviour that breaks clearly with rational buying habits. “Pure impulse buying” is distinguished from other categories. These are the “reminder impulse purchase” (the perception of the product in the store reminds the consumer that he/she actually needs it) and the “planned impulse buying” (the consumer enters the store with no clear purchasing intention, but with special price offers he/she expects and is in fact willing to buy). As a further category, Stern (1962) lists the “suggestion impulse buying”: The consumer sees a product for the first time and immediately develops a need for it. Stern (1962) concedes that in such situations, the consumer can still think about his or her buying decision and may finally end up with a rational choice, but a rational choice need not necessarily to be the outcome.

Stern (1962) with his “novelty or escape purchase which breaks a normal buying pattern” and Kollat and Willett (1969), reveal what researchers are actually looking for: An explanation of a decision making phenomenon which cannot be explained by familiar rational decision rules and which is not directly and solely determined by externally given stimuli. Such a phenomenon requires a consideration of affective processes.

With more recent contributions, intervening affective processes were accorded more and more attention (e.g., Weinberg and Gottwald 1982, Rook and Hoch 1985, Rook 1987, Gardner and Rook 1988, Piron 1991, Dittmar, Beattie, and Friese 1995, Rook and Fisher 1995, Beatty and Ferrell 1998, Shiv and Fedorikhin 2002, Ramanathan and Menon 2002). Beatty and Ferrell (1998) found that a positive affect “...produced more felt urges to buy impulsively”. Gardner and Rook (1988) report that “pleasure”, “excitement”, and “content/relaxation” were on the first three ranks of diverse mood states selected by test persons to describe best the feeling that most likely followed an impulse purchase made in the past. By means of an experiment, Weinberg and Gottwald (1982) show that those who impulsively bought a product were significantly more amused, delighted, and enthusiastic than non-buyers. Dittmar, Beattie, and Friese (1995) investigated impulse purchases in terms of self-identity and their experiment demonstrated, that men were more likely than women to buy on impulse to express their uniqueness.

Also, there are impressive and highly innovative experimental attempts in more recent contributions that investigate the influence of hedonic goals on impulsive decisions and the process of their automaticity (Ramanathan and Menon 2002).

So, meanwhile affective processes became a common key factor for the discussion of impulse purchasing behaviour in literature. However, an empirical approach which is clearly based on an affective definition of impulse purchasing in retail settings is still missing.

Impulse purchasing behaviour versus other types of unplanned buying – what makes the difference?
Several distinctions need to be made in order to formulate a clear definition of impulse purchasing behaviour. In the first place, we need to distinguish the impulse to purchase from the impulse purchase. The impulse to purchase can eventually be fought off leading to no purchase at all or lead to an unplanned but rational purchase (Rook and Hoch 1987).

Weinberg and Gottwald (1982) point out the importance of affective and cognitive factors in order to distinguish impulsive buying from extensive, rational buying decisions. According to their definition, impulse purchasing is accompanied by high arousal.
unplanned purchases

with low cognitive information processing

accompanied by strong positive emotions

- impulse purchase

with high cognitive information processing

accompanied by weak positive emotions

- reminder
- special price offer
- unplanned substitution

• rational unplanned purchase

and low cognition, and is a stimulus-controlled, spontaneous buying behaviour. Extensively planned, well thought over and rational buying decisions may also be accompanied by high arousal and strong emotions. Yet, contrary to impulse purchases, there are also strong cognitive processes involved.

Weinberg and Gottwald’s (1982) definition of impulse purchasing is one which clearly puts emotions and low cognition in the focus of impulse buying. Therefore, we will use their definition. However, Weinberg and Gottwald’s (1982) definition of impulse purchase will be extended: We wish to distinguish compulsive purchasing clearly from impulse purchasing (Cole and Sherrell 1995, Valence, d’Astous, and Fortier 1988, Dittmar, Beattie, and Friese 1995). While the compulsive purchaser is characterised by strong emotions, high cognition and high reactivity to strong internal and irresistible urges (Valence, d’Astous, and Fortier 1988), the impulsive purchaser shows strong emotions and low cognition, and the purchasing decision is not accompanied by uncontrollable inner urges. Also, contrary to the compulsive purchase, the impulse purchase is not accompanied or followed by strong feelings of guilt.

For a more precise understanding, we further wish to distinguish unplanned purchases accompanied by strong cognitive information processing, from those with low cognitive information processing. The former are non-spontaneous, but still unplanned upon entering the store. The latter still require further differentiation: It can be assumed that not every unplanned spontaneous buying decision together with low cognitive control, is necessarily accompanied by strong emotions like the impulse purchase. Therefore, by modifying Stern’s (1962) categories of “impulse” purchases, we will in theory assume the following categories of unplanned, spontaneous purchases of low cognitive control (see figure 1): (1) The “(pure) impulse purchase” which is unplanned and based purely on positive emotions and low cognition; (2) The “unplanned reminder purchase” which is equivalent to Stern’s (1962) notion of the reminder impulse purchase, yet, we will not label it as impulse purchase but as one type of unplanned purchase of low cognition; (3) The “unplanned purchase due to special price offers” covers Stern’s (1962) “planned impulse buying”; and finally a further category (4) the “unplanned substitution” as an unplanned purchase to substitute an item that was planned to be bought, but could not be found in the store to the customer’s full satisfaction.

Stern’s (1962)”suggestion impulse purchase” is considered as an impulse purchase if it is accompanied by strong emotions and low cognition. It is considered a rational unplanned, but not impulse purchase if intense cognitive information processing is involved.

To conclude, we assume the impulse purchase to be only one possible type of unplanned purchase among several other categories, and we assume further that cognitive and affective processes determine the difference between impulse purchases and other unplanned purchases.

EMOTIONS

Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer in 1999 came to the conclusion that “little consistency can be found in the use of terminology related to emotions” (p. 184). Yet, arousal can be considered a fundamental determinant of emotions (Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer 1999, Öhman, Esteves, Flykt, and Soares 1993). Two features seem to be of special interest when explaining emotions: The change of bodily functions (muscle activity, stimulation of autonomic nervous system, general arousal) and the cognitive interpretation (appraisal) of an internal or external stimulus.

The complex interchange between emotional, cognitive and motor processes is addressed by the Differential Emotion Theory of Izard (1977). Izard (1977) defines emotions as complex processes with neurophysiological, neuro-muscular and phenomological aspects (Izard 1977). Ten basic emotions are distinguished, each leading to different consequences of inner perception and behaviour, and ranging from a weak intensity on the lower end of a dimension, to a strong intensity on the higher end of the same dimension. The ten basic emotions are as follows (Izard 1977): (1) interest—

Not all basic emotions seem to be of major relevance to impulse buying decisions. Negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, and guilt feeling – either as origins or consequences of unplanned purchases – refer rather to compulsive than to impulse purchasing behaviour (Valence, d’Aoust, and Fortier 1988, Shapiro 1981, O’Guinn and Faber 1989). Futhermore, only if positive emotions are evoked, we can expect an approach behaviour and a positive action tendency towards a product (Mehrabian and Russell 1974, Donovan and Rossiter 1982, Tai and Fung 1997, Größel-Klein 1997, Größel-Klein and Baum 2001, van Kenhove and Desrumaux 1997).

According to Izard (1977), interest and joy, and under certain circumstances, surprise, can be considered positive emotions. However, interest does not seem to be an appropriate emotion for distinguishing impulse purchases from other unplanned purchasing decisions. Compared to all other basic emotions, interest is described as being the most important emotion but it is also one that most frequently accompanies selective perception and cognitive processes, as well as attention. Interest is additionally fundamental to learning processes and to the development of competence and intelligence of a growing child (Izard 1977).

As basic emotions, joy and surprise deserve a closer look with respect to impulse purchasing behaviour. Basically, no specific stimuli are needed to perceive the emotion joy. Joy may accompany the perception of any external, but also of any internal stimuli. Joy may go along with creativity, the successful completion of an action, or with the discovery of something. Joy accompanies the ability to enjoy, with commitment towards an object, the feeling of strength, vitality, superiority, freedom, and harmony. An object that is perceived with joy is perceived and enjoyed as a whole, rather than taken apart and analysed. There is a strong feeling of harmony and integration towards the object instead of the desire to dominate it. The emotion joy can best be described as if looking at the world through “rose-colored spectacles”: Every bird sings even more beautifully, the sky has a much brighter blue, and even though it may be raining cats and dogs, the day is seemingly terrific (Izard 1972, 1977).

Surprise can be described as follows: Something that suddenly and unexpectedly occurs or happens, leads to an increase in phasic arousal, and at the same time, produces an orienting reflex towards the object. Such psycho-physiological processes lead to the emotion surprise on the individual’s perception level. Cognitive processes accompany the emotion surprise only to a limited extent. The basic function of surprise is to focus the individual’s entire attention to a specific stimulus in the environment (Izard 1977).

As a basic emotion, surprise can neither be categorised as basically positive nor as a negative emotion, because it may lead equally to a positive or a negative outcome for individuals (Izard 1977). The perception of surprise as positive or negative depends on the individual. Those who mostly experience positive consequences following surprise, evaluate this emotion as positive. Those who most often have to face negative results, consequently describe it as a negative emotion. The latter are in general more anxious and afraid of unexpected and unfamiliar situations than the former (Izard 1977). Izard’s (1977) empirical study showed, that the majority of test subjects of a student population reported positive associations with surprise. Vanhamme’s and Snelder’s (2003) experiment shows that surprise has an effect on the positive evaluation of the surprising product attribute and also that variation in the level of surprise has a direct effect on consumers’ satisfaction. Since impulse purchasing implies an approach behaviour towards a product we can assume a positive connotation of surprise.

Hypotheses

We assume that interest is important to an individual’s stimulus selection. Also, a perceived stimulus may trigger an impulse to purchase. Yet, interest is a rather learning-oriented, “analytical” emotion and, considering the characteristics of interest, one could even discuss whether it should be considered a basic emotion at all. An impulse to purchase which is dominated by interest can be expected to lead to high cognitive processes revealed, for instance, by asking the sales personnel for further information, reading the description on the package, testing the functionality of the product and so on. Interest can be supposed to be important in order to evoke an impulse to purchase and to deal with the product in some way. But instead of an impulse purchase, any other type of unplanned purchase is likely to occur in the end.

H1: If diverse types of unplanned purchases can be detected, interest will be equally of relevance to all unplanned purchasers and thus interest will not be an emotion by which impulse purchasers significantly differ from consumers who make some other kind of unplanned purchase.

At this point, the question arises as to whether unplanned purchases made on impulse and other unplanned purchases can be distinguished significantly by the core factors joy, surprise, and low cognition. Therefore, with the four studies of different scenarios described in the following paragraphs, we investigate whether impulse purchasing behaviour can validly be assessed by directly measuring the two positive emotions surprise and joy, as well as low cognition, while relating all factors to the unplanned purchasing process of a specific item.

We can assume that surprise is an emotion most relevant for triggering impulse purchases. The high phasic arousal that draws the consumer’s attention towards the product may more or less directly lead to a purchase decision, since surprise is accompanied by low cognitive control.

Risk perception may be reduced and creative thinking with respect to the product may be enhanced by the emotion joy. A feeling of integration and harmony is even more likely, the more the product or brand is suitable to fulfill the customer’s emotional needs. The pleasant, carefree and self-confident experience that is evoked from joy reduces the inner inhibition of (buying) impulses (Izard 1977), thus it becomes more likely that an impulse to purchase is actually turned into an impulse purchase.

If an impulse purchase is determined by strong positive emotions and low cognitive control, the consumer should, as a shopping reason, consequently state a product-related desire for his/her unplanned buying behaviour, while those who did not make an unplanned purchase on impulse should rather reject such product related desires as shopping reasons. Therefore, in order to investigate whether, among consumers who make an unplanned purchase, we can actually identify impulse purchasers, we will investigate the following hypothesis:

H2: If among consumers who make an unplanned purchase, there is a group of test subjects who perceive the positive emotions of joy and surprise significantly stronger and show significantly higher values on the low cognition factor, than other consumers, this group will agree
significantly more strongly to a product related desire as a shopping reason, than those who make some other type of unplanned purchase.

Referring to the distinction made earlier in figure 1, impulse purchasers should not conform to Stern’s (1962) modified unplanned purchasing categories “reminder unplanned purchase”, “special price offer”, and “substitution”.

FOUR EMPERICAL STUDIES

Research designs

The results reported here are based on four empirical studies conducted between 1998 and 2001. We applied more or less identical procedures in four independent and differing research scenarios of real shopping environments in order to explore whether the results can be replicated and thus prove to be stable. For all studies, standardised questionnaires and five-point rating scales to express level of disagreement/agreement were applied.

For study 1, conducted in June 1998, 156 customers of a grocery store were asked, after leaving the cashier’s zone, whether they could recall any unplanned, spontaneous purchase they had made recently. The unplanned purchase did not have to be made in the grocery store they were about to leave, because we did not want to limit our sample to groceries. N=63 test subjects of the total sample had previously made an unplanned purchase, the others could not recall any. The latter were not interviewed except for their demographic criteria. Results from study 1 are based on the 63 subjects who recalled an unplanned purchase.

Study 2 was conducted on three successive days in June 1999 in a hallway of a local, medium-sized shopping mall. The relevant area for the research included all products displayed by the store owners in the hallway and in the shop windows. Everything inside the stores was disregarded. Customers in other parts of the mall were asked randomly to participate in our study. Test subjects were accompanied to the beginning of the selected hallway. They were then instructed to walk up and down both sides of the hallway as if they were on a shopping tour, but were not allowed to enter any of the stores. On their “trip” they were to pick one product of their choice, but not to buy it because we did not want to confound thoughts about what test subjects can afford. They were asked to report their product choice when returning from their trip. After the test persons had walked through the hallway and made their product decision, they were interviewed. The questions were related to the product that had been selected. Valid data was collected from a total sample of n=78 test subjects.

Study 3 was conducted in June 2000 in a European capital in one of Europe’s most famous department stores. Customers were asked randomly in diverse places in the store, whether they had just made an unplanned purchase decision for a product in that department store. Those who answered in the negative were not interviewed. A total sample of n=104 said “yes” and were interviewed by means of a standardised questionnaire with the questions related to one product they had just decided to purchase unplanned.

Study 4 was conducted in May 2001 under the same conditions and in the same department store as study 3. The total sample encompasses n=135 test subjects, and n=68 of the total sample reported an unplanned buying decision they had just made in the store. All others had made planned purchasing decisions only. The results reported below on study 4 will be based on the sub-sample of unplanned purchases.

Methodology

The first task that test subjects received in all four studies, was to recall the moment they had first noticed the item they had bought unplanned. They were then asked to state on a rating scale, whether the items to measure the basic emotions joy and surprise would more or less describe their feelings at that specific moment. In a second step, the consumers were asked to rate several statements with respect to the cognitive effort involved in the unplanned decision process.

This approach offers two important advantages: Firstly, we need not confront test subjects with a direct question like “did you buy something on impulse”. Such a question would leave it to the consumers how to define impulse purchasing, so that results could barely be compared between test subjects. Secondly, we omit the disadvantages concomitant with the provision of a “definition” of impulse purchasing like for instance “an emotional unplanned purchase”, or “a sudden urge to buy”. If we gave test subjects a definition right at the beginning of the survey, such a “theoretical” definition might be too complicated for “ordinary” consumers and/or we would reduce impulse purchasing to a very narrow viewpoint. Furthermore, test subjects would know right from the beginning what the survey is all about.

Scales

Positive emotions. Emotions in all four studies were measured by applying items of the Differential Emotions Scale (DES) (Izard 1977). The DES originally covers all ten positive and negative basic emotions. Each is assessed by three adjectives. We focussed only on the relevant dimensions of interest (for the first study only), joy, and surprise. Test subjects of all four samples were asked to rate their perceived emotions on a five-point rating scale ranging from (1) “does not describe my feelings at all” to (5) “exactly describes my perceived feelings”. The items were presented in the questionnaire as an unsorted list.

Comments of test subjects from a pre-test for study 1, suggested that respondents may get tired if expected to rate six emotional adjectives in a row. Therefore we reversed some of the items to a negative coding (see table 1).

Factor analysis (principal components analysis) (Srivastava 2002, Hae f et al. 1998, Taqc 1997) on the emotion scale in study 1, revealed anti-image values below 0.5 (AI=.356) for “unconcentrated” and “sad”. The item “sad” was the only one with a high factor loading on a third component together with “joyful” and “surprised”. Therefore, we excluded both items from further analysis. The remaining items of study 1 yielded three components (Kaiser criteria), equivalent to the original DES classification. (The item “tired” was re-coded prior to factor analysis.) In the studies 2 to 4, original DES-items only were applied. The items show high loading on the components “joy” and “surprise” as expected from the original DES. Table 2 shows a summary of the results of all four principal components analyses.

Low cognition. Test subjects were to rate the statements assessing low cognition as a state variable on a rating scale ranging from (1) “totally disagree” up to (5) “totally agree”. By means of principal components analysis, the three statements shown in detail in table 3, yield one single factor “low cognition” throughout the studies 1, 3 and 4. In study 2, only one single cognition statement was applied to keep the interview as short as possible.

Product related desire. Shopping motives were investigated in the studies 1, 3 and 4. We applied two statements to measure product related desire, which were also to be rated on a five point rating scale ranging from (1) “totally disagree” to (5) “totally agree”. Additionally, we measured Stern’s (1962) modified
Joy and Surprise as Guides to a Better Understanding of Impulse Buying Behaviour

If our distinction from the above holds true, these categories ("reminder unplanned", "special price offer", and "unplanned substitution") should not apply to those who made an unplanned purchase on impulse (see table 4 for a list of all statements).

RESULTS

Positive emotions and low cognition as segmentation criteria

For all four studies, we applied hierarchical clustering (single linkage procedure; dissimilarity measure: squared Euclidean distance) in a first step to discover and exclude outliers from the samples (Timm 2002). In a second step, we applied hierarchical clustering (Ward’s method; dissimilarity measure: squared Euclidean distance) to test whether unplanned purchasers can be distinguished, based on positive emotions as well as on the “low cognition” factor. Following the Elbow criteria (Timm 2002), we found that three groups appear most suitable. Cluster centres were calculated by means of ANOVA.

Results H1. For study 1, we considered all three emotion factors "joy", "interest", and "surprise" as well as the "low cognition" factor. By means of hierarchical clustering, we received three sub-groups with significant differences for joy, surprise, and low cognition. However, testing H1, discriminant analysis as well as the F-Test reveal no significant differences between the three groups for the emotion "interest" (meaninterest1=-.284, meaninterest2=.285, meaninterest3=.231; Wilks-Lambdainterest=0.934; pWilks=0.124; F=2.163, pF=0.124) which confirms H1.

Test of H2. In order to test H2, all interest items are henceforward excluded from further analysis of study 1 and as a consequence also of study 2, 3, and 4. The results for all four studies are summarised in table 5.

As the results of the four studies show, we can identify different types of unplanned purchasers based on the positive emotions joy and surprise, and on low cognition. Despite each of the four studies having been conducted with a slightly different design,

In order to ensure comparability with study 2, 3, and 4, a new factor model was calculated for study 1, excluding the interest items (components and factor loadings: "surprise": astonished=.926, amazed=.911, surprised=.843; "joy": glad=.891, joyful=.887; MSA=.659; total variance explained=80.45%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Items of joy, interest, and surprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principle component analyses on the emotion items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>study 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>astonished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amazed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surprised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>joyful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not tired (re-cod.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attentive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MSA (total variance explained) .650 (74.96%) .714 (67.48%) .666 (67.83%) .652 (66.62%)
studies 1, 2 and 4 reveal identical cluster patterns: Subjects who made an unplanned purchase in cluster 2 in study 1 and in cluster 1 in the studies 2 and 4, perceive the emotion “surprise” distinctly below average, while they perceive joy clearly above average as well as low cognition. With cluster 1 in study 1 and cluster 2 in studies 2 and 4, we identify another positive emotion/low cognition-segment. Both groups of the three studies can, following our definition from above, be labelled “impulse purchasers” due to strong positive emotions and low cognition. We have labelled the joy/low cognition-groups “delighted impulse purchasers” and the surprise/joy/low cognition groups “surprised impulse purchasers”.

A third group, is found identically in all four studies. It is characterised by low joy/high cognitive information processing with average surprise (study 1, 2, 4), or low surprise resp. (study 3). These groups are labelled the “unplanned rational purchasers”.

The results of study 3 depart from the results of the other studies: Following the Elbow criteria, we have to consider a fourth group of unplanned purchasers that is missing in the other three samples: Test subjects in this group seem to make their choice without perceiving joy and surprise, but they still claim that they made a quick purchase decision without much thought. We label that group (cluster 4, study 3) “emotionless spontaneous purchasers”. Those who show both positive emotions and low cognition as in studies 1, 2 and 4, could not be confirmed in the third study. However, there is a small group of unplanned purchasers in cluster 3 who were very surprised when discovering their purchased item. Yet, contrary to the “surprised” groups in the other studies, they are clearly below average for “joy” and yield average for “low cognition”. Due to the average value on low cognition they will not be regarded as “impulse purchasers”, but as “surprised unplanned purchasers”. The joy/low cognition cluster (Cluster 1) does show average values, but not below average agreement for the emotion dimension “surprise” as in study 1, 2 and 4. This group is nevertheless regarded as delighted impulse purchasers.

To ensure the validity of the four cluster solutions, we applied discriminant analysis (Taqc 1997) for each of the cluster results with the three factors “joy”, “surprise”, and “low cognition” as independent variables and the three (four) clusters as dependant variable (see table 6). The results are positive in all four studies: Discriminant functions for all cluster solutions yield highly

## Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>statements (varimax rotation)</th>
<th>study 1</th>
<th>study 2</th>
<th>study 3</th>
<th>study 4</th>
<th>component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I’ve been wondering quite a while whether to buy or not.” (re-coded)</td>
<td>.918</td>
<td>.782</td>
<td>.813</td>
<td></td>
<td>“low cognition”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I did not give my choice much thought&quot;</td>
<td>.898</td>
<td>only single item applied</td>
<td>.697</td>
<td>.861</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The purchase was a quick decision&quot;</td>
<td>.872</td>
<td></td>
<td>.849</td>
<td>.879</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSA</td>
<td>.730</td>
<td>.615</td>
<td>.700</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total variance explained</td>
<td>80.32%</td>
<td>60.58%</td>
<td>72.55%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>statements applied in study...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>product related desire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Once I discovered the product I immediately found it simply great and bought it at once.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The item suddenly appeared desirable to me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unplanned reminder purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I needed to buy this product anyway. It occurred to me when I saw the product on the display.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>special price offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I had the impression that this offer is a real bargain you simply cannot miss.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unplanned substitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I was actually looking for something completely different, yet, I was not satisfied with the offer provided by the retailer, so I ended up buying this item.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
significant chi-square values, strong canonical correlation and low values for Wilks’ Lambda. Univariate Wilks’ Lambda is fairly low for all three variables throughout all four studies, as required to prove a significant difference between the cluster centres. The equivalent F-Test yields significant results. There is only one exception in study 4: Univariate discriminant statistics reveal a non-significant F-Test for the emotion “joy” ($p_{joy|study\ 4} = 0.104$).

In summary, we can state that consumers who make impulse purchases, can be distinguished significantly from those who make unplanned-rational purchases based on the positive emotions “joy” and “surprise”, as well as on low cognition. There are two types of customer segments that must be interpreted as impulse purchasers, the “delighted” and the “surprised impulse purchasers”. The unplanned-rational group does not agree on the low cognition items, rather they seem to consider their choice carefully. There might be some surprise when they first discover the product, yet, joy definitely plays a minor role. The group of spontaneous purchasers with low cognition and weak positive emotions as postulated in theory, was found only in study 3 with cluster 4.

In order to test H2, the three (four) clusters found in our samples served as the independent variable and the shopping reasons as the dependent variable. We investigated whether shopping reasons significantly differ between the three (four) groups. Due to small sample sizes (<30) within the subgroups, we applied the distribution free nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis test (SPSS Inc. 1998).

“Delighted” and “surprised impulse purchasers” perceived a significantly stronger product-related desire for the item “simply great” throughout all three studies. The same holds true for “appeared desirable” for studies 3 and 4. Therefore, we can confirm H2 with respect to both groups of impulse purchasers. As expected, other unplanned, spontaneous shopping reasons based on Stern’s (1962)
## TABLE 7
Shopping motives within the groups of unplanned purchasing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shopping reason</th>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>mean(^1)</th>
<th>Kruskal-W. rank</th>
<th>sig.(^2)</th>
<th>mean(^1)</th>
<th>Kruskal-W. rank</th>
<th>sig.(^2)</th>
<th>mean(^1)</th>
<th>Kruskal-W. rank</th>
<th>sig.(^2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>product related desire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>product related desire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simply</td>
<td>dip</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>31.37</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>35.91</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>43.97</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sip</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>40.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>30.69</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>20.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>urp</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>17.32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>12.71</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>43.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appeared</td>
<td>dip</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>30.03</td>
<td>0.409</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>35.94</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>43.83</td>
<td>0.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sip</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>31.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>27.48</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>31.54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>urp</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>24.41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>16.88</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>22.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>categories of weak emotions/low cognition unplanned purchasing</td>
<td>substitution</td>
<td>dip</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>27.93</td>
<td>0.754</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>30.35</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>dip</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>37.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sip</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>31.44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>22.77</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>33.96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>urp</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>27.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>24.48</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>28.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reminder</td>
<td>dip</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>29.03</td>
<td>0.096</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>27.85</td>
<td>0.407</td>
<td>dip</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>43.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sip</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>37.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>22.76</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>28.50</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>urp</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>23.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>28.59</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>30.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>special price offer</td>
<td>dip</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>28.48</td>
<td>0.064</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>24.54</td>
<td>0.760</td>
<td>dip</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>37.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sip</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>38.44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>27.76</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>35.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>urp</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>23.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>24.94</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>33.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) mean for illustration only  
2) Monte Carlo signif.

modified categories, do not apply to either of the impulse purchasing groups. The weak emotions/low cognition-group in study 3 (“emotion-less spontaneous purchasers”) have the highest mean agreement ranks and mean values on the five-point rating scale for the “unplanned substitution” and the “special price offer”, but the difference between groups is not significant. Contrary to our original assumption, “delighted impulse purchasers” reveal the highest mean rank for the “unplanned reminder purchase” in study 3, but again, the result is not significant (see table 7).

**LIMITATIONS AND DISCUSSION**

It remains unclear why study 3, which was conducted in the same environment and under equal conditions to study 4, remains the only one to yield a distinct cluster pattern. Constantly changing store decoration and special events in that department store, do not constitute a convincing argument, because cluster patterns in study 1, 2 and 4 are equal, despite completely differing store environments and research designs. If weather and climatic conditions do influence affective processes and, in turn, behaviour (Cunningham 1979), the extremely hot, oppressive weather conditions with heavy rainfall on some days during the third survey (some customers only entered the department store to escape the rain and steamy air outside), might have had an impact on the research results from study 3. Apart from that, we believe that our approach presented here is superior to research designs that force test subjects to cognitively define and explain purely emotional purchasing behaviour. With little exception, we succeeded in finding identical cluster patterns in four research scenarios, revealing two groups of emotion-dominated impulse purchasers with one being mainly determined by joy, the other by surprise and joy. Both groups reveal low cognition as a further characteristic of impulse purchasing. However, study 1 also revealed, that the positive emotion interest, is perceived equally by all test subjects when making unplanned purchases. Furthermore, impulse purchasers perceive a significant product-related desire as a shopping motivation.

With the findings reported here, we cannot gain any insights as to why “delighted impulse purchasers” are so happy when they find “their” product and as to what exactly surprises “surprised impulse purchasers” and what makes them happy. These questions remain subject to further investigation and might best be addressed by means of qualitative interviews. Further hypotheses and new scales on motivations for impulse shopping behaviour might be derived from such investigations. Existing emotional product involvement, subtle, unconscious dreams and desires – eventually evoked by emotional advertisements to which the consumer was exposed in the past, or evoked by the effect of affective and collative merchandising concepts presented at the point of purchase – may contribute to a complex interaction of external and internal stimuli.
perception which modulates and determines impulse purchasing. Therefore, the impact of joy and surprise on other affective processes and the complex interaction of affective processes still offer a wide range for further studies in impulse purchasing behaviour.

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Kelly, Robert F. (1965), An Evaluation of Selected Variables of


Brand Personality Perception—Regional or Country Specific?
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John Saunders, Aston Business School, UK
Gail Taylor, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China
Anne Souchon, Aston Business School, UK

ABSTRACT
Brand personality is a key determinant of brand equity. Consumers seek brands with congruent personalities and use brands’ personality to define their sense of self. However, far from being universal, previous researches found that European (Spanish) brand personality dimensions differ from those in America and Asia (Japan). Are these typical of the region or do they reflect national variations? This study examines brand personality dimensions among Chinese consumers with consumers responding to 10 different commercial brands. This shows perceptions of brand personality are country specific, due to the differences found between Japanese’ and Chinese’. Implications of these findings are discussed.

INTRODUCTION
“A successful brand is a name, symbol, design, or some combination, which identifies the ‘product’ of a particular organization as having a sustainable differential advantage” (Doyle 1989); however, it will depreciate if management fails to re-invest correctly in enhancing quality, service and brand image. In addition, “people buy things not for what they can do, but also for what they mean” (Levy 1959). An emotional tie is important in consumer’s choice of brand, as well as in brand positioning (Hooley and Saunders 1993), and consumers use brand to construct their own self-identity (Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1998; Fournier 1998).

Brand personality has been applied by practitioners to build and maintain brands (Plummer 1985) using brand personality portfolios and has been investigated by academics (e.g., Gardner and Levy 1955). It can help to differentiate brands (Crask and Laskey 1990; Doyle 1989; Meenaghan 1995), and identify meanings to consumers (Belk 1988; Malhotra 1981; Sirgy 1982). It is a key determinant of brand equity (Aaker 1991; Biel 1993), and helps developing advertisements (Lannon and Cooper 1983). Brand personality is determined by factors, such as attributes, benefits, price, and user imagery (Aaker and Fournier 1995), that are unlike human personality.

Marketing policies normally have to be tailored to idiosyncrasies of customers in different countries (Doyle, Saunders, and Wong 1994) and understanding cultural differences is considered as a prerequisite for successful international advertising (Keegan 1989). Consumers respond to advertising messages that are congruent with their culture (Buzzell 1968; Harris 1984; Hornik 1980; Zhang and Gelb 1996), and they seek brands with personalities that are congruent with either their own or their sought-after ones (Sirgy 1982).

It is the aim of this study to determine if brand personality perception is more country specific, as opposed to one country of the region representing brand personality perceptions for the whole region. Furthermore, the applicability of brand personality scales, developed in America, Japan and Spain, in China is investigated for developing effective brand communication.

Background information concerning previous studies on brand personality dimensions and scales in America, Japan and Spain, as well as cultural characteristics of China and Japan are discussed. A methodology of generating personality traits, refining the instrument for conceptual equivalence, selecting stimuli, collecting data, analyzing data and implications are also discussed.

BACKGROUND
Aaker (1997) defines brand personality as “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand” and systematically developed and validated American Brand Personality Dimensions based on personality traits from psychology literature e.g., (John 1990; Piedmont, McCrae, and Costa 1991); marketing literature (Batra, Lehmann, and Singh 1993; Levy 1959; Malhotra 1981; Plummer 1985); marketing practitioners; and original qualitative research using free association with a group of 16 subjects. The resulted list of 309 candidate traits after eliminating redundancy was evaluated by another group of 25 subjects on the descriptivability of these traits on brands. Only traits with a score of 6 (very descriptive) were selected as traits for the study. Factor analysis, based on the ratings of 114 personality traits on 40 brands in various product categories by 631 American subjects, resulted in a highly stable five factors structure. After a series of factor analysis, cluster analysis, test-retest reliability, and confirmatory factor analysis on various groups of subjects, the American Brand Personality Framework with five dimensions, and fifteen facets and 42 traits scale was developed (Table 1).

Meaning embedded in consumption symbols, such as commercial brands, can represent and institutionalize the values and beliefs of a culture (McCracken 1986; Richins 1994). Using a combined emic-etic approach and the American Brand Personality Framework and scales, Aaker et al (2001) explored this phenomenon in an East Asian culture (Japan) and a Latin culture (Spain). In the Japanese Brand Personality Framework (Table 2), there are five dimensions and 36 traits. The dimension Ruggedness is replaced by Peacefulness suggesting that these constructs captured culture-specific meaning.

In the Spanish Brand Personality Framework (Table 3), there are also five dimensions and 33 traits. Only the dimensions of Excitement, Sincerity, and Sophistication are similar to those for America. Dimension Passion appears to be culturally specific.

China has the greatest number of consumers in the world, over 1.27 billion as at Oct 2002 and the economy is booming. China is also different to all other large markets by having cultures of political, economic and social isolation until very recently. Chinese and Japanese are Asian and they share many common characteristics such as emphasizing harmony & relationship and have Confucian & Buddhist traditions. However, there are also marked differences between them. Japanese people tend to be more cooperative than the Chinese and less narcissistic than the Americans (DeVos 1985). Japanese are more holistic, have ‘life-long’ employment and strong desire of belonging to some context to live and work together with its members and be protected by it, and are contextualist (Kumon 1982). They retain a personal identity, but this personal identity is virtually inseparable from the contextual identity. Thus individual changes, depending on the context s/he is in or the people s/he is with. (c.f. Hendry 1998) and they take group actions for the sake of the company or nation as a whole. The Chinese, on the other hand, tend to be comparatively more individualistic when com-
### TABLE 1
American Brand Personality Dimension & Scales  
Source: Aaker (1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sincerity</th>
<th>Excitement</th>
<th>Competence</th>
<th>Sophistication</th>
<th>Ruggedness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Down-to-earth</strong></td>
<td>Daring</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
<td>Upper class</td>
<td>Outdoorsy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family-oriented</td>
<td>Trendy</td>
<td>Hard working</td>
<td>Good-looking</td>
<td>Masculine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small town</td>
<td>Exciting</td>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>Glamorous</td>
<td>Western</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest</td>
<td>Spirited</td>
<td>Intelligent</td>
<td>Charming</td>
<td>Tough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sincere</td>
<td>Cool</td>
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<td>Smooth</td>
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<td>Wholesome</td>
<td>Imaginative</td>
<td>Successful</td>
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<td>Successful</td>
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<td>Unique</td>
<td>Leader</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Up-to-date</td>
<td>Confident</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Up-to-date</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentimental</td>
<td>Contemporary</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 2
Japanese Brand Personality Dimension & Scales  
Source: Aaker et al. (2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excitement</th>
<th>Competence</th>
<th>Peacefulness</th>
<th>Sincerity</th>
<th>Sophistication</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talkative</td>
<td>Consistent</td>
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<td>Warm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funny</td>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>Mild-mannered</td>
<td>Thoughtful</td>
<td>Smooth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Optimistic</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
<td>Peaceful</td>
<td>Kind</td>
<td>Romantic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Dignified</td>
<td>Naive</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stylish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary</td>
<td>Determined</td>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sophisticated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>Childlike</td>
<td></td>
<td>Extravagant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>Patient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Tenacious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likeable</td>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youthful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energetic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirited</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
pared with the Japanese, though less individualistic when compared to the Americans, and with close family kinship linkages. Chinese people are generally face (self)-loving, egocentric and authority-directed (Lew 1998), have a strong need for achievement (Atkinson 1977), and the achievement motivation generally aims at self-interest or interest of the family (Lew 1998).

The difference between the American, Spanish, and Japanese scales when compared with the other difference between Japanese and Chinese culture suggest that none of the previously devised scales will capture Chinese brand personality.

**METHODOLOGY**

With the limitation of time and resources, a modified imposed-ethnic approach is taken following established procedures from the measure development literature (Churchill 1979; DeVellis 1991; Spector 1992).

### Generation of brand personality traits

When developing their pool of items intended to capture brand personality traits, Aaker (1997) and Aaker et al (2001) used the three theoretically based item generation criteria set out by Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1957). These criteria are: factorial composition of the items (to ensure the items are based on a theoretical framework), frequency of usage of the items (to ensure that the items are familiar and meaningful to individuals) and relevance of items to the construct of interest (to ensure external validity of the scale), into consideration. As a result, by grouping 42 American brand personality traits, 36 Japanese brand personality traits, and 33 Spanish brand personality traits, a pool of 85 brand personality traits was generated after eliminating redundancy. For the purpose of the current study, particular attention needed to be paid to the second and the third item generation criterion, namely frequency of usage of items and relevance of items, given the distinct national context in which the study was constructed. The following section explains how this was done.

### Instrument refinement (content validity)

The same word may have different meanings in different cultures (Waldie 1981). An expert judgment team was formed to assess the content validity of these traits (DeVellis 1991; Lichtenstein, Netemeyer, and Burton 1990; Shimp and Sharma 1987). This expert judgment team consisted of one American that lived in Hong Kong for over 10 years, two American Hong Kong Chinese, two Japanese that lived in Hong Kong for over 10 years, one Hong Kong person that lived in Japan for over 8 years, and two Hong Kong people that speak Spanish and had lived in Spain. Craig and Douglas (2000) pointed out the importance of conceptual equivalence in cross-cultural research. It is important to understand if the same concept is available and expressed the same way across different countries or cultures. As a result, these experts were selected as they were familiar either with American, Japanese or Spanish culture and Hong Kong Chinese culture and were asked to comment on the applicability of these traits in the Hong Kong Chinese environment for conceptual equivalence. The ‘corporate’ trait was suggested to be reworded as ‘business–like’ and the ‘western’ trait can imply cowboy or a comparison between New Yorkers and Californians. Deletion was the recommendation to avoid confusion. Traits that were commented to be more appropriate to persons rather than brands by more than three experts, such as ‘naïve’, ‘talkative’ and ‘shy’, were also deleted. This exercise resulted in a total of 68 brand personality traits.

### Stimuli selection

Brands have to be well known to the targeted population, and they should pertain to a variety of product categories, both symbolic and utilitarian (Aaker 1997). Given these criteria, the expert judgment team plus a volunteer team of 5 students were asked to suggest appropriate brands. A list of 20 brands was formed.

### Data collection

Hong Kong Chinese university students were selected as participants. English is the official language in university so questionnaires were in English to avoid potential language inequivalence (c.f.Van de Vijver and Hambleton 1996). Chinese words were given to participants along with English attributes to minimize potential problems arises from cultural differences (as per Aaker et al 2001).

Participants were asked to evaluate ten familiar brands from a list of twenty brands rating the extent to which the 68 attributes describe a specific brand. A six-point Likert scale (1=not at all

### TABLE 3

**Spanish Brand Personality Dimension & Scales**

**Source:** Aaker et al. (2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excitement</th>
<th>Sincerity</th>
<th>Sophistication</th>
<th>Peacefulness</th>
<th>Passion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Considerate</td>
<td>Good looking</td>
<td>Affectionate</td>
<td>Fervent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outgoing</td>
<td>Thoughtful</td>
<td>Glamorous</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Passionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>Well-mannered</td>
<td>Stylish</td>
<td>Gentle</td>
<td>Intense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daring</td>
<td>Real</td>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>Naive</td>
<td>Spiritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young</td>
<td>Sincere</td>
<td>Persistent</td>
<td>Mild-mannered</td>
<td>Mystical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirited</td>
<td>Down-to-earth</td>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Peaceful</td>
<td>Bohemian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imaginative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
descriptive to 6=extremely descriptive) was used instead of five-point as per Aaker (1997) and Aaker et al 2001 because of Chinese cultural characteristics of Mean ‘without inclination to either side’ (Yau 1994). Respondents were asked to repeat the task for the ten brands they selected. Two hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed and 181 returned, and 36 were unusable due to spotted patterns in the answers (i.e., 145 respondents). After cases with a significant amount of missing data had been deleted, 1237 valid cases remained (note that cases represent respondents’ evaluation of each brand in turn. One respondent may have evaluated, say eight brands, resulting in eight valid cases).

Split sample and cross-validity
DeVellis (1991) recommends the splitting of the sample into two sub-samples to reduce the likelihood of obtaining spurious or chance results: one sample for measure development and the other for cross-validation. SPSS automatically selected a random sample of cases, 606 for development.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION
The objectives of this study are to identify the brand personality dimensions as perceived by Chinese consumers’, and to develop associated measures of these dimensions. The expert judgment team, combined with the literature review, and in particular Aaker’s (1997) and Aaker et al’s (2001) studies, uncovered 68 potential brand personality traits. In order to assess how these traits might collapse into brand personality dimensions, an exploratory factor analysis procedure was developed. More specifically, a principal component analysis was undertaken and a VARIMAX rotation was used to extract brand personality factors from the 68 traits identified. This analysis was undertaken on both sub-samples. The results were consistent across samples. A four-factor solution was obtained. The adequacy of this solution is supported by the following criteria: (a) the shape of the scree plot, and (b) the amount of variance explained by the first four components (43.59%) after purification. Nunnally (1978) indicated traits that load below 0.4 do not add to measure purification. Variables that did not load significantly on any factor, or with several high loadings, (i.e., cross-loading) were deleted (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black 1998).

The four-factor solution obtained with the both sub-samples after deletion of low-loading and cross-loading traits is reported in Table 4. Labels for all the dimensions were selected based on the attributes emphasized within each of the personality attributes.

Table 5 provides the reliabilities and associated statistics for each of the dimension of the two sub-samples. As can be seen, Cronbach’s alphas for these two sub-samples in all the dimensions are similar in magnitude and exceed the minimum level of .70 recommended by Nunnally (1978) except one, thus providing evidence of reliability and stability.

Tables 1 & 4 reveal that the four dimensions in the Chinese Brand Personality Framework (competence, excitement, sincerity & fascination) are similar to the first four of the American Framework (sincerity, excitement, competence & sophistication), although the traits are not identical. Dimension 1 represents Competence with traits like ‘reliable’, ‘secure’, ‘hard working’, ‘intelligent’, ‘successful’, ‘confident’, ‘leader’ that are also markers in the Competence dimension of the American scale. The second dimension represents Excitement, with traits like ‘exciting’, ‘trendy’, ‘daring’, ‘up-to-date’ that are also markers in the Excitement dimension in the American scale. The third dimension represents Sincerity with the traits ‘sincere’, ‘cheerful’, ‘family-oriented’. These also appeared in the Sincerity dimension of the American scale. Dimension four is similar to the American Sophistication dimension though it is named Fascination. Both of them have the traits ‘glamorous’ and ‘feminine’.

One dimension which appeared in the original Aaker (1997) study but is absent from the Chinese Brand Personality Framework is Ruggedness: ‘rugged’, ‘tough’, ‘western’. This absence could be because of the social norm of ‘non-aggression’ (Lew 1998). Also, Chinese are influenced by the doctrine of Way (Tao), the doctrine of Mean and emphasized politeness and harmony (Yau 1988; Yau 1994). The doctrine of Mean urges individuals to avoid competition and conflict to maintain inner harmony (Hsu 1947) and adopt a non-assertive approach to conflict resolution (Kirkbride 1991). Chinese believe that man should learn how to adapt to nature in order to reach harmony instead of trying to overcome and master it (Chan 1963). Chinese also conform to Li, meaning propriety, emphasizing politeness, gentleness and obeying rules (Jarvie and Agassi 1969). ‘Tough’ and ‘rugged’, having rather undesirable lexical meaning in Chinese, are opposed to desirable attributes for noble persons such as ‘gentle’, ‘polite’, ‘elegant’ in China; therefore are not as likely to be endorsed and associations are often discouraged.

The Spanish, with Latin traditions, are perceived to be quite different from the Chinese, so dimensions and traits varying between these countries are of no surprise. The Passion dimension in the Spanish brand personality scales clearly revealed their outwardly communicated emotion, such as that displayed in the Flamenco. This dimension is missing in the resultant Chinese Brand Personality Framework because Chinese believe in modesty, self-effacement and are cautious (Bond 1991). Self-restraint is highly valued and self-protection taught by parents in very early childhood (Bond 1996).

Although both Japanese and Chinese have Confucius and Buddhist influences, there are differences in the dimensions when comparing Tables 2 and 4. Traits in the Excitement and Competence dimensions of the Japanese Brand Personality Framework are quite different from those of the Chinese. In the Japanese Competence dimension, there are traits like ‘patient’, ‘tenacious’ and ‘masucline’. The trait ‘masculine’, which appeared in the Competence dimension, seems to be in line with men responsible for working outside in the Japanese tradition. ‘Patient’ and ‘tenacious’ traits are cultural values and are consistent with the Japanese notion of “gambari” meaning perseverance, inner strength and ability to endure hardship (c.f. Aaker 2000). In the Chinese Competence dimension, ‘hardworking’, ‘intelligent’, ‘successful’, ‘independent’, and ‘leader’ traits are in line with Chinese cultural value systems of high social status, surpassing others in achievement, gaining respect from others, and having authority and power reference (Bond 1996). A trait like ‘well-mannered’ is in line with the Chinese cultural tradition of modesty, and politeness. The Japanese Peacefulness dimension is not available in the Chinese framework though the trait ‘peaceful’ appeared in the Chinese Sincerity dimension. Traits like ‘talkative’, ‘shy’, ‘dependent’ and ‘naive’ seem to be culturally specific to Japan. The trait ‘dependent’ is actually in line with the Japanese strong sense of belongingness, sO-centrism and ‘great mother’ principle (c.f. Kumon 1982).

CONCLUSION
From this analysis, the differences in results of Japanese’ and Chinese’ brand personality frameworks confirmed that brand personality perception is country specific. Implications, limitations and future research are discussed as follows.

Implications
Marketing implications for certain brands which focus on ruggedness, such as Marlboro, are also of interest to explore. Shall
TABLE 4

Chinese Brand Personality Dimension & Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Competence</th>
<th>Excitement</th>
<th>Sincerity</th>
<th>Fascination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>606 cases</td>
<td>631 cases</td>
<td>606 cases</td>
<td>631 cases</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intelligent</td>
<td>.684</td>
<td>.649</td>
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<td>Reliable</td>
<td>.681</td>
<td>.666</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>.671</td>
<td>.652</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>.653</td>
<td>.684</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>.648</td>
<td>.700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>.623</td>
<td>.597</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>.613</td>
<td>.651</td>
<td></td>
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<td>.448</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>.597</td>
<td>.622</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.638</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.505</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.483</td>
<td>.564</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet</td>
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<td>.635</td>
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<td>.603</td>
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<td>.613</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.549</td>
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<td>.631</td>
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<td>Family-orient</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elegant</td>
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<td>.695</td>
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<td>Extravagant</td>
<td></td>
<td>.583</td>
<td>.572</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Glamorous</td>
<td></td>
<td>.533</td>
<td>.479</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td></td>
<td>.526</td>
<td>.574</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of variance explained</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>15.29%</td>
<td>10.91%</td>
<td>11.23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
advertising campaign remain consistent over time and across modes when advertised in foreign countries? Such an advertising campaign would aim at increasing associations (e.g., ruggedness in Japan), rather than shifting the meaning of the brand (e.g., imbuing Marlboro with less rugged but more exciting associations in Japan) or increase diagnosticity of the associations (e.g., attempting to make ruggedness more important in Japan) (c.f. Aaker 2000). The trait ‘masculine’ is in the Japanese Competence dimension, so advertising campaign can emphasize masculine aspects, such as, confident, responsible, energetic and determined. For the Chinese, the American western cowboy does not necessarily need to be rugged and tough. He can be a well-mannered, intelligent and reliable cowboy leader. The advertising campaign can emphasize intelligent, leader, reliable, successful, confident, outdoorsy, free, trendy, imaginative and well-mannered characteristics. Marlboro Classics, the brand with the American Western cowboy image and more broadly American lifestyle (Chan 2002) also has urban and fancy lines with emphasis on good quality in construction and material. Advertising messages for the Marlboro Man for Philip Morris suggest that he is more than just a cowboy selling cigarettes (Camargo 1987). It is an Aristotelian aesthetic abstraction of the Twentieth Century David symbolizing individualism, independence, efficacy, reason and capitalism (Vacker 1992), neither ‘rugged’ nor ‘tough’.

**Limitations & future research**

From this analysis, the results confirmed brand personality perception is country specific. The failure of the Ruggedness dimension to appear in China suggests a need to explore more cases to find at what level the dimensions across counties can be aggregated. It is of interest to find out if a series of standard political and cultural measures, such as economic isolation, religion, and so on, can be of use to predict the different traits.

The present study used an imposed-ethnic approach, as this has the advantage of easy comparison with previous studies. However, indigenous Chinese brand personality traits are therefore not explored. In addition, the study has only been conducted in the Hong Kong Chinese environment. It is of interest to explore other Chinese environmental situations such as in Shanghai Mainland Chinese, Beijing Mainland Chinese, Guangzhou Mainland Chinese, Taiwan Chinese, and Singaporean Chinese on brand personality perceptions. Hofstede’s culture clusters have grouped places under clusters of Latin, Germania, Anglo, Nordic, etc (Dawar and Parker 1994; Hofstede 2001). It is also of interest to explore similarities and differences in brand personality perceptions such as in Italy, France, Portugal and Spain of the Latin cluster, or Germany, Switzerland, and Austria of the Germanic cluster, or Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, U.K. and USA of the Anglo cluster and Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden of the Nordic cluster.

**REFERENCES**


### TABLE 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>No of items</th>
<th>Sub-sample</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>4.2852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b (631)</td>
<td>0.8830</td>
<td>4.2511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>a</td>
<td>0.8386</td>
<td>4.2070</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>0.8447</td>
<td>4.1778</td>
</tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>a</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
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<td>3.3117</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


OVERVIEW OF THE SESSION

There has been considerable research in the social and cognitive psychology literature on the topic of automatic processes (e.g., Shiffrin and Schneider 1977, Bargh and Pietromonaco 1982, Chartrand and Bargh 1996, Bargh et al. 2001). Research in the consumer behavior literature documenting such processes has been relatively recent. Work by Janiszewski (1993), Shiv and Fedorikhin (2002), Fitzsimons and Shiv (2001), Fitzsimons and Williams (2000), Menon and Raghurub (forthcoming) and Ramanathan and Menon (2002) among others have shown that automatic effects exist in perceptual, affective and goal-driven processes.

This session presents work that adds to this growing body of research, and delineates conditions under which perception, affect and motivation may all guide behavior in a relatively efficient and effortless manner. In doing so, we identify several new dimensions to these phenomena. For example, we show that even anthropomorphized objects are capable of activating stereotype-consistent behavior (Fitzsimons, Chartrand and Fitzsimons’ paper). We also demonstrate that the mere presence and position of another person in the behavioral context can activate social goals in the focal person that in turn guide behavior consistent with these goals (Puntoni and Tavassoli’s paper). Finally, we also show that hedonic goals can influence affective reactions to stimuli in a dynamic manner (Ramanathan and Menon’s paper). Together, these studies underscore the fact that many processes guiding behavior may proceed to completion relatively efficiently and that this phenomenon is quite pervasive—it exists in person-object interactions as well as in person-person interactions.

The papers in this session re-assert some of the basic findings in the psychology literature that judgments and behavior are often quite automatic. For instance, Fitzsimons, Chartrand and Fitzsimons show that common objects that have human characteristics imbued in them are capable of activating behavior consistent with the characteristics represented by the object. Puntoni and Tavassoli show that absent a direct social interaction, even the mere presence of another person in the same behavioral context can influence the way the focal person behaves due to the automatic activation of impression management and social desirability goals. Ramanathan and Menon look at how people primed with hedonic goals evaluate hedonic objects, both related and unrelated to the goal, over time and show that people with chronic hedonic goals show increasingly extreme (positive) evaluations of related (but not unrelated) hedonic objects with delay, while those without such chronic goals show a temporary increase in evaluations that then decays to more normal levels.

Specifically, the first paper by Gráinne Fitzsimons, Tanya Chartrand and Gavan Fitzsimons shows that people primed with words related to a dog are more likely to show loyal behavior relative to a control group, while those primed with words related to a cat are less likely than the control group to exhibit such loyal behavior. In a second study, the authors show that such stereotype-consistent behavior extends to brand logos. People primed with the Apple logo performed significantly better on a creativity task compared to those primed with the logo for IBM. The Apple-primed group also showed greater persistence on the task. The authors are testing a link between such stereotypical perceptions and goals in a third study that they propose to present at the session. The second paper by Stefano Puntoni and Nader Tavassoli looks at how the mere presence of another person in a room can influence evaluations of products that carry positive or negative social cues. The authors show that evaluations of socially enhancing products such as perfumes are higher relative to control in the presence of another person, while evaluations of socially threatening products such as hemorrhoid ointments is attenuated under the same conditions. They examine the moderating role of self-monitoring and social anxiety, showing that there is an approach motivation towards socially enhancing products for those with high self-monitoring, while there is an avoidance motivation against socially threatening products for those with high social anxiety. In a second study, the authors show that even the position of the person in the social setting matters. People prone to self-monitoring show a greater effect on their evaluations of products when the confederate is seated in front of them, while socially anxious people show a greater effect on their evaluations when the confederate is seated behind them. In the third paper, Suresh Ramanathan and Geeta Menon examine the effect of chronic and hedonic goals on the spontaneity and intensity of affect generated across time upon seeing hedonic products. They show that people with chronic hedonic goals who are also primed with a temporary hedonic goal (wanting something sweet) show faster like-dislike reactions to hedonic objects related to the temporary goal (e.g., desserts, candy). Further, these reactions intensify over time such that liking for related hedonic objects increases with delay. This effect does not obtain for those without chronic hedonic goals. The temporary goal causes liking scores for related hedonic objects to increase momentarily but this effect decays with time to normal levels. The authors argue that this effect is due to interplay between the affective and motivational system.

The three papers in this session focus on both person-object interactions and person-person interactions. They examine processes that underlie the way we perceive and evaluate common objects and products. They especially show the influence of goals on such perceptual and evaluative processes. By showing that a variety of goals can influence consumer behavior in a relatively efficient and automatic manner, they argue that the commonly accepted notion that goal-driven behavior is effortful and planned is overstated. Together, they trace a process path from perception to behavior via evaluation and motivation that proceeds to completion in a smooth and effortless manner. The three papers also look at different domains of judgment and behavior (creativity, hedonic consumption, social enhancement), thereby attesting to the generality of the findings presented.

ABSTRACTS

“Automatic Effects of Exposure to Anthropomorphized Objects on Behavior”
Gráinne M. Fitzsimons, New York University, USA
Tanya L. Chartrand, Ohio State University, USA
Gavan J. Fitzsimons, University of Pennsylvania, USA

Perceiving another person can automatically activate stereotypes that lead the perceiver to behave in a stereotype-consistent fashion (see Dijksterhuis & Bargh, 2001). Further, exposure to significant others can automatically activate goals and subsequently change the perceiver’s behavior (Fitzsimons & Bargh, in press). The current research explores whether exposure to anthro-
pomorphized objects such as house pets (e.g., dogs and cats) or brand logos (e.g., Apple and IBM) can also activate associated stereotypes and/or goals and influence behavior.

In a first study, we predicted that participants that were incidentally exposed to dog-related primes would have the associated trait or goal of loyalty activated, whereas participants that were exposed to cat related primes would be less likely to have a loyalty-related cognition or goal activated. Participants first completed a sorting task that served as a supraliminal prime. Each participant was asked to place in time-sequenced order eight sets of three related photos. Four of the eight sets of images consisted of photos of cats for 1/3 of the participants, four series consisted of photos of dogs for another 1/3 of the participants, with the remaining participants ordering eight sets of images unrelated to pets or loyalty. Upon completing the first task, all participants responded to a series of questions designed to measure how loyal they were toward other humans. As anticipated, those that had received dog-primes were significantly more loyal than those that received cat-primes, with the control group falling between the two groups in terms of loyalty.

In a second study, we conceptually replicated the first study in the context of brand logos. Based on the idea that the brand Apple connotes creativity much more than does the brand IBM (see Aaker, 1997), we predicted that people primed with Apple logos would perform better on a creativity task than would people primed with IBM logos. Participants first completed a computerized vigilance task that served as a subliminal priming manipulation: 1/3 of participants were primed with Apple logos; 1/3 were primed with IBM logos, and 1/3 were primed with pattern masks only (as a control condition). All participants then completed a creativity task—the Unusual Uses Task, in which they were asked to generate as many unusual uses as possible for a brick. As predicted, people primed with Apple logos outperformed control and IBM-primed participants on the creativity task. Apple-primed participants spent more time working on the task and generated more uses than did control or IBM-primed participants. Participants did not differ on self-reported motivation or interest in the task, suggesting that the effects of the brand logos on behavior were nonconscious.

In a third study, we explore whether the effects of exposure to anthropomorphized objects on behavior are operating through a stereotype-activation mechanism or through a goal-activation mechanism. We use the same subliminal priming procedure as in study two, but only _ of participants complete the creativity ask immediately following the priming procedure. The other _ of participants complete a neutral filler task for 5 minutes prior to engaging in the creativity task. If the observed effects are operating through a stereotype-activation mechanism the effect on creativity should dissipate after a 5 minute filler task. By contrast, if the observed effects are operating by activating a goal, the effects should remain constant or even strengthen after a 5 minute filler task (based on the argument that activated goals will remain strong or should dissipate after a 5 minute filler task). Across the three studies, we conclude that even incidental exposure to common objects that have had human characteristics ascribed to them (such as house pets and common brand logos) appear to influence behavior, providing further evidence that perception-behavior effects may be ubiquitous in everyday life.

“The Influence of Social Context on Advertising Reception”
Stefano Puntoni, London Business School, UK
Nader Tavassoli, London Business School, UK

Research on the advertising-viewer interaction has almost exclusively focused on the individual. However, advertisements are often viewed within the dynamics of a rich network of social interactions—be it watching television at home or in a bar, surfing the web in an Internet café, or reading a magazine sitting on a bus. Even when individuals’ cognitive responses remain unobserved and there is no opportunity for interaction, the fact that others are physically present can affect cognitive activity (Levine, Resnick and Higgins 1993). We therefore experimentally investigate the effect of social context on cognitive response to advertisements.

The primary theme of our research is that the presence of others primes the goal of social desirability, of positive self-presentation (Edwards 1957). We do not merely treat this variable as a test-taking response bias, but as reflecting a more pervasive motivational determinant of individual behavior. Specifically, we hypothesize that the presence of others will prime the goal of social desirability and lead to a motivational state of impression management, a non-conscious process that can be entirely mental in the absence of direct social interaction. As a consequence, memory for cues with high applicability to this goal should be stronger and evaluative criteria should become driven by the activated goal (Bargh and Chartrand 1999).

In experiment 1, we examine the effect of social context (alone vs. to a confederate) on the reception of television advertisements that advocate products associated with positive social impressions (e.g., perfume), negative social impressions (e.g., hemorrhoid ointments), or are neutral with respect to social goals (e.g., lip balm). In contrast to the ‘alone’ condition, memory and evaluations in the ‘next to a confederate’ condition should be facilitated for socially enhancing products, but attenuated for socially threatening products. We also investigate the effect of two personality traits: self-monitoring and social anxiety.

Self-monitoring is the active seeking of social acceptance (Gangestad and Snyder 2000). For high self-monitors, the facilitating effect on socially enhancing products should be amplified. High self-monitors should have better memory and evaluations for products that offer social desirability cues such as perfumes (DeBono and Krim 1997) and variety-offering products (Ratner and Khan 2002). A related but independent trait is social anxiety. Socially anxious individuals are hypersensitive to events perceived as a threat to self-evaluation (Mansell et al. 1999). Socially anxious individuals should engage in perceptional defense and show an attentional bias away from advertisements that threaten a socially desirable impression (e.g., hemorrhoid ointment). This effect should be amplified by the presence of others. In other words, whereas self-monitoring should affect the cognitive responding to products that have a positive effect on self-impressions, social anxiety should affect the cognitive responding to products that threaten self-impressions.

In experiment 2, we investigate the influence of seating arrangement on cognitive responses to advertisements. The physical position of others has been shown to affect group dynamics (Paulus and Nagar 1989), perceived expertise (Hart, Stasson and Karau 1999), and obedience to social influence (Milgram 1974). We manipulate the absence or presence of a confederate, and whether the confederate sits behind or in front of the participant. We expect high self-monitors to react more strongly to the presence of others when the confederate is sitting in front of them. This is because self-monitoring is an active behavior of wanting to belong, or fit in. The presence of another person in the field of vision should, therefore, have a particularly strong effect. In contrast, the effect of the presence of others should be particularly strong on socially anxious individuals when the confederate is sitting behind the participant. This is because the attentional bias for socially anxious individuals appears primarily under conditions of social-evaluative
thrusts (Mansell et al. 1999). Pilot data shows that people feel as though they are being evaluated and that the confederate has “access to innermost thoughts” when sitting behind them.

These experiments comprise the first essay of the first author’s dissertation and data collection is to be completed by April 2003. We have conducted several pilot investigations that support the general effects (we have not yet investigated the effect of personality variables) and are confident in being able to present an exciting set of insights at the conference this summer. Social context has been an overlooked area of inquiry. We believe that the “mere presence” of others can have a profound and non-conscious effect on the ad-viewing behaviors of individuals, even when these behaviors are entirely mental and not observable by others. Our findings are not purely of academic interest, but should also be of interest to practitioners. For example, viewing conditions during advertising tests should consider matching the potential social contexts the advertisement is consumed in. The creative design of advertisements, such as a self versus other focus, may also be sensitive to the social context an advertisement is consumed in.

“Dynamic Effects of the Interplay Between Spontaneous Affect and Goals”
Suresh Ramanathan, University of Chicago, USA
Geeta Menon, New York University, USA

Consumers are often likely to be exposed to stimuli in the environment that activate some knowledge or goals temporarily. For example, seeing a display of cakes and desserts in the store may either activate one’s knowledge of related categories or may actually activate a goal to have something sweet. These constructs or goals could also be chronically accessible to some consumers either because of certain traits they possess (e.g., impulsivity, dealproneness) or due to frequent instantiation by virtue of engaging in similar behaviors repeatedly. Several studies on accessibility have shown that temporary and chronic sources of accessibility influence judgments or evaluations independent of each other (e.g., Aaker and Lee 2001). In other words, if both sources of accessibility are concurrently in operation, evaluations are likely to be more extreme relative to when only one of the sources or neither of the sources is available. Thus, impulsive people may report a greater liking for a hedonic object (and potentially add it to their cart) when a hedonic goal is temporarily primed at the same time. Pitting chronic sources of accessibility against situational ones (i.e., contextual primes) in a study that also manipulated delay since the priming event, Bargh, Lombardi and Higgins (1998) found that with increasing delay since the priming episode chronics were more likely to use their chronically accessible construct instead of the primed alternative construct to categorize an ambiguous behavior.

The purpose of this study was to examine how people evaluated moderately hedonic objects as a function of their chronic and contextually primed hedonic goals. In particular, our focus was on the effect of delay, not in a between-subjects design, but in a within-subjects one, where we could examine the dynamic effects of the interaction between the chronic and situational sources of accessibility over time. The studies on accessibility cited earlier essentially found that people with chronic accessibility who are also primed contextually report more extreme evaluations. However, no study in the extant literature has examined the dynamics of such evaluations across time. Do the extreme evaluations reported earlier continue to get even more extreme with delay since the prime? Or, do they start high, and then decay to more neutral levels? Most importantly, are these evaluations automatic or more controlled? We expect this to be a function of the degree of chronicity of the underlying goal. We examine this particular question in the context of hedonic judgments as made by people with or without chronic hedonic goals, as operationalized by their impulsivity.

In a recent study, Bargh et al. (2001) pitted motivation against perceptual processes as an explanation for behavior. They argued, following from Atkinson and Birch’s (1970) dynamic theory of action that delay should cause an increase in the strength in the action tendency (due to lack of satiation) if indeed a goal was activated. On the other hand, if only a perceptual or non-motivational process such as knowledge activation is initiated, delay should either have no effect or should cause a decrease in activation over time. Following from this, we hypothesize that for those with chronic hedonic goals (impulsives), priming will activate a temporary hedonic goal (wanting something sweet) and that liking of hedonic objects related to the goal (e.g., desserts, ice-cream, etc.) will increase as a function of delay, intensifying in response to the lack of satiation of the jointly operating chronic and temporary hedonic goals. On the other hand, for non-impulsives who do not have such chronic goals, priming may only temporarily activate knowledge structures related to hedonic objects (one may think of desserts and ice-cream but not really want them). For such people, the priming task may cause evaluations of hedonic objects to go up temporarily, but then decline over time.

Further, we hypothesize, following from the literature on accessibility, that impulsive people are likely to be faster at reporting their liking for hedonic objects as compared to non-impulsives. This is particularly likely when they are primed as well, so that both chronic and temporary sources of accessibility are operating simultaneously. In other words, we expect that such evaluations are likely to be efficient, a key dimension of automatic processing. On the other hand, non-impulsive people may show faster response times immediately following a prime due to temporary accessibility of their knowledge structures but the effect of the prime is expected to wear off after a delay. In other words, we expect non-impulsives to return to more controlled processing of stimuli after a delay.

A temporary hedonic goal was primed via having subjects evaluate breakfast cereals. In a subsequent task they were exposed to blocks of pictures of moderately hedonic products, some of which were related to the previously primed goal (to desire something sweet), such as desserts, candies, etc., while others were unrelated to the goal, such as steak, pizza, MP3 players, CDs, etc. Each block of six pictures consisted of two sweet foods, two non-sweet foods and two non-foods. Blocks were presented 5 seconds, 60 seconds and 150 seconds after the priming manipulation in a within-subjects design. Subjects were asked to give a like-dislike reaction, reaction times of which were measured. They were also asked to rate the intensity of their like-dislike reactions on a 100-point scale. As hypothesized, impulsive people (or those with chronic hedonic goals) showed progressively higher degrees of liking for sweet foods (but not of non-sweet foods or non-foods) with delay after they were primed. They were also significantly faster than non-impulsive people in responding to the like-dislike measure. Non-Impulsive people on the other hand showed a temporary increase in their liking for sweet foods 5 seconds after being primed, but liking scores declined to average levels 60 seconds and 150 seconds after the priming.

We conclude that the affective and motivational systems interact with each other in influencing judgments and behavior. There appears to be a feedback mechanism at play such that a currently operating temporary goal interacts with chronic goals in influencing and strengthening the spontaneous affect felt upon seeing a hedonic object. This process is efficient, as evidenced by faster response times and hence at least partially automatic. We frame our results within a connectionist framework where perceptual, affective and motivational processes interact with each other.
REFERENCES


Marketing and consumer behavior theorists have focused primarily on retail venues in their investigation of “place,” addressing such issues as location, merchandising, and a “sense of place,” for example (e.g., Sherry 1998; Lego et al., 2002; MacLaran and Stevens 1998). More rare are those scholarly works that explore “place” from a sociocultural, experiential or historical perspective (e.g., Brown and Sherry 2003). For example, Belk (1998) assessed the roles of fantasy and farce in Las Vegas, and Costa and Bamossy (2001) evaluated Disney Paris within the context of European consumption of American icons and an idealized United States. Researchers also have considered tourist destinations as settings where “place” is significant and may include specific settings, traditions and behaviors. For instance, such studies have shown that consumers may seek products such as souvenirs, performances and experiences that conform to their pre-existing knowledge of the destination (e.g., Costa 1998), or that provide further education or familiarity with historical or social aspects of a place (e.g., Alsayyad 2001; see also Arnould and Price 1993).

While the papers in this proposed special session continue in the vein of these recent studies, the presenters also hope to impart new and greater understanding of “place” consumption. They explore the application of various relevant theories, as well as new cases and data that provide substantial insights into the consumption of place. Their research illuminates the processes involved in the transformation of “space” into “place,” the dialectical tensions and intertwining meanings of the physical settings and their spiritual, cultural and social associations, and the dynamic character of symbols and interpretations attached to a given space or place.

Suggestive of both the Frankfurt School (e.g., Horkheimer and Adorno, Marcuse, and Habermas) and the perspectives of Stuart Hall (1997), Bamossy, van Herk and Velliquette consider the issues of power and difference as local culture-holders attempt to manipulate the presentation of “place” in the media. The authors also apply and analyze the role of culture in the consumption of the 2002 Olympic venue from the perspective of some 2500 European consumers in five different countries. Their point of departure in this portion of their analysis is the presentation of “place” via national and international media. Their data sets of Utah powerholders marketing the Olympic place, of national and international media presentations, and of consumers’ pre- and post-Olympic perceptions and attitudes concerning Utah as a place provide an exceptionally nuanced and detailed delineation of the role of communication and of culture in the consumption of place.

The designation of places as sacred is apparently a cultural universal; that is, a practice found in all known societies and cultures. Sacred sites in contemporary societies are typically buildings such as churches or temples and their surrounding grounds. More unusual are those places that encompass a larger space and may include a topographical feature—a mountain, valley or river. According to Hirsch, “the purest form of potentiality is emptiness itself...sacred sites and places are physically empty or largely uninhabited” (1995, p.4). In their presentation, Costa and Zhao investigate consumption of the American desert as a “sacred space.” Located in the American Southwest, the desert includes expanses of sand and large sandstone cliffs, buttes, canyons and bluffs. Costa and Zhao invoke the classic theories of Durkheim (1965/1915) and Hegel (1996/c.1840) in the context of reflective self that produces projected self, not-self, and recognition of society as sacred. Here, the varied encounters of consumers who visit or live in the desert suggest the sparse, arid landscape often evokes notions of the sacred and the sublime. The presenters analyze consumers’ hoped-for thoughts concerning self, the past and the future, and their daily versus their “hoped-for” lives. Consumers also report ritualized behaviors involving the rising and setting of the sun, as well as contemplation of Native American religious beliefs. Experience of the dialectical tension between the desert and the not-desert, between the sacred and the profane, and between self and society, is typical of consumption of the American desert as sacred space.

In describing the changing role of the piano within the space of an Irish shopping center, Maclaran suggests the ways in which objects are representatives of—and metaphors for—consumer experiences, interpretations and meanings. In addition, such objects and the places and spaces associated with them can embody identity and identification, in this case of Irish cultural patterns and behaviors, including the well-known Irish talents for music and art. When the objects and design of a space change, not only does the nature of the “place” become different, but the objects themselves take on other meanings and have altered implications for consumption and experience. Thus, as the “old” shopping center was re-designed, the piano was no longer a focal point, and its former role symbolizing transcendence of music and art, separating the center from typical, mundane shopping, and creating a “hyperreal” experience reminiscent of the theatre, concert or opera was circumvented. Thus, as Maclaran’s analysis indicates, place becomes “something both fixed and fleeting” (Richardson 1984, p.1).

All three presentations suggest the significance of both society and the individual in the creation and consumption of place. The identification of a space as “place” taps into extant social discourses (e.g., Costa 1998) but also serves to further the dialectical interactions of culture, society and self in the construction of identity and meaning. Thus, “[place] meanings crystallize into shared symbols and ultimately link people to a sense of common history and individual identity” (Kahn 1996, p. 168). Finally, the association of “place” with the dialectical tensions of sacred and profane, of unusual and of everyday, of past, present and future, of “own culture” with “cultural Other,” and of media and individuals/societies in various domains is also illustrated in the presentations.

ABSTRACTS

“Culture Times Three: Construction, Mediation, and Consumption of the 2002 Winter Olympics”
Gary Bamossy, University of Utah, USA & Vrije Universiteit, The Netherlands

Hester van Herk, Vrije Universiteit, The Netherlands
Anne Marie Velliquette, University of Utah, USA

Second only to Soccer’s World Cup in terms of being a global media sports spectacle, the Olympic Games attracts a world-wide audience of viewers. For the Olympic host city, “being in the spotlight” implies more than just planning and organizing for the smooth running of sporting events. There is no doubt that the host city also wants “to put on its best face” for the world to see during the run-up to the games, a process which increases in intensity
beginning approximately eight weeks’ prior to the event and ending with the closing ceremony. While the main focus of the Games is on the athletes’ performances, the Olympics are an event with many important side-shows. The venue for the Games can be seen as two distinct places: The physical space, comprising the terrain, climate, and majestic views of the host’s geography, and the cultural space, comprised of the local, regional, and national contexts. In the case of the Salt Lake City Winter Olympic Games, the national context had an extra dimension of drama, as the U.S. was on the world stage, hosting a global event for the first time since the September 11th 2001 attack. At the local level, Salt Lake City added an extra dimension of discourse to the Games as a host city whose dominant culture of Mormons has long been a curiously viewed sub-culture to other Americans (Twain, 1872), and to the rest of the world.

The focus of this study is on the presentation, representation, and interpretation of the 2002 Games’ physical and cultural spaces. McCracken’s framework on the cultural transfer of meaning (1986) and Kozinet’s model of Consumer-Media Articulations in a Mass Media Culture of Consumption (2001) provide the theoretical frameworks for our analysis. Within these frameworks, we conceptualize three separate but related cultural levels of analyses:

1. The multiple cultures of consumers of the Games (viewers from France, Germany, the U.K., Italy, Denmark, and the U.S.A.)
2. The Culture of the Place/Space Producers (The Western USA, and the local Mormon culture of the host city)
3. The Cultures of the national and international media who provided coverage, commentary, and images of the Games to viewers in their respective countries.

In spite of all the careful planning and pre-event efforts carried out by the local organizing committee, the ultimate presentation and representation of the host city and its citizens are seen through the cultural lens of the global media members, who come from most countries of the world. It is this intersection of the unique local culture, the Western American regional culture, the American National Culture, and the variety of global cultures, represented by the world’s media that provides the focus for this study.

This paper provides three unique data sets to assess the pre- and post-Olympic awareness and images of Salt Lake City as host of the 2002 Winter Olympic Games, of Utah as a state, and of the American West as a region.

1. The first data set is a sample of 2,500 Europeans from five European countries (the U.K., Italy, Germany, France, and the Netherlands), who were surveyed on their awareness and perceptions of Salt Lake City, the state of Utah, and the region of the American West prior to the Winter Games (this “pre-Olympics” study was carried out in 1999).

2. The second data set is a “post-Olympic” study carried out six months after the 2002 Winter Games, which sampled 2,500 Europeans from the same five countries. These survey respondents were administered the identical survey as in 1999, but the 2002 survey also included measures of media behavior during the Winter 2002 Games, and a measure of behavioral intentions of visiting Salt Lake City as a tourist destination. These two carefully constructed surveys allow for a quantitative measure of the impact that the Salt Lake City Winter Olympic Games had on Europeans’ awareness and perceptions of Salt Lake, the state of Utah, and the American West.

3. The third data set gives meaningful insights into the survey data, and is comprised of several hours of video recordings of the Winter Olympics as it was being broadcast live in five European countries. In addition to the taping in Europe of the Games, video recordings of the U.S. coverage as broadcast on national and Salt Lake City media were also taken (recordings started two weeks prior to the Games, and went through the closing ceremonies). Additionally, magazine and newspaper articles in each country for the same time period, and web publications and photo essays were collected.

The focus of the analyses is on the presentation and representation by global media of the U.S., Utah, Utah’s culture, and Salt Lake City. Using McCracken’s and Kozinet’s models of the movement of meaning and articulations in a mass media culture of consumption, we provide a critical comparison of the data at several levels and across a variety of subject matters relating to the Games.

“Sacred Space: Spiritual Consumption of the American Desert”

Janeen Costa, University of Utah, USA
Xin Zhao, University of Utah, USA

Reflective of consumer culture, where individuals typically derive substantial happiness from the possession of material goods, consumers may sacralize virtually any product or service (Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry 1989). However, this form of consumer sacralization is substantially different from that involving the “supernatural,” where products are often referred to as “magic,” “spiritual” or “religious” (see Arnould and Price 1993; Costa 1998). Focusing on places rather than objects, we address the nature of sacred spaces where consumers believe the supernatural to be (or to have been) present.

Some consumers apprehend and experience the American desert as this type of hallowed space, somewhat similar to the consecrated sites of churches, synagogues and temples, pilgrimage destinations, cemeteries and Indian burial grounds. For example, consumers variously see the desert as a regenerative and rejuvenating “mother Earth,” a manifestation of the awesome, ageless sublime (Kover, 1998), the locus of “contagious” divinity derived from Native American religions, and/or as a pilgrimage site, all materialized representations of spiritual forces. In interpreting and understanding their own consumption, they draw upon discourses involving landscape (real, imagined, and produced), past and present Native American Indian life, New Age religion, legends of the American West, and spiritual expressions of the desert embodied in the work of artists such as Georgia O’Keefe or authors like Tony Hillerman (based on Navajo, Pueblo, Zuni cultures) and Carlos Castaneda (delineating Yaqui belief systems). Moreover, consumers experience the desert as a site for reflection and self-analysis, where they can “discover” their basic character, plan for a more “meaningful” life, and experience both God and nature (the latter often seen as the same thing in this context).

Addressing the resultant perceived differences between their “daily” existence and the fragile yet sublime desert life and environment, our informants suggest the significance of dialectical interactions of the profane and the sacred (Durkheim 1965/1915). They first desire, then experience and assess, reject or accept, and finally escape from and/or return to each sphere (the daily profane and the sacred desert) in a continuing pattern of processual consumption wherein profane and sacred mutually define one another. While some consumers desire full immersion in the supernatural and consequently choose to live in the desert, others seek temporary
residence and consumption, focusing on liminal/liminoid (Van Gennep 1960; Turner 1969) states that offer both distraction from work and responsibility, as well as rejuvenating preparation to return to these obligations of their quotidian existence. While the temporal dimension differs, however, the meaning-based and discursive characteristics of their consumption are basically the same.

Finally, our data indicate that the dialectical reflection upon and interaction of the individual and society are manifest also in consumption of the desert. Drawing upon personal experience and introspection, as well as contemplation of the dictates, demands, and benefits of urban versus rural society, their consumption suggests fruitful analysis would be based upon both the Hegelian (1996/c.1840) reflexivity of “true” versus “projected” selves and the Durkheimian (1915) dichotomy of self versus not-self, the latter conceptualized as secularized, normative society. Our presentation will utilize multiple media and is based upon data collected through observation, informal and depth interviews of consumers and service providers, assessment of marketing materials and websites, and analysis of literature on space and place.

“Putting a Piano in its Place: Ascribing Meanings to a Space”

Pauline Maclaran, De Montfort University, UK

It is not spaces which ground identifications, but places. How then does space become place? By being named: as the flows of power and negotiations of social relations are rendered in the concrete form of architecture; and also, of course, by embodying the symbolic and imaginary investments of a population. Place is space to which meaning has been ascribed.

(Carter, Donald and Squires 1993, p. xii)

Potentially, places play an important role in the symbolic and psychical dimensions of our identifications (Carter, Donald and Squires 1993). Casey (1996) highlights how a given place takes on the qualities of its occupants, becoming a complex intertwining of physical, spiritual, cultural and social factors. In this way markets and other retailing milieu, for example shopping centres and malls, contain what Sherry (1990) refers to as a “matrix of energies.”

Using the story of a piano to illustrate the dynamics of place in a festival market in Dublin, this paper explores the multiple levels of symbolic meanings that are inherent in those energies that surround “being-in-the-marketplace” (Sherry 1998, p. 9). As the only musical instrument that is rooted in place, the piano is an especially potent and apposite physical symbol of these marketplace dynamics. Whenever we think of a piano, we are very likely to contextualise it within a particular setting. Moreover, in relation to consumer culture, the piano epitomised the successful development of mass-marketing techniques in the nineteenth century. Due to the evolution of consumer credit, it transcended socio-cultural boundaries, and no Victorian parlour was considered respectable without one (Ehrlich 1975).

This particular story is about a piano in the Powerscourt Townhouse Centre in Dublin, a piano that became invested with a multiplicity of meanings as the centre underwent a radical, and highly unpopular, refurbishment. Prior to this modernization, three levels of retail outlets were grouped around an atrium-enclosed courtyard, the majority of which were specialist arts, crafts and designer goods. Rising up from the courtyard was a stage for cultural events with a grand piano to provide special recitals and enhance the centre’s ambience. After the refurbishment, the emphasis changed from arts and crafts to high street retailing, and the piano was no longer a focal point. I draw on findings from a major ethnographic study conducted over a two-year period in the centre to illustrate the meanings that were created by consumers and retailers alike in relation to these changing dynamics of place. In this presentation I will highlight the ways in which the physical setting, as represented by the piano, interacted with the consumer imagination in the centre and how spiritual, cultural and social meanings became interwoven in a complex and mutually interdependent web.

For example, in relation to spiritual aspects, the piano symbolised for consumers the transcendent effects of music and the arts, associations that prior to the refurbishment had been a key part of the Powerscourt experience. In turn these associations also reflected important cultural aspects of the Irish psyche that were seen as being represented by the centre through its arts and crafts. This feeling of transcendence was subsequently lost in the centre’s new emphasis on high street fashion. At an additional cultural level the piano epitomised the nature of postmodern consumer culture, and the search for the future in the past. The central space in which the piano sat was not simply a “conspicuous and scandalous waste of space” (Ferguson 1992, p. 31), but an integral part of the shopping experience in Powerscourt. This space was one devoted to stimulating the consumer imagination, and conveyed meanings that far outweighed narrow, economic calculations and considerations. Even when it remained unplayed, the piano created an air of expectancy and anticipation, creating a hyperreal ambience that reminded consumers of the theatre (Maclaran and Stevens 1998), the concert hall and the opera house. It thereby simulated a more cultured environment, one that was very much removed from the mundanities of shopping.

At a social level the story of the piano in Powerscourt mirrored the rise and fall of consumer engagement with the centre and the utopianism inherent therein. For Dublin consumers, the piano in Powerscourt represented a corner that remained unsullied by the modern environment. It lent a sense of continuity and security in terms of the tradition it was able to evoke for them. Yet, in that very tradition and its association with past grandeur and nobler aspirations, it was able to transcend the immediate present and act as a symbol for critiquing the present, namely the over-commercialization of the rest of Dublin. Consumers associated the loss of the piano with a capitulation to wider market forces. These wider market forces were associated in turn with an impending loss of Irish identity in the face of increasing globalization and the encroachment of the British High Street with its uniformly bland chain stores. Ironically when it first opened as a festival marketplace, Powerscourt had been perceived as part of an Anglo-Irish heritage that was now freely accessible to the Irish people (Maclaran and Brown 2000). Given its history, a piano in this context was a particularly appropriate symbol to denote this mass accessibility to a previously elitist culture. However, in a further ironic twist of fate, Powerscourt revisits its colonial past with the domination of the British chain store, FCUK, over its entrance.

REFERENCES


SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY
Privacy, Confidentiality, and Intellectual Property Online: Issues and Challenges for Consumer Behavior Research
Angela Hausman, The University of Texas-Pan American, USA

ABSTRACTS

“Consumer Research in Virtual Communities”
Constance Porter, Georgia State University, USA
The special problems of privacy and intellectual property rights for researchers examining virtual communities are addressed with emphasis on questions of individual rights and what practical and theoretical perspectives should guide research behavior in adequately protecting those rights without sacrificing research efficacy. The author has substantially completed the conceptual part of this paper.

“Consumer Interests Versus Privacy on the Internet”
Angela Hausman, The University of Texas-Pan American, USA
Issues that may contribute to consumer vulnerability in cyberspace are addressed with emphasis on issues such as the collection of data on individuals without their knowledge, increased electronic surveillance in the workplace, and the possible vulnerability of stored information online for consumers, businesses and other entities that collect this information. This paper is primarily conceptual.

“Internet Distribution of Copyrighted Digital Content: Consumer Perceptions, Ethical Issues and the Viability of Subscription Models”
Jennifer Christie, University of Dayton, USA
Don Lloyd Cook, University of New Mexico, USA
Dan Fisher, University of Southern Mississippi, USA
Jeff Langenderfer, Berry College, USA
Norma A. Mendoza, University of Arkansas, USA
The growth of the file sharing or “peer-to-peer” mechanisms such as Napster, Freenet, Kazaa, Morpheus and others has raised a host of issues for consumer researchers, business, and policy makers. The perceptions and attitudes of consumers toward the sharing of copyrighted material in an online context is examined in an effort to better understand the interactions between policy-makers, intellectual property owners, and other consumers using quantitative and qualitative data. Data collection is continuing.
Our special session will focus on our own interdisciplinary research effort of business administration and ethnology in applying the concept of commercial cultures to a number of phenomena here in Sweden. The importance of cultural perspectives on consumption has gained more acceptance recently. However, still a lot remains to be done when it comes to integrating economic and cultural science. What kind of cultural analysis is in demand? What happens to economy if you accept the fact that it is culturally constructed, not made up of objective laws? If it is all about culture, what stops us from dealing with both production and consumption in the same study? Most research on consumption from the cultural side has tried to isolate producers and consumers, setting up the latter as uniquely creative in teasing out new creative meanings of mass produced goods (Gelber 1999, 1989). The conventional approach in cultural studies suggests that consumption is only meaningfully treated by the ethnography of resistant consumers. But this is only the simple reverse of glorifying business as heroically moulding passive consumers into desiring subjects. We like to contribute to the recent move towards ending the purely artificial division between production, marketing and consumption. This also, of course, means changing the narrative—both consumers and producers should be studied as interacting and creative in bringing about commercial cultures marked by both.

The concept of commercial culture has been used to sum up the essence of a number of complicated issues. As discussed by Peter Jackson, Frank Mort and Daniel Miller (Jackson et al. 2000, Mort 1996), it has been taken to mean the integration of economy and culture by focusing upon creative acts by both producers and consumers. Commercial culture is a hybrid creature that accounts for the manifold outcomes brought about by changes in consumption. The impact of commercial cultures on everyday lifeforms is difficult to assess. There are no obvious borderlines demarcating an original popular culture from market promoted phenomena. By mobilizing the tools of ethnography we try to get into the details of how consumers and producers interact. A number of phenomena will be studied, like appropriating and intimization and the ritualizing of the consumption of anonymous massmarket products. Singularisation and de-commodification are ways to remove the anonymity of goods (Belk 1995, Osteen 2002). But this is only one way to approach consumption, one that still owes a lot to traditional demonization of consumerism. Goods are taken to be “bads” because of their commercial origin. The approach we would like to develop also includes the perspective of “fans”, people who invest intimate feelings in brands as exponents of outright commercial cultures. In that case goods may be appropriated without either singularisation or de-commodification. We think there is a demand for studies that go into the true complexity of consumer-producer relations, without demonizing the many forms of consumption as onedimensional consumerism. We have selected three examples to fully grasp these interactions. First we show intimate relations being formed in that most anonymous space, the McDonalds restaurant. Second is a case of high status consumption in the form of collections of medium value like vases. Third, we focus on relations created by giftgiving on the internet in a context of popular hobbies. These examples serve to bring out some important aspects of commercial cultures, the study of market impact on everyday life without either demonization or glorification. Hopefully we will move on to be able to integrate some exiting avant-garde perspectives that yet wait to be applied to consumption like the ANT of Bruno Latour (1999) or the Art-Culture system of James Clifford (1998).

References

“McDonald’s as Commercial Culture”
Helene Brembeck, Göteborg University and CFK, Sweden

A McDonald’s-restaurant is no doubt a commercial space. Inside very mundane activities take place, parents and children socializing while having a meal. The aim of this paper is to discuss a visit to McDonald’s not as a wholly commercial activity following the authors of the McDonaldization thesis (Ritzer 1993, 1998, Schlosser 2001) and not as pure popular culture, which might be the approach favored in Cultural Studies, celebrating the consumer as an artist using the offers of the restaurants for his or her own ends (e.g. Fiske 1989), but as commercial culture, an ongoing flow of interaction and influence including consumers and producers, artifacts and technologies, situated in time and space.

Fears of McDonald’s as a homogenizing force, which lays at the heart of the McDonaldization thesis, were followed by an interest in hybridity, creolization and glocalism (Featerstone, Lasch & Robertson 1995, Hannenz 1996), showing that these restaurants offer different experiences and are differentely used in e.g. Moscow, Paris and Hongkong, one eminent example being James L Watson’s “Golden Arches East” (1997). Recently researchers inspired by post-structuralism have criticized ideas of hybridity and creolization, since they imply whole and stable cultures, that in different ways can be blended to special glocalized mixes. Instead culture should be understood as neither whole, stable and with no clear borders, but changing and in constant flux, approximating an understanding of culture similar to the one we adhere to in the Commercial Culture project. Different combinations of place and movement have been proposed as a better way to understand globalization. Well known exponents for this view from the field of anthropology are James Clifford advocating that places/locality is created where people’s routes meet (1997) and George Marcus inspiring us to track traces of people, artifacts, metaphors (1998), and from a more philosophi-
cal stand-point French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari questioning the very possibility of complete stability and coordination between central powers and localities (1988).

An interesting example from the field of consumer studies is provided by British geographer Philip Crang, investigating topics such as food and eating (1996). The consumer, Crang says, is always entangled in flows and nets of goods and services and it is the duty of the researcher never to get stuck at the local. A visit to a McDonald’s restaurant can, following Crang, be understood as contextual, but “where those contexts are recognized as being opened up by and constituted through connections into any number of networks, networks which extend beyond delimiting boundaries of particular places: where imagined and performed representations—surround the various flows — and where customers (and other actors in commodity systems) find themselves positioned and position themselves in terms of their entanglement with these flows and representations” (1996: 47). This way a McDonald’s restaurant could be understood as a cross-road for of a number of tales about the company and its products, about modern men, women and children, that producers and consumers jointly create, flows and pictures, narratives, categories, technologies and artifacts that customers as well as personnel have to orient themselves within. If these tales are deconstructed biographies of humans and non-humans appear. Through and beyond the illusory shine from the Golden Acres a McDonald’s restaurant is also a place where it is possible to go to, get seated and have a meal, with its own localization in time and space, a place most Swedish families visit regularly. Ordinary man, woman and child are not devastated by the power of the brand. In the restaurant customers not only find themselves entangled with narratives, they are also entangled with embodied humans, artifacts and technologies. A lot has been written about the detrimental effects on relations when they are expressed through things and consumption, often in terms of a moral panic about human relations and love being replaced by things following the tradition of the Frankfurt school (e.g. Marcuse 1964, Adorno 1981, Horkheimer 1972), i.e. turned into something thoroughly commercial and commodified. The other extreme might be exemplified by Material culture studies, where artifacts are sometimes seen as completely ethereal turned into emotions or pure meaning (Miller 1998), i.e. as something thoroughly cultural. Inspiring ways to bridge these opposites are offered by e g Bruno Latour 1988, Donna Haraway 1991 and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari 1988. Things could be seen as extensions of people, but people could also be seen as extensions of artifacts and technologies bridging the human-artefact divide. An interesting exemplification from the field of childhood research is offered by British sociologist Nick Lee advocating that both children and adults are “becomings”, i.e. never finished as individuals, and in need of extensions to “become” individuals. Such extensions could be language but also artifacts and technologies. Inspired by Deleuze and Guattari, Lee describes how children, artifacts and technologies form “assemblages”, or “desiring machines” in this process of becoming (Lee 2001), a way of reasoning that could easily be used in analyzing the child at McDonald’s enjoying a Happy Meal. Following Latour (1988), however, also artifacts become using humans as extensions.

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“Collecting and Reflexivity”
Karin M. Ekström, Göteborg University and CFK, Sweden

Collections are often highly private. Even though collectors display their collections in their homes in various ways such as vertical/horizontal, structured/unstructured (Belk et al. 1988), the display is not always made visible. Some collectors show their collections or part of their collections only to certain selected individuals, while others like to keep their collections to themselves. To exhibit a private collection in a museum gives both the collector and the collection exposure in a public/commercial place. Collections can become part of the owner’s extended self (Belk 1988). An object may become part of the self when an individual appropriates the object (Belk 1988). Possessions are not only part of the self, but can also be seen as instrumental for development of the self (Belk 1988).

The purpose of this paper is to describe private collector’s experiences of exhibiting their collections in a museum. More specifically, the paper focuses on how collectors perceive themselves as collectors after the exhibition. Collections can state things about the collector which would be socially undesirable to express aloud (McCracken 1988). Is it possible that the collector perceives him/herself differently after seeing his/her collection displayed in relation to other collector’s collections. Collecting represents a highly individualistic activity, but also a collectivist activity in that the collectors often associate themselves to other collectors. The individuality is substantiated by the exposure received in relation to other collections as well as in relation to the absence of such collections.

The paper focuses also on how collectors perceive their collections before and during an exhibition of their collections in a museum, as well as after their collections have been moved back into their private homes. Collections are viewed and evaluated by
people, collectors and non-collectors, and related and compared to other collections. Maybe the collection is transformed and the meaning of the collection changes after being displayed in a museum. The collection may become more legitimized after being displayed in a museum. The exhibit may result in a shift from profane to sacred or the opposite. What does the transformation of the collection into a museum symbolize for the collector? The views from the unknown public may affect the collector’s perception of his/her collection. For example, is the collection viewed as more romanticized or sterilized? The collections in a museum are arranged in different ways than at home. For example, in a more abstract, scientific criteria, in glass cases, and with guards, all of which may mark a distance from the objects (Belk 1995). Collectors viewing their collections in a museum may or may not experience this distance to their objects. Also, different rituals (e.g. McCracken 1986) related to acquisition, possession, and divestment may become affected after the collection has been exhibited in a museum.

The paper is built on written story-telling (e.g. Czarniawska 1999). The author who is a collector reflects upon experiences related to exhibiting her own collection of vases in a museum. Also, collectors exhibiting a variety of collections (representing different degrees of visibility) in the same museum have been asked to write down their feelings and experiences in retrospect and describe how they felt before, during and after the exhibition is over. Stewart (1995, p.31) states: “the arrested life of the displayed collection finds its unity in memory and narrative”.

The paper is related to commercial culture in that a private collection is displayed in a public/commercial place where the collection is viewed by museum visitors who pay to see the exhibition. Collecting represents consumption in that collectible items are acquired, displayed, and disposed of. Collecting also represents production. A collector produces and redefines his/her collection over time, for example by arranging it differently. The collector also produces him/herself as a collector and relates him/herself to other collectors and collections. Collectors are embedded in consumer culture. Belk (1995, p.158) states “rather than being manipulated pawns of marketers, collectors are proactive decommoditizers of goods who creatively wrest meaning from the marketplace. I do not mean in this assessment to vindicate consumer society in general. But for the majority of collectors, their participation in consumer culture is perhaps less problematic than that of the majority of non-collectors”. Furthermore, consumption is often visual (e.g. Schroeder 2002) and the exhibition of collections involves also visual display (e.g. Cooke and Wollen 1995). Recently there has been an upsurge in the study of museums and exhibitions (e.g. Wollen 1995).

Since collecting is linked to identity, the paper draws upon theories related to self and identity (e.g. Belk 1988, Gould 2001, Sirgy 1982). The paper is also inspired by literature on reflexivity (e.g. Giddens 1991). Marcus (1998) views reflexivity as a dimension of method. Reflexivity is also interesting to compare and contrast to literature on introspection (Gould 1991,1995; Wallendorf and Brucks 1993). Rabinow (1977) argues that the participant observer is influenced by the collection of cultural data. He made it scientifically legitimate to include the researcher’s own experience in a study.

This paper is part of a larger study which rather than viewing collecting from a single-site location, views collecting from multiple sites of observation and participation. Marcus (1998) describes the emergence of multi-sited ethnography in anthropological research. There are different techniques for conducting a multi-sited ethnography such as follow the people, follow the thing, follow the metaphor, etc. In this paper, the focus is on following the thing, i.e. tracing circulation of collections in different contexts.

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“Giftgiving and Commodification in an Internet Context”
Magnus Möreck, Göteborg University and CFK, Sweden
Gifts and commodities are often interpreted as opposites, the first are recruited as proof of love and personalized empathy, while the latter only serve to bring out the contrast, massification and instrumental rationality (Belk 1993, 1995, Mauss 1966, Miller
1998, Osteen 2002). Gifts get associated with history, the familiar narrative of loss in the quality of life, brought about by the growth of the markets and commodity production. The cynic counterpart of the nostalgic scenario is economism, which effectively nivellates gifts to just another example of calculating exchange. If these rather predictable approaches is avoided, many interesting topics open up, the constant intertwining of gift-giving phenomena and the commodity form in the present day consumer societies. My own sub-study of the commercial culture deals with gifts and commodities in an internet environment. Collecting (Belk 1995, Gelber 1999), visual culture (Mirzoeff 1999), the art-culture system of James Clifford (Clifford 1988) and Steven Gelbers analytic triangle of hobbyism as craft, collecting and consumption are main theoretical themes (Gelber ibd). Of great interest is also the engendering and degendering movements brought about by the articulation of femininity and masculinity in the diverse genres under study (Mort 1996, Kimmel 1997, Rogers 1999).

The trajectories of particular objects show switches back and forth along the continuum from the perfect gift to the perfect commodity. Commodities get singularised or decommmodified and in the end may also get depersonalized once more in order to enter the second hand market (Appadurai 1986, McCracken 1988). A fair number of studies have tackled this problem, the cycle of life or biographic approach to things. My project deals with printable downloads from the internet of artifacts that can be made to appear in real space, if you just print the files and glue the parts together. This phenomenon has appeared as giftgiving, hobbyism and commodity production during the last few years. The motives are diverse, like display of craft skills or historical or other forms of factual knowledge. Hundreds of artifacts are available from the most diverse sources, both small scale actors like students and large scale ones like NASA, Canon and many other corporations and government agencies. This phenomenon is gendered as most of the artifacts appeal to traditional manifestations of masculinity: airplanes, ships, cars and buildings. Some female designers are active and tend to affirm conventional feminine interests like dolls houses and paper dolls. This means that printable artifacts on the internet engender, rather than degender a new social space.

The project has been running for about a year, trying to survey the artifacts and how they circulate on the web. Presently I am most interested in how moments of giftgiving and commodity production and exchange get integrated. The standardized quality of the files that can be reproduced digitally at no cost any number of times owes most to the commodity form. The artifacts reproduced are made up of simple and distinct forms and try to get universal attraction by appealing to well known object worlds. In the case of model buildings there is a large overlap with often reproduced sets of souvenirs, like the opera standing for Sydney or a New England barn appealing to American History values like simplicity and good taste (Margolin 2002). The object world of the internet shows an affinity with commodity production by appealing to already known artifacts and representing them as kits with parts that will reproduce the same likeness whether it is assembled in America or Japan. The consumption of these free gifts during leisure time actually resembles work at the tayloristic assembly line. Steven Gelbers critical theses on the work-orientation of hobbyistic leisure are in many ways confirmed (Gelber 1999). Indeed, competitive behaviour is richly manifested in the web-albums that are dedicated to the display of assembled artifacts. The motives for offering the files of various objects for free is decidedly not any homogenous manifestation of altruism. A large number of these gifts circulate as promotion or advertising of corporations that obviously have calculated their expenses. Many professionals in graphic design have examples of their skill available on their homepages for the same reason. But there also seems to be a lot of altruistic giftgiving in the strict sense that has been suggested by authors like Belk or Osteen (Belk 1993, Osteen 2002). The offerings are presented to anomaly consumers with few possibilities to gain instrumentally. The rhetoric that has been created by different actors and can be documented in email lists appeals to values of excess and generosity. Gratuitousness is shown through elaborations of a number of themes supposed to be manifested by the offer. Spontaneous, enjoyment and superfluity lie at the heart of the responses. It is constantly underlined that people give away the work of many hours, that in other contexts could have been marketed with a profit. The dimension of excess in digital no-cost copying comes close to the principle of expenditure in Bataille (Bataille 1988). But some cold distance is also appropriate in assessing this phenomenon, the prefect digital files that are down-loaded are heavy with the esthetics of the commodity form. As the kits get assembled into various fragile and highly temporary paper objectifications personal thumbprints and mistakes creates singularisation. The ideal of the hobbyists is however not to personalize in this obvious way, but to create something clean and pristine and in this way commodity form is again and finally courted. To sum up, in this study, part of a cooperative research effort with marketing science, my ambition as ethnologist has been to transcend the conventional limits of my discipline to culture as the meaning of texts, to include the meanings brought about by manifestations of economic categories like giftgiving and commodity form.

References
The aim of this session is to challenge the axiomatic assumption of consumer wastefulness (Lastovicka, Bettencourt, Hughner and Kuntze 1999). Across the social sciences, many models of consumer behavior build in the presumption that consumers are wasteful, perhaps because they recognize that capitalism is a wasteful economic system. In economic theory, the idea of infinitely expanding consumer wants unites models as diverse as neoclassical theory and Veblen’s (1994) theory of conspicuous consumption. In sociology, Colin Campbell (1987) proposes that the Romantic current in Protestantism, supplanting the thriftiness espoused by the earlier Calvinist variety, and evident in early American consumer behavior (Witkowski 1989), fuels an unquenchable passion for material things. Presumably, the frugal republican yeoman is no more. In anthropology, case studies of the erosion of idealized traditional cultures (commodity poor but ecologically sound) faced with the presumably irresistible flood of Western consumer goods are a staple of textbooks and undergraduate readers.

Movements that challenge modern consumer culture also seem to presume consumer wastefulness as a condition that needs rectification. The consumer behavior literature on recycling, for example, deals primarily with the problem of non-compliance or mechanisms to increase compliance with recycling plans (Chew and Wirtz 2001; Dahab, Gentry, and Su 1995; Jackson, Olsen, Granzin and Burns 1993; Thøgersen and Grunert-Beckmann 1997). Backed up by undeniably alarming macro-level statistics about energy consumption, consumer debt, carbon dioxide emissions, global warming, and landfill use, recent work on sustainable consumption similarly focuses its attention on the search for incentives to reduce waste by reducing consumption (Czech 2000; Chapman, Lorey 2002; Petersen and Smith-Moran 1999). The voluntary simplicity movement entwined with the popularity of PBS’s 1996 Affluenza documentary likewise extols the delights of consuming less as against the (sinful?) inducements of marketers to wasteful consumption (Elgin 1993; Pierce 2000).

The popular press provides compelling evidence in such vehicles as the Tightwad Gazette, that frugality is alive and well among many consumers (Lastovicka, et al. 1999). Nevertheless, the consumer behavior literature is virtually silent on thrift and frugality. Only Lastovicka, et al. (1999) challenge this silence to develop a trait measure of frugality (Lastovicka et al. 1999; Miller 1998). Their study also extends lastovicka et al. (1999) framework. Their study also extends their work by examining saving on luxury purchases as constitutive of an extended network of significant others. Coulter and Ligas examine a category of behaviors that maps tidily neither to hoarding nor collecting in Belk, et al.’s (1991) framework. Their work focuses on storage in anticipation of saving through giving and reuse of useful things.

Together the papers in this session encourage future work in two areas: first, on frugality and consumption and, secondly, on frugality, re-use and giving as forms of productive consumption. Our session chair, Lorna Stephens, who speaks as a professional expert in retailing, a participant observer of trash shopping, and as a collector developed further research directions and theoretical implications.

Gleaning is generally associated with gathering or picking up ears of corn or other produce after the reapers (Oxford English Dictionary). In this context, gleaners constitute a differentiated segment of people, generally marginalized and economically disadvantaged. Renderings that are more contemporary refer to gathering or picking up in small quantities or scraping together and primarily describe gleaning intangibles such as information or experience. Only recently have researchers turned attention to gleaning as a metaphor for how consumers derive value from products, but again gleaners have typically been depicted as fringe elements of contemporary society—dumpster divers, thrift shoppers, and homeless consumers (Meamber and MacLaran 2002). In “Everyday Gleaning in the American Midwest,” Eric Arnould and Linda Price examine the everyday product gleaning behaviors of middle-class North America Midwesterners in order to inform understanding of consumer thrift and frugality in contemporary consumption.

Arnould and Price’s research builds systematically on research that identifies frugality and saving impulses in the context of purchase behaviors to explore these urges in product use and reuse (Lastovicka et al 1999; Miller 1998). Their study also extends research examining the meaning of post-acquisition activities (Arnould and Price 2001, Curasi, Arnould and Price 2003, Price, Arnould and Curasi 2000). In this paper, they draw on 80 semi-structured depth interviews and observations with a convenience sample of consumers interviewed in their homes on the topic of using up products. Informants were diverse in gender, age, socioeconomic and lifestyle characteristics. Observations involved taking photographs throughout the home including garages/attics/storage areas, junk drawers, laundry room, refrigerators, bathrooms, recycling, and even cars, purses, and wallets to capture product depletion and reuse tactics. Interviews focused on: whether and how consumers use up products, how this varies across charac-
teristics of the products, criteria used in deciding whether and how to use products up, feelings and emotions associated with gleaning, and finally situational, social, intergenerational and individual factors that consumers believe contribute to their own product use behaviors.

Arnould and Price’s findings illustrate that consumers working creatively to extract value from mundane products and extend their useful life saturates everyday consumption. Certainly not all consumers pursue savings, but their results suggest consumer gleaning is a meaningful product use behavior among middle class American Midwesterners.

Several general observations about gleaners and gleaning emerge. Gleaning behavior is selective: sometimes expensive products like perfume and fashions are used to the last drop, but often inexpensive products like personal care items and cleaning products are. Sometimes favorite products are used up; sometimes less favored products are used to the last drop. Arnould and Price also found that some people are gleaners, but some just engage in selective gleaning behaviors. They also found that there are recognizable sub-groups including savers, who want to get the most out of things by using them up, pack-rats (see Coulter and Ligas’ paper below), who hoard things for an indefinite future use; re-users (Bardhi’s trash shoppers?), who find creative ways to repair and transform things; and tightwads, for whom frugality is a terminal value. Not surprisingly, they recorded notable gender differences in the domains in which gleaning behavior occurs. And, they found that in general, older consumers practice more and extreme savings and reuse behaviors, and generally use more tactics than younger consumers. Finally, Midwestern consumers in their sample express little eco-consciousness, beyond relatively vague concerns about landfills or the inherent good in recycling.

Arnould and Price elaborate several central themes. First, they focus on the rich, and ambivalent emotions associated with using or not using things up. Although some consumers feel embarrassed as they reveal unique and extreme antics for gleaning mundane products such as toothpaste and laundry soap, they also feel proud and accomplished to have wasted nothing. Many brag about the number of uses they have gleaned through their innovative strategies. Avoidance of guilt is prominent, as is resistance to the wastefulness of consumption. For example, consumers report retaining products they do not use (and probably won’t) in order to avoid the feeling that they wasted money buying them. Sometimes, college age consumers associate their heightened gleaning to their newly adult social status; thriftiness is closer to the values and behaviors of their parents. Consumers also report frustration and exasperation with products that they cannot use up because of packaging or their own lack of imagination. For example, after saving leftover anti-perspirant for a long time, one consumer abandons hope because he just could not figure out how to use the stuff up. Another consumer facing this same dilemma finally uncovered a solution—she melts several of them in the microwave and then combines them into one.

Second, discussion surrounding these emotions gives us insights into consumers’ meanings for using things up and the sources of those meanings. Intergenerational socialization, “stickiness,” previous hardship, ecology, time, storage and habit figure prominently. But, many of their informants also believe they have special knowledge and skills to which other consumers may not be privy. For example, if other consumers had any idea how much was left in that sealed lotion container, they too would find a way to extract it, or if other consumers were as effective at constructing storage, they too would save it. Arnould and Price find that gifts, even unwanted gifts, and favorite products exhibit a curious “stickiness.” Consumers are loath to part with them when they are worn out, and sometimes simply hold on to their packaging. Although product characteristics, especially shelf life, influence product use, some characteristics such as the expense of the product make less difference than one might suppose. In general, Arnould and Price’s Midwestern consumers are concerned with non-wastefulness rather than a particular economic savings. Some feel that savings is a way to “put one over” on marketers who induce waste.

Third, their findings suggest ways consumers rotate products among applications and areas of their home to extend their useful life—from public to private, from one kind of a container to another, from one kind of use to another and from one area of the home to another. Some consumers try to move still useful products into someone else’s care—Cool Whip™ containers become gifts of leftovers for grown children; thirty-two ounce empty milk containers go the elementary art teacher; gallon ice cream buckets store household cleaners. Consumers discover new value in re-used objects; value that exceeds the original value the marketplace assigned to the object. This is particularly so of those who repair and restore disused items, making a quilt from old athletic T-shirts or sofas from automobile bodies. Available storage offers a consistent barrier thwarting consumer efforts to conserve, but consumers overcome this in a variety of ingenious ways. They view storage, even in the absence of use, as a utility enhancing consumption practice, as is the intention to use something up, even if they do not quite realize this intention. For example, individuals households will save for months or even years objects “just in case,” believing they will “some day” be useful, and feeling good about that intention. They outline several future research directions for exploring saving through consumer use.

Fleura Bardhi’s study “Thrifty and Pleasure: Understanding Consumer Values Derived from Thrift Shopping,” examines a process largely ignored in marketing, thrift shopping. Thrift shopping is shopping in second hand settings, such as estate sales, auctions, garage sales, but especially in thrift shops. The study focuses on thrift shopping that takes place in so-called thrift stores—retail stores that sell secondhand items, and often run for charitable purposes, such as Goodwill. Currently, this particular category of thrift shopping represents a thriving industry with an annual growth of ten percent and with an estimated 15,000 thrift stores around the US.

In the context of this special session, the study of thrift shopping is important for a number of reasons. First, thrift shopping provides a unique context for the study of the concept of thrift. Thrift shopping as a money saving activity is commonly associated with thrift, frugality, savings, and poverty. Marketing traditionally conceptualizes thrift and frugality from utilitarian economic perspectives that is, in terms of budgets, transaction costs, and savings (Blattberg et al 1978; Lastovicka et al 1999). Generally, thrift is not considered as an end in itself, but in terms of short-term sacrifices in current consumption for future long-term goals (Lastovicka et al 1999; Miller 1998).

This study challenges and extends the concept of thrift by taking a hedonic perspective, influenced by the work of Miller (1998) and Campbell (1987). This literature has suggested that one of the important motivations for shopping is to save; consumers go shopping to experience saving money (Miller 1998). Thus, this paper studies thrift in the experience of spending (shopping) as a valued end in a market economy itself.

Second, study of thrift shopping allows us to examine the values and benefits that consumers derive both from this activity and from the consumption of the items purchased. The purpose here is to provide evidence that in contemporary American consumer society, where consumption, luxury and hedonism are important values, thrift and savings coexist with them.
The research was conducted through qualitative observations and interviews in two thrift stores in a Midwestern town, USA. The participants of this study are consumers that consider themselves regular thrift shoppers. Findings show that thrift emerges as an important discursive framework of thrift shopping in three aspects. First, consumers perceive the thrift stores’ cheap prices and numerous sales promotions as a preferred vehicle to achieve desirable consumer lifestyles. Thrift shopping allows consumers to “have a life” that they desire in difficult financial times. Some participants in the study also go thrift shopping because they perceive it as wasteful to buy new items. Further, consumers engage in surrogate shopping (Solomon 1986) to enable their friends and family to save money in pursuit of their lifestyle goals, as well.

Second, thrift stores represent a chance for consumers to recycle non-desirable items instead of throwing them away. Further, itineraries of thrift-shopped items show that many items end up back at thrift stores after present owners exhaust their value. They also pass unused items on to friends and family as gifts. Very little get wasted in this process.

Third, a major motivation to go thrift shopping is the ludic and hedonic experience of finding the best bargain and the thrill of the hunt. Low prices and the numerous sales promotions offered every week focus the thrift shopping process in a competitive search for the best bargain. As a process, thrift shopping emerges as a serious time consuming activity where shoppers hope to find objects of desire at the lowest price possible. Best bargains are handmade, collectibles, or designer brands made with quality raw materials. Thus, thrift shopping merges with luxury shopping. Further, consumers derive pleasure and hedonic benefits from thrift shopping in terms of surprise, pride in expertise, and indulgence of fantasies. In sum, Bardhi’s study shows how consumers engage in highly autotelic behavior by encapsulating it in a shopping context in which thrift is the accentuated discursive frame.

In 1996, PBS produced the documentary, Affluenza, which highlighted the extravagant and supposedly wasteful lifestyle of the American consumer. The premise of the report was over-consumption and materialism gone awry; the central message was the eventual deterioration of society, the economy, and the environment. Is it possible that consumers could no longer control their purchasing urges, and as result their mindset has become one of constant disposal and replacement of possessions? In “Saving for Whom?, for What?, and How?: Exploring the Mindset of Packrats,” Robin A. Coulter and Mark Ligas provide a stark contrast to this materialistic consumer by focusing on packrats, consumers who exhibit “extreme” saving, sometimes referred to as hoarding, behavior. In the paper, they draw upon semi-structured depth interviews with fourteen self-described packrats (7 males, 7 females) to consider packrats’ motivations for saving.

Their findings suggest that packrats’ behaviors run counter to those espoused by the Affluenza documentary—packrats are thrifty, resourceful and not wasteful; they save as much as they throw something away, they will need (and not have) it. Coulter and Ligas’ informants are proud of their saving behavior, and look unfavorably upon more materialistic consumers. Packrats are different from collectors; packrats save a broad array of things (e.g., used clothing, old paintings, old tires, broken bicycles, old newspapers). Their fourteen informants provide insights about saving motives and behaviors from several perspectives: 1) for whom are they saving things? 2) for what reasons are they saving things? and 3) how are they saving things?

First, they find that packrats save for themselves and for others, whether acquaintances (e.g., family or friends) or not (e.g., “trash” shoppers). Importantly, packrats strongly believe “some-one” will have a need for the things they are saving, and packrats are selective with regard to whom they will give, sell or donate their goods—packrats want the new owner to be a good caretaker of their things.

Second, Coulter and Ligas find that packrats save because they perceive their things have some functional or symbolic value. With regard to functional value, packrats note that “This is too good to throw away,” they want to extract all use from a product before disposing of it. For example, packrats conceive that either they or someone can reuse the thing (e.g., an old painting) in its current form. Additionally, packrats save things for future needs; e.g., a broken bicycle, so that they or others could later take parts from that bicycle to rebuild or fix another bicycle. Further, their informants indicate that figuring out new uses for saved things (e.g., making a swing or sandbox out of a used tire) is important to them. In addition to fulfilling functional needs, packrats also commented on the symbolic value associated with their saved belongings. Sentimentality is prominent in the minds of packrats. Packrats’ memories related to their things come tagged with information about when and how these things figured in their lives.

Finally, there is some variability with regard to how and where packrats save their things. Some packrats report being very organized and careful storing their things, others less so. Some have their things in the attic, the basement, the garage, or their own personal closet and drawer space; others report that their things are not only in their own space, but encroaching on others’ space.

By examining packrats’ saving motivations, Coulter and Ligas’ research contributes to a growing body of literature about consumers’ shopping motivations. They are also investigating packrats’ acquisition strategies and motivations for initial purchase, as well as more about their disposition strategies.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

An Examination of Consumers’ “Active” Responses to an Emerging Breed of Marketing Events

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Some have predicted the death of traditional advertising as marketers continue to shift expenditures toward sales promotions (Breen 2000) and consumers habituate to the 30-second ad spot, relying on tools like digital video recorders to “manage” the marketing communications they receive on television (Gimein 2002). While few believe that advertising is actually going to disappear, discussion prevails in professional and academic circles alike, about how consumers might respond to or adapt to a changed marketing landscape. One common realization is that interactivity allows consumers to move to the “center” of the marketing process and shape the interaction that takes place between them, the marketers, and marketing content (Stewart and Pavlou 2002). However, whether consumers are able or even willing to process all of this additional information remains an open empirical question.

Sales promotions represented the first transition to a more active type of involvement for the consumer. At times, consumers structure their purchases around loyalty programs and special offers, although there is evidence pointing to consumers’ becoming less brand loyal as the marketing landscape slides into an increasingly fragmented postmodern state (Firat and Venkatesh 1995). Consumers commonly focus on process as opposed to simply products; the value of the purchase is not defined by the products themselves but also the deals and rewards associated with the products (Thaler 1985; Honea and Dahl forthcoming). They organize their flight plans around the miles, not the convenience of a flight route. They spend purchase minimums to receive free gifts that they do not even want. As consumers focus more on the marketing content associated with products, it is not surprising that they may also shift attention to the marketers responsible for that content and the manner in which they distribute or manage it.

The advent of new forms of marketing techniques promises to affect how consumer interpret and direct the interactions they have with marketers and content. New classes of marketing activities rely heavily on integration of content into unique contexts, adding interactivity or consumer participation. Product placements within television programs, for instance, blur the lines between the entertainment content and the promotional message (Russell 2002). Permission-based marketing and consumer-mediated digital environments enable consumers to determine the content they will “allow” marketers to share with them. The interactive television environment combines all these elements so consumers can respond directly to promotional offers available on their television screens and even to the products placed in their programs. Beyond produced content, consumer-based marketing is another new trend where marketers attempt to recruit consumers to physically become, or at least to transmit, the marketing message in a consumer-to-consumer context. Marketers place products with the “alpha teenagers” at high schools (Goldstein 1999) and pay attractive women to discuss products with men at a bar. Consumers even display ads on the side of their cars and tattoo their bodies.

The three papers in this session serve as the catalyst for a discussion regarding this new breed of “consumer-based” and “(inter)-active” marketing events. We (1) discuss the elements which differentiate these methods from one another; (2) present preliminary findings about consumers’ responses to these marketing methods; and (3) propose a research agenda for this new class of marketing events. As a starting point for this discussion, we use the first paper on sales promotion—the most widely deployed type of marketing event that demands consumer involvement—to examine the manner in which perceptions of procedural fairness govern the interaction between marketers and consumers in a retail context (Ashworth and Darke). The paper sets up the notion that, in an increasingly complex promotional retail environment, consumers’ perceptions of procedural fairness are crucial component to assessing the effect of promotional techniques.

Then, we extend this discussion to consumers’ responses to integrated types of promotions, via a second paper (Honea and Russell) focused on the processing of promotional messages in an interactive television context. This paper discusses consumers’ memory for and responses to different types and combinations of product placements, advertisements, and promotions, and proposes that certain consumer characteristics (e.g., connectedness to the television characters) may moderate consumers’ acceptance of integrated promotional techniques. The final paper (Austin and Zinkhan) pushes the issue even further by extending the framework of promotional techniques to include the active, engaged consumers who themselves become and disseminate marketing efforts. That is, consumers have the potential to become both the media and the messages.

Collectively, the three papers address the increasingly complex issues of consumer preferences for passive versus active engagement with entertainment and marketing (lean forward versus lean back), and consumers’ levels of tolerance for the increasingly taxing marketing environment they live in. In addition to providing insights into the potential effectiveness of these emerging breeds of marketing events, the presentations invite the audience to debate the new mental environmentalist movement where consumers decide how to manage psychic “pollutants” created by an overwhelming presence of marketing events in their daily life (Lasn 2002).

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Consuming Gardens: Representations of Paradise, Nostalgia and Postmodernism
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ABSTRACT
This paper unravels the types of relationships people have with their gardens. This is achieved through a review of previous literature on the topic, coupled with a theoretical contextualisation which utilises postmodern concepts, notably that of Jameson’s ‘nostalgic return’ (1989). To illustrate the relevance of these concepts to an understanding of gardening the paper turns to a number of gardening ‘texts’ and ‘spaces’ to decipher the ways in which gardens are consumed within contemporary culture. It argues that representations of gardens cohere around two key motifs: the search for paradise and the imagined return to a long-forgotten past.

INTRODUCTION
The statement that gardens are in vogue is an oft-made one in the UK. By some accounts, gardening has become the ‘new sex’ (Bhatti and Church 2000; Maltby 2001) as testified by the popularity of garden makeover programmes (Taylor 2002), the most notable being Ground Force. Market research reports suggest that gardening represents the number one hobby in the UK (Mintel 1997) and that the total market for gardening products had reached a value of £3.35 billion by 2000, an increase of 70 billion since 1996 (see Taylor 2002).

This paper discusses the contemporary way in which the practice of gardening appears to be constructed and enjoyed. To do this, the paper begins with a contextual discussion of postmodern conditions, where the emphasis is placed upon understanding the consumer and their modes of consumption. This leads to a question: ‘what form does our contemporary enjoyment of gardening appear to be taking?’ To answer this question two illustrations are provided. First, the view offered in UK and US gardening ‘textbooks’ where the emphasis is placed on providing a philosophy of everyday life within consumer culture. Second, the search for meaning from the sites or places of gardening consumption, one such ‘spectacle’ (Debord 1976) or ‘site of cultural consumption’ (Chevalier 1998) is the Chelsea Flower Show, an annual exhibition of all that is ‘contemporary’ in UK gardening.

POSTMODERNITY, NOSTALGIA AND PARADISE
“Why do we need the concept of postmodernity?” was a rhetorical device employed by Bauman (1988) to question the role and significance of this concept for an understanding of contemporary culture. In response he argued that its main basis for legitimation lies in its ability to “theorize different aspects of contemporary experience, or theorize them in a different way” (1988, p.217). Cue a discussion of gardening, and a detour into the range of concepts that come under the umbrella concept of postmodernism, for the insights they may offer for a contemporary reading of ‘gardens’. For help, Thomas (1997), working on the basis of Firtat and Venkatesh’s (1993; 1995) framework argues that the ‘essential characteristics’ of postmodernism are those of fragmentation, de-differentiation, hyperreality, pastiche and anti-foundationalism. In this manner, Firtat and Venkatesh (1995) argue that the postmodern conditions which serve to explicate the situation of the consumer ‘most’ are those of fragmentation and decentredness. Once more Thomas (1997) comes to the rescue with his suggestion that “Consumers live in a world of doubt, ambiguity and uncertainty.” (1997, p.58). In this context, one route for an ‘escape attempt’ (Cohen and Taylor 1976) may be to revert to the safety and security of the past (Brown 1999; Goulding 2000); eras which were less problematic than that of our own (Foster 1989). Jameson (1989) originally spotlighted this desire for a ‘nostalgic return’ in the films of the 1970s; Brown (1999) in the world of advertising and the craze for retro products; and Goulding (2000) in the historical representations provided at heritage attractions. Hence our shift to the world of gardening and its representations of the past, coupled with the offer of a ‘paradise’ or ‘sanctuary’ free of the ambiguity and uncertainty of contemporary times; or as Jameson concluded on the wish to experience and “return to that older period and to live its strange old aesthetic artifacts through once again.” (1989, p.116).

The argument that marketing is bound up with our notions of paradise is evident in current work (Brown and Patterson 2000) which suggests that advertising is often employed to sell ‘dreams’, with one such dream being the recourse to nostalgia (Wernick 1997).

THINGS TO DO WITH GARDENS
Research on gardens has similarly emphasised the role and significance of these spaces to contemporary living. For example, the argument that gardens represent a significant feature of people’s lives can be found in a number of early studies (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989; Francis 1993). Dunnett and Qasim (2000) in their more recent quantitative study on the social meaning and values derived from gardening make the link between gardening and human well-being. They found a clear relationship between time spent in the garden and age, but also sought to explore some of the enjoyment that people derive from their gardens. Some important factors in this respect were the creation of a pleasant environment and promotion of relaxation, but also having a ‘neat and tidy’ garden, health value of fresh air and exercise, meeting and talking with neighbours and fruit and vegetable production. In addition, a number of respondents valued the garden as a sphere of creativity and self-expression, a factor that was especially important for professional people in 35-55 age groups. In explaining this desire to garden, Dunnett and Qasim suggest:

“Gardens were viewed as a necessary relief and contrast to the hard elements of the built environment of the city. Garden wildlife was almost universally welcomed. Some gardeners attributed religious or spiritual associations to their gardens.” (2000, p.44, italics added)

They go on to conclude, that:

“It is clear that the value of gardens to the people who use them goes far beyond pure utilitarian uses. The garden also has considerable emotional, psychological, healing and even spiritual values for many people.” (2000, p.45).

Moreover, the notion that gardens may represent an ‘escape attempt’ in the fashion of Cohen and Taylor (1976), from the questions and doubts of contemporary living demands further attention. A number of previous studies have made the link between gardening and the search for paradise. Cooper-Marcus (1993) suggests that the then resurgence in the popularity of gardening could be attributed to a reaction to modern technology. In his definition of gardening, he seeks to explore the question of why people may choose to garden:
“We garden because that activity requires knowledge and intuition, science and nurturance, planning and faith. We create gardens because, at some barely discernible level of consciousness, it is one way to reconnect with that mythical Garden of Eden or oasis of Shambhala.” (1993, p.27, italics added).

Chevalier (1998) uses the concept of ‘appropriation’ within her study to examine people as what she terms ‘creative appropriators’. She focused on thirty households living on the Jersey Farm estate near St Albans, United Kingdom, and in explaining their practices she draws a distinction between how people choose to appropriate or use two contrasting gardening spaces, that of the ‘back’ garden versus the ‘front’ garden:

“The front garden acts as the presentation of the household, an identity marker in the absence of any other sign...In Jersey Farm, thanks to the front garden, the visitor could also collect some information, but in this case on the social integration of the residents through the similarity of their garden and those of their neighbours.” (1998, p.49)

She continues by explaining how this ‘front’ garden differs from the notion of the ‘back’ garden:

“The back garden, more or less protected from outside views by fences, is a private/public space as is the lounge, in opposition to the front garden, which is a public/private space. Only a few authorized persons can enter the back garden. This space expresses the individual and familial identity of the owner through a sense of being ‘at home’.” (1998, p.49)

This focus upon the distinctions apparent in people’s use of spaces, can also be gleaned from an ethnographic research, Chapman and Jamal (1997) discuss the contrast between the meaning and use of gardens in semi-detached versus terraced housing. They contend that in terraced housing:

“The front garden (often very small, perhaps only a yard or so in width) was a celebration of ornamental non-functionality, as befitted its opposition to the routine of the back yard and back entrance...The front garden was a place for fantasies of rockery in quartz, for flowers and shrubs, and for careful display of propriety and cleanliness.” (1997, p.7).

Whereas in semi-detached housing:

“Each dwelling was surrounded on three of its sides by land, air, garden. The toilet, by this time, had moved indoors, so that the sense of ‘back-yard’ (containing toilet) was lost; all the garden was influenced by the proprieties of the ‘front’ garden; in a sense, the ‘front garden’ of the older style terrace now spread all around the house. The garden, more or less elaborate, was a showcase for tidiness, display, neatness; flowers and shrubs were grown, lawns carefully tended.” (ibid, p.7)

The garden then can be read as what Chapman and Jamal define as “a publicly visible metaphor for the interior of the house.” (1997, p.8). This focus can also be found in the early work of Young and Wilmott (1990, originally 1957) who discuss the movement of people from the East End of London to Bethnal Green: “A nice house and shabby clothes, a neat garden and an old box of a pram, do not go together.” (1990, p.157). In explaining this Young and Willmott argue that “People struggle to raise their all-round standards to those of the home, and in the course of doing so, they look for guidance to their neighbours. To begin with, the first-comers have to make their own way. The later arrivals have their model at hand. The neighbours have put up nice curtains. Have we? They have got their garden planted with privet and new grass-seed. Have we?” (1990, p.159). So that what is generated is a process whereby the “norms of the estate” are manufactured and reproduced.

So when we start to analyse the act of gardening we are immediately faced with a contradiction, that at one level gardening appears to offer people a creative sphere, but at another it displays not freedom but aspects of social conformity.

**LOOKING TO GARDENING TEXTS**

The notion of gardens as constituting some form of ‘paradise’ (Cooper-Marcus 1993) can be traced through previous research on the topic, but to extend our discussion it is useful to turn to gardening ‘texts’ which echo many of these themes but serve to illustrate how gardens may be consumed in contemporary culture. To extend this discussion two gardening ‘textbooks’, the first published in Britain and the second published in America, are spotlighted to reveal the representations of the kinds of relationships people may have with this socially-constructed space called the ‘garden’. The first is Geoff Hamilton’s *Paradise Gardens* (1997). The review of the book, to be found on the backcover, suggests:

“Our gardens have always been sanctuaries, private places to escape from the pressures of the outside world. Now with Geoff Hamilton’s infallible advice, you can transform your own garden into a little piece of paradise on earth.” (1997)

The text then becomes akin to a guide, with Hamilton spelling out his philosophy of how this search can be achieved. He continues by stating:

“If asked to define our own idea of a personal paradise, I think most of us would visualize rolling green hills, shady trees and flower-studded meadows, all orchestrated with the song of birds and the buzzing of insects: in other words, the countryside. In reality, few of us have the good fortune to live in this kind of Arcadian situation, but we still yearn for the beauty and simplicity of a life lived close to nature.” (ibid, 1997, p.8)

In legitimating the idea of the search, Hamilton contrasts the world of the garden to his vision of contemporary consumer culture:

“...I’m convinced that we all need some kind of escape from the complexity, the pressure and the ever-accelerating speed of modern life, a life just about as far removed from the one for which our minds and bodies were originally designed as it’s possible to get. I’m certain too that most of us our desperate for a philosophy that counters our current passion for materialism and the shallow values of ‘sophisticated society’. (ibid, 1997, p.8).

Gardening through this reading can be understood as providing a defence from the ‘sublime’ (Kever 1998). A suggestion which serves the illustrate the contemporary consumption of gardening, or as Chapman and Jamal (1997) remark:

“The garden...has an entire cosmology of urban and industrial life built into its rockeries, an entire historiography of modernity growing out of its flower-beds.” (1997, p.7).
For Hamilton, the garden then becomes a panacea to the ills of contemporary consumer culture, a culture encapsulated by: “…constant noise, traffic, shopping malls, canned entertainment, muzac, low-flying aircraft, intrusive neighbours and all the horrors of modern existence” (Hamilton 1997, p.9). Hamilton then contrasts this contemporary environment with that of medieval times, when as he suggests “chaos reigned and life was fraught with danger” (ibid, 1997, p.15). In response he suggests medieval gardeners developed the concept of ‘hortus conclusus’, that is a “quiet garden enclosed on all sides and symbolizing protection from the outside world. It was intended to produce what was then a rare feeling of security and peace.” (ibid, 1997, p.15).

His book therefore becomes a ‘guide’ to ways to ‘escape’ the contemporary postmodern predicament of fragmentation and decentredness (Firat and Venkatesh 1995). In this manner he argues that gardens should provide us with “time to think” but also a “controlled situation” where an individual can “get your hands into the soil” (Hamilton 1997, p.19). Essential to his approach to the garden and the activity of gardening is the concept of gardening as a space for temporary relief:

“…don’t underestimate the therapeutic value of gardening. It’s the one area I know where we can all use our nascent creative talents to make a truly satisfying work of art. Every individual, with thought, patience and a large portion of help from nature, has it in them to create their own private paradise: truly a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.” (ibid, 1997, p.19)

Hamilton starts to touch upon the search for meaning that may be experienced by individuals in postmodern times. Themes which are mirrored in the second ‘text’ that I would like to discuss, a book entitled The Inward Garden: Creating a Place of Beauty and Meaning (1995) by Julie Moir Messervy. Even from the title, the search for ‘meaning’ or value is paramount, the book predates the Hamilton book by two years, and was published in America rather than Britain, but appears to share a number of central preoccupations. Messervy (1995) begins her exploration of the relationship between people and gardens with the following lines:

“Deep within each of us lies a garden. An intensely personal place, this landscape grows from a rich blend of ingredients—imagination, memory, character, and dreams—that combine in wonderful ways in our innermost selves.” (Messervy, 1995, p.11).

She continues by suggesting:

“Your inward garden lies in your imagination; your outward garden lies upon your land—a private landscape for wondering, for dancing, for daydreaming. Both gardens represent your personal paradise—a beautiful place designed specifically to capture the most positive and refreshing landscape memories; a place that is both a sanctuary from the stress of everyday life and a place of rejuvenation; a place available to you at all times.” (ibid, 1995, p.11).

Messervy therefore echoes a number of themes prevalent in the work of Hamilton, especially the notion of a garden as constituting some form of “sanctuary”. A “sanctuary” ever more important given her perception on the nature of everyday life:

“A garden can also be a place of refuge—a sanctuary from the everyday world. After a long day’s work, we race through the garden gate, leaving behind daily stresses and strains, to tend to our garden’s (and our own) needs: watering its flowers, cutting its grasses, breathing in its fragrances, all the while contemplating and dreaming. When we lose ourselves in the care of a garden we cherish spending time alone.” (ibid, 1995, p.20, italics added)

The emphasis on what Brownlie and Horne term ‘consumption dreaming’ (2000) is thus apparent, when Messervy argues:

“I have found through years of practice, that people garden in order to make something grow; to interact with nature; to stare, to find sanctuary, to heal, to honor the earth, to leave a mark. Through gardening, we feel whole as we make our personal work of art upon our land.” (ibid, 1995, p. 19)

So here Messervy directly explores the question of the dialectic between people and nature:

“For many of us, a garden is also one of the few places to experience the demands of the natural world. However formally it is laid out, however unnatural its features may appear, the garden is still the place where we must reckon with our limitations in controlling the forces of nature.” (ibid, 1995, p.19).

This focus on the agency of individuals in the context of the relationship between people and nature is similarly explored through the ‘taming’ of nature at Flower Shows. Where the effort is to create a ‘hyperreality’ (Baudrillard 1989) of gardening through a representation of the garden space, a hyperreality or façade which is achieved at huge expense.

**LOOKING TO GARDENING SPECTACLES: CHELSEA, 2002**

This focus upon the concept of gardening and gardens as a paradisiacal space can also be traced in terms of recent representations of gardens found at flower shows. But the logic is very different as these gardens are constructed as very costly (many with price tags of over £100,000) and temporary facades (the event lasts for only five days). The Chelsea Flower Show is an annual event hosted by the Royal Horticultural Society and held in London during May. More than a ‘flower show’ the event receives thousands of visitors and blanket television and radio coverage from the BBC throughout the five days of its duration. The show can therefore be perceived as a particular site of consumption (Chevalier 1998), a ‘spectacle’ in the gardening calendar. At the heart of the show are the recreations of gardens that are displayed.

My story begins with three of the gardens at the show, which all received significant television coverage and were eventually awarded Royal Horticultural Society gold medals. The three gardens were the ‘Sanctuary’, ‘Tearmann sí’ (translated as ‘A Celtic Sanctuary’), and ‘Garden Open’. It is argued that all three of the gardens echo many of the concerns evident in the gardening textbooks, but also the postmodern concern over the contemporary position of consumers and the ways in which they may try to ‘escape’ the dilemmas of uncertainty and ambiguity through representations of the past.

The first garden was sponsored by Merrill Lynch Investment Managers and designed by Stephen Woodhams, as stated, it received a lucrative RHS Gold Medal, the description of the garden reveals:...
“The Sanctuary Garden is designed to be a tranquil and protected environment, providing a place to relax and recreate away from the stresses of daily life.” (www.rhs.org.uk)

Echoes here then of the representation of the garden as ‘other’ to contemporary culture, in much the same fashion of Hamilton and Messervy, a world free of the stresses and strains of contemporary living.

The second garden was designed by Mary Reynolds, a young Irish garden designer who showcased at Chelsea for the first time in 2002, titled ‘A Celtic Sanctuary’ we are told that it was inspired by the Wicklow Countryside in Irish Mythology, once again the garden won an RHS gold medal. The description of the garden reads:

“A circular stone moon gate arches over a pre-roman style split bough path planted with primroses, cowslips and speedwell. This leads to the inner circle where the elements of air, fire and water combine. The circle is flooded with still water crossed only by a path of stepping stones. Out of the center of the water rises a stone fire bowl watched over by granite thrones placed on an axis representing the four points of the compass.” (www.rhs.org.uk)

The garden expresses a contrasting relationship with nature to previous Chelsea gardens where the aesthetic has been one of modernism. For ‘Tearmann Si’ the aim appears to represent a mythological garden where the focus is upon natural planting and attempting to ‘recreate’ through a simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1989), rather than ‘tame’ nature. The description continues:

“Enclosing the garden will be a traditional dry stone wall built from Wicklow Granite. The wall will be planted with native Irish plants such as wall pennywort, yarrow, thrift, heart’s tongue fern, maiden hair spleenwort, wild strawberry, cranesbill, St John’s wort, sweet violet, self-heal, common pennywort and woodruff.” (www.rhs.org.uk)

Part of the aesthetic for these gardens appears to be changing relationship with nature but also with the past. Here it is useful to return to the classic texts of postmodern culture and Jameson’s notion of ‘pastiche’ where he suggests that:

“…in a world in which stylistic innovation is no longer possible, all that is left is to imitate dead styles, to speak through the masks and with the voices of the styles in the imaginary museum…imprison(ed) in the past.” (1989, p.115-116)

This desire is perhaps best seen in the third garden which I would like to spotlight Roger Platt’s ‘Garden Open’. This garden was awarded the illustrious ‘Best in Show’ award and an RHS Gold medal. The description to the garden on the RHS website reads:

“Part of the garden will look as if it has been refurbished by the owner in preparation for NGS visitors. This richly planted area will be based around a series of pergolas weighed down with climbers and an oak framed summerhouse.” (www.rhs.org.uk)

Through this description the emphasis is upon how the past can be re-represented:

“The other area of the garden will be wild, overgrown and walled featuring a tumbledown greenhouse and neglected cold frames dating back to 1927…a lawnmower and other bits of garden paraphernalia from that era will add a nostalgic feel, and create enormous contrast with the well-tended part of the garden adjacent to it.” (www.rhs.org.uk)

So here the explicit reference to the postmodern condition of nostalgia is made apparent, but it is a very different form of representation to that of Mary Reynolds’ recourse to Irish mythology:

“The planting will be of a very Traditional English country style with an abundance of rambling roses and colourful perennials supported by solid evergreen shrubs such as Cistus, Hebe, myrtle, Photinia, Bupleurum, box and yew.” (www.rhs.org.uk)

Three representations for the garden of the future which have their feet firmly em-bedded in the past, from that of a sanctuary, to ‘old’ England of the 1930s or a return to mythological Ireland and the rural idyll. And they are perhaps best made sense of through Baudrillard’s eyes, and his characterisation of the postmodern outlook: “…a universe where there are no more definitions possible…It has all been done…It has deconstructed its entire universe. So that all that are left are pieces. All that remains to be done is to play with the pieces. Playing with the pieces—that is postmodern.” (cited by Best and Kellner, 1991, p.128). The representations of gardens can thus be understood as such ‘pieces’ with which people play to assure ourselves of the value and meaning of contemporary living.

ROUND-UP

This paper has modest ambitions, taking a cue largely from Bauman (1988), and his questioning of the value of postmodernism. Postmodernism it is suggested provides the tools to theorize previously neglected consumer experiences (Featherstone, 1991; Kover, 1998), one such activity being that of gardening. In using this lens of postmodern conditions an explanation is provided for why activities such as gardening have become shrouded in the language of philosophies of everyday life, as arenas through which ‘escape attempts’ may be imagined in cultural contexts such as the UK. Escape attempts that are rooted in the notion of garden spaces as forming a paradise or sanctuary from contemporary social life, and one form that this may take is the desire to return to more ‘peaceful’ and ‘tranquil’ spaces. The paper opens up to consumer inquiry the issue of how gardens are consumed in the 21st century. This is especially so, in the light of the popularity of garden makeover programmes where the garden represents a key lifestyle statement (Taylor 2002) and where the promise appears to be one of have your paradise without the hassle of exerting physical energy. The paper therefore has at its heart the following ethos, expressed by Vita Sackville-West in the 1940s, which I offer as a punctuation mark to the discussion,

“Small pleasures must correct great tragedies, Therefore of gardens in the midst of war I boldly tell.” (Sackville-West, 1946, p.13).

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ABSTRACT
One of the popular destinations for Japanese tourists overseas is a museum. This article explores their experiential consumption of museum visits in New York City based on personal essays posted on the Internet. The netnographic study indicates that, to Japanese tourists, the museum is a cultural mall in which they come to shop, dine, socialize, and enjoy the atmosphere of foreignness and atmospherics of authenticity. Objects and people in the museum serve as stimuli that provoke a wide variety of feelings. Their most memorable moments in the museum are derived from intercultural personal interactions with non-Japanese visitors and staff.
ABSTRACT

Competitiveness, inter-urban competition and an awareness of where a city sits in notional ‘leagues’ of cities at various spatial scales are dominant themes in the analysis of the new urban politics and in urban marketers’ responses to a constellation of economic restructuring imperatives. Synthesising aspects of Lefebvre’s (1991) pioneering work on the social construction of the spatial and insights from Hall’s (1997) work on what he calls the ‘cultural relocation’ of city space. Drawing on insights from original ethnographic research, this paper examines how the re-presentational work of Manchester City Council and its cadre of marketers is directed at re-articulating the city’s relation with the global economy. This is often linked in turn to changes in forms and scales of economic spaces in the face of intensified competition in the European level and of restructuring imperatives. Synthesising aspects of Lefebvre and in urban marketers’ personnel and their private sector partners operate are variously saturated with notions of competition. Jessop (Ibid.) maps out the economic conditions which have encouraged city authorities to achieve that (Chief Exec. Man. City Council–Interview with Author:1997)

Similarly Harding et al (1994) point to the impact of trans-national corporations on the European regions and argue that cities are seeking ‘new functions and niches’ in a ‘European-wide system of economic and political hierarchies’; hierarchies which have emerged from ‘an economic logic which encourages cities to compete with each other to attract increasingly scarce, mobile international capital…’(3); the author’s claim that:

‘This competitive search for economic growth and increased international weight has generated substantial costs as well as benefits, losers as well as winners’(3).

Within this economic context a new generation of urban policy which began with City Challenge (1991) installed the principle of the competitive bidding for regeneration funds within local government in the UK, Cochrane (1992) and Jessop (1990;1994) have both argued that the shift from local welfarism to market welfarism via the ‘Schumpeterian workfare state’ has made competition absolutely central to the operation of contemporary urban policy. More fundamentally this new generation of urban policy, delivered through processes of competition was accompanied by a more general valorisation of ‘competitiveness’:

There has been a renewed emphasis on economic regeneration and the promotion of the competitiveness of both commercial and industrial activity and the localities in which these activities are located’(Oatley:1998:X).

Few would disagree that cities are now centrally located in a competitive environment in which ‘bidding’ for both private and public investment is a professional and political way of life, and in which the city is recognised as a player in competitive inter-urban game for jobs, investment and media attention.

LOCATING MANCHESTER’S PLACE IN THE URBAN LEAGUE

The position of all but the elite players within these competitive spaces is highly uncertain. All serious commentators would agree that late twentieth Manchester is not a global or world city in the sense that has become dominant within the academy. Whilst it may be clear that the city does not possess global status, it is considerably less clear where the city may be said to fit into a notion of ‘command capability’ of a city, and extends from the recognised global centres, to international, national and lesser known regional centres:

‘According to Saskia Sassen (1991), the different command competencies of western cities derive, in part, from the existence and geographical ‘reach’ of key producer service firms in these cities. Only in a few select informational cities or world cities is the quantity of these global maps sufficient to furnish multinational headquarters with a global command capability’(Boyle et al.,1996:151).

In their seminal paper ‘World city formation’ Friedmann and Wolff (1982) argued that the emergence of world cities is driven by the process of economic globalisation; central to which is a process of de-territorialisation, in which firms have ‘learned’ to overcome their dependence on national spaces. In a thesis which anticipates
Friedmann and Wolff argued that it was the manner in which a city is ‘integrated’ within the global economy which determines its position in a global hierarchy of economic influence and control:

‘At the apex of this hierarchy are found a small number of massive urban regions that we shall call world cities. Tightly integrated with each other through decision-making and finance, they constitute a worldwide system of control over production and market expansion’ (Friedmann & Wolff, 1982: 310).

Analyses of the enmeshing of cities into a ‘global system’ have not helped to contribute to resolving the question of where regional cities like Manchester might fit into a spatial hierarchy of urban centres. Friedmann and Wolff’s assertion that there is a hierarchy of economic influence and control, what Sassen would later call ‘command capability’, presupposes a continuum of this variable and therefore the existence of cities beneath its world or global apex. However, the focus of the academy has remained on the alluring pinnacles of the urban economic hierarchy, New York, Tokyo, London, and more recently, of course, Los Angeles, the ‘centre of centres’. Research has been reluctant to consider the ‘mode of integration’ of cities further down the hierarchy, what we might call the urban ‘poor-relations’, in Britain these could include any of the countries regional centres.

Friedmann and Wolff (1982) argued that the specific role(s) of world cities in a world system could only be determined through empirical research. The same basic argument must apply to the role of the ‘lesser’ cities. Their positions can only be understood through substantive research into the specific functions they perform at various spatial scales, whether they are local, regional or national.

RE-PRESENTATIONS OF SPATIAL STATUS

However, this paper is not concerned with economic enquiries into command capability. The texts employed by a city authority and their marketers to represent a city as a global city, an international city, a national or regional city, for example, are far more accessible and therefore amenable to analysis than the economic data. Sharon Zukin (1988) has highlighted the importance of representations to the status of cities at the top of a global urban hierarchy. Though no longer centres of garment and furniture production, Zukin argues it is important for New York and Los Angeles to ‘claim to be world centres of design’, that role, she argues, ‘symbolises and provides material resources for the specialisation in high-level business services to which core cities aspire’ (439). I want to direct attention away from judging the validity of the claims made in Manchester City Council’s marketing texts, towards how they work to represent the city as a regional capital and a ‘European’ city.

The academic research mobilised in the Council’s marketing texts is no less immune from constructing the categories it pretends to describe than the political-promotional texts of a city authority. As King (1995) has argued the authors of these texts: ‘by exercising their power to name, not only construct the category and the criteria used to define it, but also identify the places to which it refers’ (216).

It is testament to the perceived authorial power and ‘objectivity’ of academic research to define and identify cities of a certain status, that Manchester Council chooses to incorporate such discourse into its promotional texts. For example, the Economic Facts text makes much of research conducted by the Manchester Business School:

‘A survey, conducted by Manchester Business School, of the strengths of European regional cities, found Manchester ‘sub-

stantially met the criteria for international regional centres and came close to the two major continental centres surveyed’.

RE-LOCATING MANCHESTER IN ‘EUROPEAN’ SPACE

In 1994 the City Council claimed that:

‘By 2005 Manchester is expected to have developed into a city that is:

- A European regional capital and investment centre.
- An international city of outstanding commercial, cultural and creative potential.
- An area distinguished by the quality of life and sense of well-being enjoyed by its residents’

The positioning of cities as regional, national, international and/or global cities is a common marketing strategy. Hall & Hubbard (1996) refer to this as the positioning of places on ‘stages’. The marketing discourse that works to achieve this symbolic positioning presupposes a particular pattern of spatial relations and identities, that it is meaningful to talk about a ‘European city’ or an ‘international’ city, and the existence of an urban order or hierarchy. Hall & Hubbard (1996) and Hall’s (1997) work is interesting and important because it intervenes at that point where other research posits the existence of spatial identities and relations without examining the social construction of the spatial categories which the marketing discourses engage. Hall & Hubbard (1996) argue that this silence on the social construction of the spatial:

…has led to the fetishization of individual place and promoted a myth of spatial autonomy. It is apparent that cities, within networks of interurban competition, not only operate against the images promoted by their opponents but also within the identities they are ascribed by virtue of their location within external systems of cultural space’ (164).

RE-PRESENTING SPACE: LESSONS FROM LEFEBVRE

‘External systems’ of cultural space are what Henri Lefebvre (1991) refers to as ‘representations of space’. Representations of space form one of the cornerstones in Lefebvre’s trialectic of spatiality, the other two being spatial practices and spaces of representation. Representations of space are dominated spaces, spaces which are spoken for, inscribed with meaning and meanings which burden the possible transformation of an ascribed identity:

‘For Lefebvre, “this is the dominant space in any society (or mode of production),” a storehouse of epistemological power. This conceived space tends, with certain exceptions “towards a system of verbal… signs”, again referring to language, discourse, texts, logos: the written and spoken word. In these “dominating” spaces of regulatory and “ruly” discourse, these mental spaces, are thus representations of power and ideology, of control and surveillance’ (Soja, 1996: 67).

Hall & Hubbard’s work is underpinned by Lefebvre’s pioneering work on the social construction of the spatial. For Lefebvre the spatial is the fundamental, but long hidden, variable for Marxist analysis. In the seminal La Production de l’espace originally published in 1974, Lefebvre begins what Edward Soja (1989) will later term the ‘reassertion’ of space in social theory:

Space is becoming the principal stake of goal-directed actions and struggles. It has of course always been the reservoir of
resources, and the medium in which strategies are applied, but it has now become something more than the theatre, the disinterested stage or setting, of action. Space does not eliminate the other materials or resources that play a part in the socio-political arena… be they businesses or “culture”. Rather it brings them all together… (Lefebvre, 1991: 410-11).

The power of space to ‘bring together’ the ‘materials and resources that play a part in the socio-political arena’ is central to Hall’s (1997) notion of the cultural relocation of places within wider social spatialisations.

Lefebvre’s work captures the necessary spatial dimensions of all representational processes and does so in a way which does not hypostatise the dynamics of the processes of spatialisation, but demonstrates how identities and images which are given to spaces are subject to change as they are reinterpreted if not transformed, representations of space are subject to re-presentation. Lefebvre asked ‘what exactly is the mode of existence of social relationships? Are they substantial? Natural? Or formally abstract?’ He concluded that ‘social relations of production have a social existence to the extent that they have a spatial existence’ (1991: 129). In his celebration of Lefebvre, Edward Soja reinforces the social-spatial connection:

‘There is no unspatialized social reality. There are no aspatial social processes. Even in the realm of pure abstraction, ideology, and representation, there is a pervasive and pertinent, if often hidden, spatial dimension’ (1996: 46. Emphasis in original).

Hall & Hubbard’s (1996) and Hall’s (1997) work instructs us to be attentive to the spatial dimension of marketing discourses how these discourses variously construct the spatial categories into which they seek re-locate the city. Hall’s (1997) applies these ideas in his analysis of the spatialising work of marketing discourse in Birmingham.

THE CULTURAL RE-LOCATION OF BIRMINGHAM CITY CENTRE

Hall’s (1997) study of regeneration in Birmingham city centre is informed by the same desire to unearth the hidden, and not so hidden, spatial dimensions of contemporary practices of urban regeneration. Introducing the notion of ‘cultural relocation’, Hall’s work begins with the argument that places and cities are not only competing against the images and discourses marketed by their opponents, but also against images and discourses which have been ascribed to them by virtue of their location in larger ‘systems’ of economic and cultural space. These ‘external systems of space’ are the overarching representations of Lefebvre’s representations of space, representations that have shaped the identity of a place/ city. Hall (1997) charts what he calls the ‘cultural relocation’ of Birmingham city centre, he argues that peripheral regional cities like Birmingham are ‘deeply embedded [within] cultural systems of space’ and that these cultural-spatial systems:

‘establish the dimensions from within which individual places must extricate themselves if they are to assert their own identities above those they are ascribed by virtue of their position within these systems’ (203).

Hall’s description of systems of space as over-determining representations clearly echoes Lefebvre’s notion of representations of space as spaces of domination, order and restriction. Hall’s argument that places are ‘ascribed’ identities from which they must ‘extricate’ themselves relates directly to my argument that Manchester is embedded in and burdened by a legacy of economic and cultural re-presentations which contemporary re-presentations of the city struggle against.

Hall (1997) draws our attention to the ways in which a city/place can struggle against such re-presentations and be, symbolically, moved into different ‘cultural spaces’. Hall understands the ‘challenge’ immanent in the process of cultural relocation as part of the wider ‘political struggle for position’ (267) of regional-provincial centres in the UK which has it origins in this countries historical-geography of centre periphery relations built on the overarching cultural and economic dominance of the nations capital:

The emergence, since the early 1980’s, of narratives of identity from places such as the formerly industrialised regions of the UK can be read as an attempt to extricate them from the legacy of these wider and external discourses of space and to rescript and reorientate the contours of these geographies around themselves (Hall, Ibid: 204).

Hall’s concept of cultural relocation highlights the extent to which the process of re-presenting the city is fundamentally spatial. Referring to the geographical and cultural marginalisation of the English ‘Midlands’ and of the city of Birmingham in particular, Hall argues that representations of the region’s and the city’s cultural marginality, have provided ‘the prevailing structures of expectation against which the city has had to compete to assert an identity of its own making’ (211).

In his study Hall examined how three media, ‘most closely associated with urban regeneration’, attempted to assert a new and distinctive cultural-spatial identity for the city. He examined stories in the local press and promotional material issued by the city’s International Convention Centre (ICC) during the construction of the ICC between 1986-1991, and a piece of public art called Forward by the sculptor Raymond Mason. Hall argues that all three media can be seen to have worked towards the ‘goal of [the] cultural relocation’ of Birmingham. The local media, the promotional material of the ICC and Mason’s piece of public art represented the city (centre) as belonging within a new cultural space, a space of high culture, international culture and spectacle. Hall argues that these cultural spaces ‘were oriented explicitly around dominant ideas of European, rather than British, national space’, and that this re-orientation of Birmingham towards ‘Europe’ can be read ‘as an attempt to challenge the ascriptions of the cultural geography of British national space’ (215), to rid Birmingham of aspects of its real and imagined history. Hall argues that there are two implications of the ‘challenges’ to Birmingham’s ascribed place in British national space, first, ‘the establishment of the city within external cultural space’ (215), a European cultural space. Second, the desire to relocate Birmingham within a European space of ‘high culture, international culture and spectacle’ engendered judgements regarding the extent to which other spaces in the city complement or disturb the desired location/identity for the city:

This cultural positioning affected a concomitant re-ordering of the cultural spaces of the city into a series of centres and peripheries according to their compatibility with the cultural practices of the wider space. It imagined a geography of visibility and invisibility (215).
I return to Hall’s observations of the emergence of a geography of visibility and invisibility, what he also refers to as disclosure and enclosure later in my discussion of the use of certain buildings and places in Manchester as symbols of the city’s ‘European’ status.

**THE CULTURAL RE-LOCATION OF MANCHESTER?**

There are many instructive parallels between the experience of cultural relocation that Hall has observed in Birmingham and the ongoing marketing effort to re-present Manchester as a European and international city; even to the extent that Manchester has G-MEX (The Greater Manchester Exhibition Centre) and the Bridgewater Hall, the city’s equivalent to Birmingham’s Symphony Hall. These symbolic additions to the built environment contribute a similar effort to attempts to relocate Manchester within those spaces of high culture, international culture and spectacle identified by Hall.

Manchester City Council’s efforts to re-present Manchester as a ‘European city’ can be understood as the attempted re-spatialisation of Manchester. The Council’s marketing texts and images seek to redefine Manchester’s relation within a national economic and cultural space by placing the city in a notional European urban economic and cultural space, and in so doing reassert Manchester’s status as a regional capital in national and international space. One of the Council’s most recent marketing texts, *Manchester two thousand: the changing face*, produced in 1998 announces:

The transformation of this great British city into an even greater European regional capital is underway... (No page numbers).

In the next part of this paper I examine textual interventions into the meaning of Manchester and how these texts can be understood as attempting the relocation of the city within ‘European’ cultural and economic space.

**THE RE-LOCATION OF MANCHESTER WITHIN ‘EUROPEAN’ SPACE**

Whilst much can be learnt from Hall’s spatially sensitive analysis of regeneration discourse in Birmingham, in at least one crucial respect Manchester’s promotional texts employ a rhetorical technique which, rather than seeking to ‘challenge’ the ‘ascriptions’ of the historical-geography of the nation state, use them to signify Manchester’s dominance outside London. Hall’s analysis shows that the texts he examined sought to relocate Birmingham in cultural and economic space as free as possible from the shadows of London. However, marketing texts produced by Manchester City Council seek to establish the city’s spatial dominance in both national and international space. The marketing texts of Manchester City Council symbolically align the city with the nation’s capital and in doing so assert Manchester’s role as the UK’s regional capital. Thus a characteristic trope in the city’s promotional literature, and especially the *Economic Facts* document, is the comparison of Manchester with London. This is what we might call the ‘outside London’ trope and it characteristic of the re-presentations made in the *Economic Facts* text:

‘Manchester is unquestionably the largest centre of corporate finance activity outside London’(7).

The comparison, only with London, whilst acknowledging the dominance of the capital and the south east region more generally, is used to signal Manchester’s dominance over other regional cities in the UK; hence Manchester is the regional capital, the regional centre of centres.

‘Manchester is the regional capital, as such it must compete on a local, national and international scale’ (Manchester City Council *City Development Guide* 1995:11. Emphasis in original).

Unlike Birmingham’s promotional texts Manchester’s materials are less interested in challenging the UK’s historical geography and the dominance of London and more in using the symbolism of London’s dominance to imbue Manchester with a greater spatial status. In referring only to London Manchester’s promotional texts engage in a ‘politics of position’ similar to that which has been identified by Giddens (1984). In this struggle for national and international position Manchester is intentionally *distanced* from other British regional cities. In not talking about them a measure of their inferiority is inferred. Giddens’ account of the behaviour of central places is helpful in explaining the activities of places that seek recognition as centres:

‘Those who occupy centres establish themselves as having control over resources which allow them to maintain differentiations between themselves and those in peripheral regions. The established may employ a variety of forms of social closure to sustain distance from others who are effectively treated as inferiors or outsiders’ (Giddens, 1984:131).

The imperative behind this *othering* is competition, in aligning the city with the nation’s capital Manchester’s marketers demonstrate the extent to which they recognise other regional centres as potential ‘threats’ to the city’s preferred status as the UK’s regional European and international axis. Though in representing Manchester as the UK’s ‘regional capital’, the city’s marketers chose an alternative strategy to Birmingham. Like Birmingham, Manchester’s historic spatiality is also being re-constructed in *European* terms, marketing efforts are directed towards situating the city in *European* and international space.

**DEFINING THE ‘EUROPEAN’ [CITY]**

In this part of the paper I want to unpack the meaning of the use of the signifiers *European and international* as they are deployed in the marketing texts of Manchester City Council. I will show that deconstruction of the notion of the ‘European’/international’ at work in these marketing texts must be understood with reference to an analysis of the talk of key decision makers in the City Council and their private partners about Manchester’s second Olympic bid, and how subsequent re-presentations of the city have been crucially informed by what they learnt from their observations of Barcelona.

What is meant when it is said that Manchester is a ‘European’ city with ‘European credentials’? The invocation of the ‘European [city]’, seeks to free Manchester of its historical subjugation to the capital; in re-presenting the city as ‘European’ Manchester signifies its independence and ability to bypass London’s control. But the notion of a ‘European city’ is more than a way of downplaying the city’s historic subjugation to London and the southeast. It is an appeal to a part real, part imaginary European city model, an
idealised urban environment and ‘lifestyle’ to which the city’s marketers can aspire.

LEARNING FROM BARCELONA

As an aspirational model the city of Barcelona occupies a singular and mythic position in the accounts of Manchester’s private partners. Barcelona appears to exemplify their idea of the European city. Throughout the bidding for the 1992 Olympic Games Barcelona was Manchester’s closest rival, both geographically and in terms of Barcelona’s economic and social history as a formerly industrial, albeit, port city. In my interviews with the Council’s private partners and key decision makers in the Council accounts were given of their visits as Manchester’s Olympic representatives to Barcelona during the bidding process and their reactions to a city which had been successfully re-positioned as the cultural and economic capital of Catalonian. The Council’s private partners variously commented on how the leadership of the Council became ‘jealous’ of Barcelona, a jealousy which over-flowed when that city was successful in its bid for the 1992 Games.

It was widely acknowledged that Barcelona’s success reinforced the perception that Manchester must become more like Barcelona, that it must undergo a process that some of my informants referred to as ‘Barcelona-isation’. It was not clear whether this term was being used to emphasise the necessary political underpinnings of Barcelona’s transformation, and particularly the figure of the city’s mayor Pasqual Maragall, or aspects of the city’s aesthetics and designs of the city’s built environment. On further questioning Barcelona-isation was typically explained in terms of a transformation achieved both at the political level, the pursuit of an ‘entrepreneurial’ governance under the charismatic Maragall, and the aesthetic, the transformation of the city into a desirable cultural destination. What was meant by Barcelona-isation was never formalised. Barcelona-isation was never, of course, a specific ‘policy’. Rather, the idea of making Manchester more like Barcelona became implicit to their work and understanding of what they wanted to achieve in Manchester. The ongoing significance of Barcelona was made clear in a recent and essentially boosterist article in The Guardian newspaper on the Manchester’s ‘urban renaissance’. The paper’s northern editor remarks on how the Leader of the Council and two of his private partners all separately mentioned the Barcelona factor:

Significantly, [Nick Johnson], Ian Simpson and Richard Leese separately mentioned a visit by the city fathers to Barcelona in the early Nineties. Fact-finding for Manchester’s Olympic Games bid, the delegation saw a blinding light in the Spaniard’s sassy profiting from really high quality urban design ‘The gritty city goes lookie-feely’. The Guardian, April, 1999:17

THE BARCELONA MODEL

Despite the vast historical and political differences between Manchester and Barcelona, and the real economic and cultural differences between Manchester and any other European city, the marketing texts of Manchester Council have distilled a two dimensional model of the ‘European city’ from their observations of Barcelona. First, the European city is represented as a certain type of urban economy, centered on the ‘dynamic’ and ‘entrepreneurial’ producer-professional services and especially the financial services industries. Second, the European city displays a distinctive urban aesthetic and cultural life.

The specific content of the notion of the ‘European City’ or ‘European regional capital’ is less important than the rhetorical function provided by this marketing device. This is why Barcelonaisation would never add up to a strategy, a ‘check-list’ which the city’s leaders could tick-off as and when they fulfilled their ambitions for the city. In re-presenting Manchester as a ‘European regional capital’ and using Barcelona as a form of bench-mark for the city the Council and its private partners have sought to re-locate Manchester in a European city ‘league’ in addition to its place in UK’s national-internal league. For Manchester and Europe’s other regional cities insertion into a notional European league of city’s allows these cities hitherto cast in the shadows of their national capitals to be re-presented as autonomous urban agents in a Europe of cities. In the present historical and economic conjuncture Manchester Council have clearly set their representational limits within this European league. My research shows that key decision makers in the Council and their private partners had a clear idea about which other European cities were the city’s competitors; again problematising their other statements that the Council was not interested in ‘competing’ with other cities. The Council’s Economic Initiatives Department have used research by the Manchester Business School (MBS) to inform their understanding of Manchester’s potential competitor cities. The MBS European Regional Services Project (1993)– considered the relative standing of a number of European cities with regard to their ability to act as European regional financial and professional service centres (3). The research examined seventeen European– secondary financial centres – including: Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Bilbao, Brussels, Copenhagen, Dublin, Lille, Lisbon, Lyon, Oporto, Stuttgart, Turin, Valencia, and Birmingham, Edinburgh and Manchester. For the staff of the Economic Initiatives Department, the leadership of the Council and their private partners this is the European urban league in which Manchester must compete.

DEFINING THE EUROPEAN CITY: ‘QUALITY’ AESTHETICS AND THE ‘PUBLIC REALM’

If we are to become a European city it’s important to get contemporary architecture not pastiche, actual statements of quality (Architect–private partner, March, 1997).

I want to show that the re-aesthetisation of the city centre is central to the attempted re-location of Manchester within this European league of cities and urban space. Quilley (1995) has observed the extent to which the city’s built environment is being used to support the claims that Manchester is [becoming] a European city:

‘[E]nvironmental regeneration provides not just sites for specific business operations, but also landscapes which underwrite the claims of the Manchester script. For instance pedestrianisation, the use of stylish street furniture and the provision of public space relates to the notion of Manchester as a European city and its role as a regional capital’ (1995:297. My emphasis).

The city’s marketing discourse makes strategic use of particular aspects of the built environment of the city to re-present and highlight the ‘European’ character of Manchester. The Council’s Arts and Cultural Strategy (Oct. 1997) announces one its ‘aims and objectives’ as:

Sense of Place and Urban Culture: to create an environment which reflects Manchester’s objective to be recognised as a European Regional Capital, through new programmes for improved urban spaces, street life, cultural animation and public art(9).

Urban re-development and re-building can alter, in quite fundamental ways, the way we apprehend and remember a city. In Manchester the Council and its private partners are using particular
places, spaces and designs to re-present and symbolise the city’s ‘European’ status. This is not to say that they are literally copying or simulating the aesthetics of a mythical Barcelona or any other European city. The work that is being done is to link two features of the built environment, a notion of ‘quality’ aesthetics, as developed by the Council’s private partners, and the presence of public space, to a notion of the ‘European’. In doing so the marketing texts of the Council and the talk of the private partners define Manchester’s ‘European’ qualities as manifest in the city’s built environment, specifically its privileging and possession of public space and ‘quality’ architecture and design.

One of the city’s most recent marketing texts—Manchester 2000: The Changing Face (1999) makes clear the link between built form, here specifically public space, and the city’s European aspirations:

The power of open space was often ignored in recent decades. Everyone now knows the glory of every great European city lies as much in its public realm as in its architecture.

A measure of ‘quality’ made its first appearance in the City Development Guide published in January 1997; here quality is represented as a universal standard, equated with the substantive it is defined as fundamentally a-temporal:

‘We seek to encourage “quality” development as distinct from promoting a particular style. Style is a matter of taste, and remains highly subjective. Quality is enduring whilst style, taste and fashion change’(8).

The ‘enduring’ quality of ‘quality’ is set against the transience and ephemeral of ‘style, taste and fashion’. Importantly, the author of this measure of quality stressed that it was not anti-modern, they claimed ‘quality’ was an attempt to establish a form of judgement with respect to different architectural styles, rather than the privileging on one particular style. As it is written into the City Development Guide quality is employed as a critique of certain forms of architectural modernism, especially the system-built mass produced forms of Hulme. More generally this measure of quality is rooted in an aesthetic attitude to the urban environment which is heavily critical and ultimately rejects a post-war history of what members of the City Development Guide referred to variously as ‘corporate’ and ‘mediocre’ architecture, in favour of an approach to regulating built development which recognises that aesthetics can be a powerful incentive to private sector investment. The Council’s private partners’ statements on ‘quality’ acknowledge the links between architecture, design and investment. ‘Quality’ makes implicit appeal to an aesthetics of urban design prior to comprehensive ‘master’ planning and the whole apparatus of bureaucratic, technocratic planning, hence:

‘High quality environments and quality design can enhance people’s lives in countless ways. Good design cannot be achieved by regulation or prescription’(17). My emphasis.

Quality is understood to be an individual possession, this relates to implicit distancing of ‘quality’ and bureaucracy; in my interviews with members of the City Development Guide advisory panel quality was understood to be the possession of ‘committed’ individuals. Indeed, my informants used similar ethical judgements to refer to the personal qualities of those ‘committed’ individuals interested in ‘quality’ and to the features of quality architecture and design. Thus, the six criteria adopted from the Royal Fine Arts Commission to identify quality include reference to an aesthetics of ‘integrity’ and ‘honesty’.

Whilst quality’s allusion to history should not be read as an attempt to resurrect certain architectural styles, its appeal to the ‘human scale’ privileges the public character of a city’s streetscapes. Thus, the first draft of the City Development Guide (May:1995) made very clear the relationship between ‘quality space’ and the scale of urban life:

The scale and position of new buildings should, therefore, relate to the geometry of the street…developments should be appropriately scaled to relate to the street…large buildings should not distort the scale of streets…’(18).

This valorisation of the ‘street’ is a privileging of what the Council’s marketing texts also refer to as the ‘public realm’ of the city. Public space and the public realm are closely allied to ‘quality’:

‘A high quality urban environment is created by buildings which suit the space in which they are located’(15).

The significance of the marketing of ‘public space’ and ‘quality’ is that they have come to symbolise the city’s claim to be ‘European’. Places which can be re-presented as places of ‘public space’ and ‘quality’ are then used to demonstrate the city’s ‘continental atmosphere’; for example:

‘[The Gay Village] It’s one of the trendiest places in town. European style café culture, “al fresco” pavement society, continental licensing hours and a cosmopolitan attitude, have all put the Village at the forefront of the new Manchester’(Manchester two thousand: the changing face. Manchester City Council, 1999).

‘…the city buzzes at night with bars, restaurants, cafes, live music and night-clubs, all contributing to a booming nightlife economy and giving the city an ever more Continental atmosphere’(Economic Facts. Manchester City Council, 1997).

Quality is given its most substantive form in the City Development Guide. It is given expression in the images selected for inclusion in that text; images, which we must assume, include buildings and spaces the authors considered to be exemplars of their measure of quality design.

PLACES AND SPACES OF A ‘EUROPEAN CITY’

Even a cursory examination of the City Development Guide, and any of the Council’s other marketing texts which relate to the built environment, reveals that there are small number of buildings and places in the city which make regular appearances in these texts. The buildings and places that have attained a symbolic status in representing Manchester’s identity as a ‘European city’ include: the Castlefield area, the Bridgewater Hall and associated Barbrioli square, Hulme, the Manchester Evening News, formerly Nynex, arena, the Velodrome, the Gay Village, the Airport, and the Greater Manchester Exhibition centre (G-MEX). As few as eight buildings/places are consistently used to symbolise what is called Manchester’s ‘current renaissance’, a ‘new chapter’ in the city’s history, the chapter of Manchester as a European city.

These fragments of the city are used to re-present a number of different aspects of the ‘European city’; thus, Castlefield and the Gay Village feature as re-presentations of spaces of the cities ‘continental atmosphere’, of bar and café culture and public space.
The Nynex/Manchester Evening News Arena and GMEX are used to represent Manchester as a European concert/exhibition centre. The Arena is: 'Europe’s largest multi-purpose indoor entertainment and sports facility’ whilst GMEX is ‘rightly regarded as one of the most prestigious exhibition and event centres in Europe’. The Bridgewater [‘international concert’] Hall is of particular significance in re-presenting Manchester’s location in European cultural space. The then Leader of the Council spoke of how he regarded an ‘international’ concert hall to be essential for any city aspiring to ‘European’ status.

Barbiorilli square, after Sir John Barbiorilli the founder of Manchester’s Hallé orchestra, is a 20,000 sq. m office development situated next to the Bridgewater Hall. Its tenants include some of the prominent names in business-services—Price Waterhouse, Ernst & Young and Natwest Commercial Banking Services. The building—100 and 101 Barbiorilli square—is used to signify the city’s status ‘the most important and fully competitive business services centre outside London’.

The city’s airport its ‘jewel in the crown’ according to the Economic Facts document and the building of a second runway:

Manchester Airport is already among the top 20 busiest in the world and the second runway will help to double its capacity to 30 million by 2005 (Manchester 2000,1998).

The airport is the key symbolic site that brings together the Council’s desired relocation of Manchester in European and international space.

These buildings and places are of course only fragments of the city’s built environment, its precious enclaves, what Boyer (1995) has called a city’s ‘ornaments’, which the Council proudly displays in its marketing texts time and again. The fragmented nature of this imaginary city-scape was made clear by the comments of informants both inside and outside the Council’s network of private partners. Problematising what they saw as the Council’s ‘quantitative’ approach to re-development, typically these informants claimed that:

Architectural priorities are secondary because of the need to be seen to be phoenix like (October 1997).

There’s a lot of indifferent work. Outside of Castlefield and Hulme, outside of those the quality of buildings is very ordinary (October 1997).

In its reduction to combinations of 8 buildings and places Manchester can be considered what Hubbard (1999) calls a ‘virtual’ city, in that it is a city ‘constituted through a quixotic range of images and representations’. The physical re-development of a city’s built environment comes to stand for transformations in that city’s economic and cultural and ‘life’:

[The] physical spaces of the city can be considered as belonging to the same set of cultural forms (brochures, videos, guidebooks, advertisements) which promote a partial and selective view of the essence of the city. The imagineers’ attempt to construct a new city image is thus rarely restricted to the launching of a new advertising campaign, and goes hand in hand with the creation of new urban landscapes (200).

CONCLUSIONS: A ‘EUROPEAN CITY’, IN BITS

In this paper I have identified the emergence of a symbolic economy in Manchester, including especially those eight buildings and spaces which are used by the city’s marketers to speak for the city. These buildings and spaces are productive resources and therefore inexorably linked with the city’s economy, in the sense that they are resources of symbolic images which can be made to work to concretise claims which are advanced in their name, whether those claims relate to the city’s status as an European regional city and/or a cultural capital; and a 24 hour city, or the success of public-private partnership in the city. Indeed the very power of these symbolic resources, buildings and places, is that they can mobilised for a variety of signifying purposes, cultural, economic and political.

Manchester’s symbolic ‘quality’ locations are the most obvious means with which it is possible to contribute to the ongoing exctrication, or unbundering, of the city from its historical-cultural spatialisation as a place of mass-manufacture and working class culture. In the same way that Hall (1997) understands the construction, both rhetorical and physical, of the International Convention Centre and Symphony Hall in Birmingham as being led by a range of local interests who wanted to assert Birmingham’s status as a centre of ‘high culture, international culture and spectacle’ (215), so symbolic buildings and places in Manchester, fragments of the city, are joined together and given coherence—articulated—in the city’s marketing texts, and invested with the necessary symbolic capital of quality and public space to work at the re-presentation of Manchester in European cultural and economic space.

Boyer (1992;1995), Crilley (1993) and Hubbard (1996) and have drawn attention to the ways in which city-scapes, or more precisely fragments of city-scapes like those I have identified in Manchester, are being used as productive resources in the representation of formerly industrial cities. In this paper I have argued that as few as eight buildings and places in Manchester’s are being used to relocate the city in a notionally European space. Examining the construction of the ‘European’ city I have shown that whilst the understandings of key decision makers in the city about what constitutes a ‘European’ city have been significantly shaped by their visits to Barcelona during the Olympic bidding process, the aspiration for Manchester to become a ‘European regional capital’ involves the mobilisation of a palimpsest of discourses, images and associations which inform the re-presentations which are made of the city. In linking a particular aesthetic to a notion of the ‘European’ city and bringing together fragments of the city-scape which are said to capture this aesthetic on the same page, the re-presentations of Manchester found in the Council’s marketing texts seek to ascribe a unity and identity to the city; they layer meaning on an otherwise disparate and contradictory city-scape, a city-scape of gaps, decay and a myriad references to other [hidden] economies and cultures.

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The glaring assumption that haunts advertising theory is the fallacy of a pre-existing meaning within the advertising text. This assumption leads to a relegation of the role of the advertising audience to that of decoders of the message. In audience terms you either get it or you don’t. Black or white. In or out.

But what if there is no meaning in an ad? What if a TV ad is a series of pixels on the screen? What if a print ad an array of coloured dots on the page? What if the audience constructs the meaning from the ad?

Aside from promoting a far more audience centric view of the process of advertising interaction, this approach also presents the possibility of polysemy. The same ad, viewed at the same time, may well result in multiple meanings across an audience that inevitably constructs different interpretations from the same text. Neither black nor white, but whatever colour you think.

ABSTRACTS

“The Multiple Meanings of a TV Ad”
Stefano Puntoni, London Business School, UK
Mark Ritson, London Business School, UK
Lan Nguyen, University of Minnesota, USA

“Our advertising is a Rorschach test of what you bring to the image”,
Oliviero Toscani (from www.benetton.com).

Despite the contention that advertising represents the means by which meaning is ascribed to consumer goods (McCracken 1987), advertising research has traditionally conceptualized advertising comprehension as “the grasping or extracting of prespecifiable meanings from the message” (Mick 1992, p. 411). Typically, a researcher carefully constructs a number of advertising stimuli according to a certain experimental design, displays the ads to a sample of individuals and then, after collecting the responses, tests a certain number of theory-driven hypotheses. Within this paradigm, a researcher imbues the advertising stimulus with a certain “correct” meaning and assumes that such a meaning flows from the ad to the consumer. The researcher has decided what the ad “means”, and these meaning are assumed to be transparent to the consumer or subject. Any other alternative interpretation is labeled as “miscomprehension” (Jacoby and Hoyer 1982). Over the years the “advertising as information” paradigm has served well the field of consumer research, as shown by the extensive body of knowledge developed in the field. However, as highlighted by Scott (1994), “models of processing that attribute control to the advertiser, constrain the objectives of the reading experience to brand processing, and define the consumer’s primary task in terms that privilege the interests of the advertiser, disempower the consumer to a degree that is unrealistic and undesirable” (p. 477).

One of the most recent developments in advertising research has been the emergence of “meaning-based models” of advertising (Mick and Buhl 1992). Such models differ from the traditional information processing approach to advertising reception principally because advertising meanings are “constructed within the semantic frame” of the text by the audience rather than simply being “delivered in content” by the advertising (Anderson 1988, p. 25). In effect, the causality of the advertising-audience relationship is reversed and passive terms such as ‘reception’ and ‘processing’ are rejected by meaning-based models and replaced with the more active concept of ‘interpretation’. This subtle shift in the advertising’s semantic locus has had a number of major theoretical implications for the study of advertising interpretation (McCracken 1987). Most important, meaning-based models stress that audience members may well produce different interpretations from the same advertising text.

The pluralistic nature of advertising meaning reflects a wider recognition within theories of popular culture and mass communication that all texts are “polysemic” (Condit 1989 for a review). The term polysemy refers to the “interpretive scope of media texts, the argument being that several interpretations coexist as potentials in any one text” (Jensen 1995, p. 75). Polysemic conceptualisations of media texts directly oppose the univocal assumption that there can only be one correct interpretation of any text. The actual meaning of the advertising text is constructed by individual audience members who make meaning from the text in a way congruent with their own experiences and perspectives. Passing from information-based to meaning-based models, power moves from the text to the reader, because meaning-based models empower the individual with the capability of selecting a specific reading from a potentially infinite number of interpretations. This moment of selection is usually named “heteroglossy”. Texts are defined as open or closed as a function of the measure in which they allow a broader or narrower heteroglossic range. While the individual’s cultural background and repertoire of experiences determine the choice of a certain interpretation, both background and experiences have matured within a specific social-historical context leading, in turn, to the formation of “interpretive communities” (Fish 1980).

A growing body of evidence of advertising’s polysemic status has emerged in recent years (e.g., Keck and Mueller 1994; Mick and Buhl 1992). What is missing from the literature, however, is a systematic study of advertising interpretation that demonstrates not only that advertising is polysemic but which also explores the nature and sources of such polysemy within and across different interpretive communities.

This study investigates these issues by using an interpretive methodology. A sample of students from a large US Midwestern university (composed of 20 heterosexual and 25 homosexual informants), were interviewed to examine the informants’ interpretation of the events portrayed by a 30 second TV commercial and to understand the mechanisms behind the emergence of recurrent dominant readings within different interpretive communities. We selected as the stimulus for this study the ad “Sunday afternoon” for Volkswagen Golf, broadcast in North America in 1997. The ad portrays two young men (one black, the other white) driving around a suburb with a Volkswagen Golf car. When they see an armchair left close to a trash bin they put it on the back seat of the car but after realising that the chair smells they leave it on the side of the street. The stimulus was selected because anecdotal evidence from undergraduate students revealed that two very distinct, independent interpretations existed for this particular ad, according to whether the liaison between the two characters was seen as friendship or romantic relationship. Furthermore, because the commercial had been widely broadcast, interpretations of the ad had already been formed naturalistically and would therefore not need to be artificially induced. Like no other subculture, gay subcultures have
constructed their identities around oppositional reading strategies (Creekmur and Doty 1995). Consequently, the interpretative discrepancy between the gay subculture and mainstream culture was identified as the ideal starting point for a study of advertising polysemy.

The results support the contention that individuals from both hegemonic and dominated social groups are knowledgeable about the cultural codes of the hegemonic group whereas the opposite is not true (e.g., Grier and Brumbaugh 1999; Stern 1993). Heterosexual informants showed a poor knowledge of the cultural codes of the homosexual community. The entire heterosexual sample failed to interpret any gay connotations to the characters or story in the ad. Moreover, when exposed to the alternative reading most of the heterosexual informants denied the alternative reading and dismissed it as untenable. This provides support for the results obtained in a laboratory setting by Bhat, Leigh and Wardlow (1998), according to which attitudes towards homosexuality influence response to homosexual imagery in advertising. The informant’s negation of the alternative reading represents the strategy used to reduce the cognitive dissonance generate by the alternative reading. In other words, the informants “protect their attitudes by selective interpretation” (Fiske and Taylor 1991, p. 470).

The homosexual informants, however, exhibited far greater heterogeneity of interpretation. The homosexual sample was divided into a group that only saw the ad’s “gay” connotation and a group who perceived a dominant, heterosexual reading of the ad and a second gay interpretation. The analysis of the transcripts revealed three key factors in determining the meanings that an audience member produced from the ad.

Supporting the assumptions of meaning-based models, the first one is the role of the lifeworld in influencing interpretation. Accordingly, different people have different experiences and thus their interpretation of the text is influenced by the intersection of the same text with drastically different experiential contexts. The second is the contextual priming effect on interpretation. Contextual factors such as program context can also influence the final interpretation of advertising content. In fact, some informant in the heterosexual sample cited, as the reason for interpreting the couple in the ad as a gay couple, the fact that the first time they saw the ad was within the “Coming out” episode of the TV serial “Ellen”. Finally, another key factor behind the occurrence of polysemy is the presence of interpretive communities of advertising. After an initial interpretation, the advertising audience will often reinforce their interpretation by confirming it with others from the same peer group.

Condit (1989) pointed the attention to the limits of polysemy; while in theory the concept of polysemy suggests that it is possible for every reader to produce a unique interpretation, in practice only a limited number of different interpretations are tenable and, as a result, idiosyncratic readings of a text repeatedly reoccur within a particular audience group. This research suggests that a combination of different factors, some textual and some contextual, combine to ensure that different audiences will interpret one meaning for the advertising text over another.

“The Smiling Female Model in Ads: Does She Really Make a Difference?”

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Joy appeals with smiling faces appear frequently in marketing, but in relation to other emotional appeals they have received little attention from researchers. In an attempt to examine this type of appeal we designed two versions of an ad for a mobile telephone (Figure 1). Both ads had an identical bottom part that contained a picture of the product and short a list of some of its main character-istics. The top part, however, was different: the first version depicted a smiling female model (cf. the enclosed figure), and the second version contained a text with detailed information about the telephone’s attributes. Respondents were randomly allocated to one of these versions (n=60 in both groups). The analysis shows that the smiling face appeal was judged to be significantly happier than the other appeal. Moreover, the smile appeal elicited a significantly more positive attitude towards the ad (particularly among male target persons). These results suggest that smiles in ads may be contagious, and that they may affect judgments by a process of affect infusion—despite the fact that the high frequency of this appeal may signal “influence attempt” rather than stimulus person joy. In other words, the smiling model does appear to make a difference, at least on variables that are located at the early steps in the hierarchy-of-effect models commonly used to assess advertising effectiveness. These results are consistent with findings from (1) psychologists’ studies of the effects of smiling strangers and canned laughter and (2) previous marketing research on other appeals than the joy appeal (e.g., the effects of physically attractive models in ads).

However, a smiling model has other characteristics besides a smile being present; the smiling model stimulus is one particular case in which polysemy is encountered. A smiling model in an ad, for example, may also be physically attractive, sexy and healthy. If this is the case, the presence of the model may evoke a bundle of emotions—such as attraction, joy and arousal—that together color the target person’s subsequent judgments.

“The Impact of Advertising Interaction on Advertising Polysemy”

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Even though television advertising is often consumed together with other people, advertising research has tended to ignore the social dimensions of advertising. According to Ritson and Elliot (1999) the dominant view of the advertising recipient as a solitary subject in advertising research has resulted in an only partial understanding of the effect that advertising has on an audience. Another shortcoming of advertising research is that it has suffered from a considerable bias in the formulation of the audience; viewers are being seen as if “searching for product information, compliantly forming positive brand attitudes, and resolving intentions to purchase”, when a more realistic formulation might be “television viewers who roll their eyes, sigh and go for a snack when the commercial comes on” (Scott, 1990, p. 227). For most people advertising represents an obtrusive and unsolicited form of communication that reaches the viewer in the form of an interruption of the chosen viewing experience (Mick et al., 1999). Few sit down with the aim to watch television advertising. Instead, people sit down to watch TV in order to catch specific programs (Livingstone, 1990), to relax or to use TV viewing as a way of socializing with friends and family (e.g. Lull, 1980; Anderson and Meyer, 1988).

Advertising meaning is not supplied as a pre-packaged reality; instead it comes “to our homes as raw material which we process and reprocess... within the social actions we perform” (Buttle, 1991, p. 10). Many texts are open and are thus open for several interpretations, i.e. the notion of polysemy. This means that several interpretations can coexist and may be actualized differently by different audiences with different interpretive conventions and cultural backgrounds (Jensen, 1995). The person’s cultural background and repertoire of experiences don’t exist in a vacuum but is framed by a specific social-historical context and people can therefore be said to belong to different “interpretive communities” (Fish 1980). An interpretive community is a group of individuals
that share the same “interpretative strategies”, i.e. the ways these individuals approach and digest a text (Scott 1994). Polysemy can occur only when two audiences have different interpretations of the events described in a text.

In this study we use data taken from ethnographic interviews and in situ video recordings made of eight different UK households over a two week period as the households watched their television. This data has been analysed to understand what people decide to do during the commercial break. One activity is to watch the ads, another is to engage in advertising interaction, which is defined as an individual or social behavioural response to a particular ad. We present a series of excerpts from the data to illustrate the theme of advertising interaction and then discuss the role that this interaction plays in reducing or expanding the polysemic potential of a particular advertising text.

Interestingly, in the case of advertising interaction and the following social interaction there is seldom an open disagreement about the evaluation of a particular ad. Instead of verbally supporting or challenging a household member’s opinion about an ad, there are alternative non-verbal communicative strategies. In taking the household as the effective unit of consumption of television advertising, one immediately brings up issues concerning “power relations” (Morley, 1995) and the “complex mixture of people, social roles... routine activities, processes of interpersonal communication...” (1988, p. 245) that exists within a particular household. Depending on the existing and ever evolving power relations and social roles, a spoken comment about an ad by a powerful household member might not be challenged by weaker household members even though there is a disagreement on its interpretation or evaluation. At other times statements about ads can be seen as a tool in the process of interpersonal communication; there might be polyvalence in the evaluation of an ad due to a previous conflict about a non-associated matter.

**SELECT REFERENCES**


Since the 1980s, emotions have received increasing attention from consumer researchers. The impact of emotions has been examined in numerous domains including consumer satisfaction (e.g. Westbrook and Oliver 1991), advertising response (e.g. Batra and Ray 1987; Edell and Burke 1987), decision-making (e.g. Luce 1998) and variety seeking (Kahn and Isen 1993). Accumulating research suggests that a deeper understanding of the emotional experience of consumers promises to shed light on our understanding of many areas of consumer research. The majority of past research has focused upon the experience of single, pure emotions. However, a growing interest in a broad spectrum of conflicting psychological states (e.g., attitude ambivalence, Priester and Petty 1996) and in conflicting emotion-states in particular, has led to increased theoretical development in this area.

For example, recent research has shown that while individuals can simultaneously feel happy and sad (Larsen, McGraw, and Cacioppo 2002), the degree to which they feel torn between these two emotions, and thereby are persuaded by appeals reflecting pure versus mixed emotions may be moderated by a propensity to accept two emotions, and thereby are persuaded by appeals reflecting pure versus mixed emotions.
separated. In contrast, when the processing demands of the message appeal are low, highly motivated consumers tend to prefer ads that physically segregate rather than integrate the visual and verbal ad components. Resource matching theory suggests that favorable evaluations occur when the processing resources allocated by the consumer matches the resources required to fully process and substantiate the ad. In this way, only when there is a match (versus mismatch) of the resources allocated versus required do consumers use visual elements of the ad to substantiate the message claim made (Anand and Sternthal 1989). Moreover, integration of the visual and verbal message claims appears to demand fewer processing resources than separation.

The first experiment finds initial support for the premise that mixed emotional appeals demand more processing resources than single emotional appeals. Specifically, integration of picture and message claim leads to more favorable evaluations for mixed emotional appeals whereas separation of picture and message claim leads to more favorable evaluations for sad emotional appeals. However, responses toward happy emotional appeals are not affected by integration versus separation. A second experiment extends this theory by examining the persuasiveness of single (i.e., low resource demands) or mixed (i.e., high resource demands) emotional appeals when ambiguity inherent in the ad’s visual elements would defy processors’ attempts to confirm the emotion(s) discussed in the message. Under these conditions, we predict and observe that the persuasiveness of the more resource demanding mixed emotion message is greater when the ad’s visual and verbal elements are physically separated rather than integrated, yet the persuasiveness of less resource demanding single emotion messages is relatively low and constant regardless of whether such ad elements were separated or integrated. Interestingly, participants who are better able to seek visual confirmation generate more negative thoughts about the visual elements of the ad than participants who are less able to substantiate the verbal with the visual claims.

Implications of the findings will be discussed in light of the current understanding of resource matching theory, as well as the role of motivation versus ability in emotional regulation.

“Oops, Will I Do It Again? Mixed Emotions After Impulsive Behaviors”
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Studies on consumer impulses have documented the presence of spontaneous positive affect guiding behavior, as well as feelings of guilt after the behavior is engaged in (e.g., Rook 1985, 1987). Recent work by Ramanathan and Menon (2002) has shown that at least some forms of impulsive behavior can be automatically activated by hedonic goals that in turn are activated by situational cues in the environment. The experience of mixed emotions after an impulsive act, however, may mitigate against such automatic activation. The present research attempts to address these two different points of view by looking at the degree to which different people experience mixed emotions after impulsive acts and how they reconcile the mixed emotions so experienced.

Following from the work by Giner-Sorolla (2001), we examine the extent to which people experience immediate emotions and delayed self-conscious emotions after an impulsive act. Giner-Sorolla suggests that self-conscious emotions such as guilt are experienced after a delay, presumably because it takes time and resources to process such emotions. In our first study, we test this proposition by priming both impulsive and prudent consumers with a hedonic goal. Ramanathan and Menon (2002) found that there was an increased incidence of impulsive behavior among both impulsive and prudent people after a temporary hedonic goal was primed. We examine the emotions felt after such behavior by manipulating the timing of the emotion measure (either immediately after the first impulsive act or a day after the act). We also manipulate the time people are presented with an opportunity to express an intention to re-engage in the same behavior (either 5 minutes after the first act or a day after the act). Results indicate that both impulsive and prudent individuals experience hedonic emotions immediately after engaging in the impulsive act. However, prudent people showed a greater extent of self-conscious emotions both immediately and after a delay as compared to impulsive people. This is reflected in a greater degree of ambivalence among prudent people immediately after the impulsive act, though results also show that this ambivalence decays in favor of a negative emotional trace one day later. In contrast, we found no evidence of ambivalence among impulsive people either immediately or after a delay, suggesting that self-conscious emotions were either not experienced or somehow rendered non-diagnostic in the interim. Reported intentions to re-engage in the same behavior were higher among impulsive people compared to prudent people.

In a second study, we looked at how people might reconcile their ambivalence or negative emotional components experienced after an impulsive act. Following from findings reported by Levav and McGraw (2002), we hypothesized that when prudent consumers could engage in a utilitarian behavior after the impulsive (hedonic) one, they were less likely to feel self-conscious emotions afterwards, because they would be able to effectively “laundry” their self-conscious emotions through engagement in the utilitarian actions. Following the procedure in Study 1, all subjects were primed with a hedonic goal and those who acted impulsively in response were chosen for the next phase of the study. Once again, the emotion measure was taken either immediately after the act or a day later. Subjects were then presented with an opportunity to engage in either a utilitarian behavior, a hedonic behavior, or to do neither. Once again, we find that prudent people are most likely to experience ambivalence immediately after engaging in an impulsive act. However, when given the choice to act again after the impulsive act, this group was also more likely to choose to engage in a utilitarian behavior, relative to a hedonic one. In contrast, prudent people for whom the emotion measure was taken a day after chose neither the utilitarian nor the hedonic option. Impulsive people, on the other hand, were more likely to choose the hedonic behavior (in what could be a “what the hell” effect) both immediately and one day later.

“Mixed Emotions in Judgments of Stigmatized Behaviors and Individuals”
Roger Giner-Sorolla, University of Kent at Canterbury, UK
Roberto Gutierrez, University of Kent at Canterbury, UK

In dealing with stigmatized persons and behaviors, judgments may be controlled by a variety of conflicting emotional reactions. These judgments will impact consumer behavior when, for example, an HIV-positive spokesperson is employed, an advertiser tries to promote an inherently unpleasant product, or a brand tries to recover from repulsive product rumors.

We propose a model in which stigmatized acts first invoke an immediate, irrational negative reaction of disgust that can be modified later by the presence or absence of anger arising from the perceived consequences of the act and also by compassion for the individuals involved.

Importantly, research shows that disgust is an immediate reaction that is not very amenable to cognitive restructuring; for example, people are disgusted by the thought of wearing the sweater of someone who has died of AIDS, even though they realize
it can have no negative consequences (Rozin & Nemeroff, 1990; Rozin, Markwith & McCauley, 1994). More recent work (Haidt, 2001) finds that victimless scenarios involving a stigmatized behavior evoke immediate negative, and that people will sometimes bend the parameters of the scenario in order to come up with consequences that fit the initial affect. This work seeks to expand on this initial disgust-focused work, by looking at the ways in which the emotions of anger and compassion may strengthen or mitigate initial judgments, on the basis of the more effortful process of thinking about an act’s consequences.

A preliminary study generated scenarios describing stigmatized acts, and found that anger, disgust and compassion each made contributions to the overall judgment of each act. In particular, anger, but not disgust, was responsive to the valence of an act’s perceived consequences, and these two emotions formed separate factors in judgments of highly stigmatized but victimless acts. Compassion toward an act’s perpetrator was influenced by the act’s consequences primarily among highly stigmatized acts, and had a lesser influence on judgments of the act’s rightness or wrongness.

Results from two other studies now in progress will also be presented. The first of these studies examined thinking about consequences within-participants, asking participants to write down emotions that came to mind regarding stigmatized behaviors before and after writing down the likely consequences of the behavior. It is expected that anger and compassion, relative to disgust, will be more influential on judgments made after thinking about consequences, and that these emotions will be influenced by the valence of consequences listed. In preliminary analysis of this study’s results, extreme taboo acts such as incest showed a negative relationship between the number of consequences written down and judgment; the more consequences, the more extremely negatively the act was judged. However, more moderate taboo acts such as prostitution showed a positive relationship between the number of consequences and judgment, indicating that thinking about consequences may be related to more moderate judgments.

The second of these studies uses a between-participants manipulation and scaled emotion item to compare judgments after thinking about consequences versus judgments without thinking about consequences and judgments made under cognitive load. It is expected that under load, disgust will be more influential than anger and compassion on overall judgment.

REFERENCES
**SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY**

**Fitting It All Together: A Look at the Fit Construct Across Brand Extension, Sponsorship and Endorsement**

Karen Becker-Olsen, New York University, USA

Fit has become a central focus for many marketing relationships in which we create affect transfer. In the marketing literature, the fit construct typically embodies the idea of transferability of feelings, associations, expertise or synergies from one organization, product or brand to another because of consumer perceptions of appropriateness between the two entities. Fit is important for several reasons: First, it is the basis for the affect transfer. Second, it determines how much thought people give to a specific relationship and the nature of those thoughts. Third, it affects the favorability of attitudes and behavioral intentions.

Current research on brand relationships, advertising alliances, and sponsorships have all noted the importance of fit in creating effective programs. However, the research has stopped short of examining many important dimension of the fit construct. Specifically, how various consumers are likely to use fit to process information, how it influences consumer thoughts about efficacy, what types of fit are best in terms of creating affect transfer and when might fit not be important. This session begins to explore all of these ideas.

In the first paper the influence that age, cohort and period effects have in determining the meaning of a brand and its fit with several extension categories is examined. This is particularly important for brands with a wide target audience, or multiple target audiences, which need to examine how various groups of potential customers perceive fit. However, little research has examined the differences between children and adults in determining brand fit with extension product categories. The influence of cohort and period effects on consumers’ perceptions of brand meaning and, hence, brand fit, has yet to be examined in the academic literature. The second paper looks at the effects of fit on sponsorship efficacy. The key finding in this paper is that a high fit brand is perceived as helping an event more than a low fit brand. The laboratory findings are replicated across a stratified sampling of Irish households. The third paper tests the claim that there are times when fit does not matter. This endorser study finds that no matter what the level of fit, a brand may benefit when the most salient endorser associations are positive character traits. However, when a celebrity has a negative character, the brand may suffer unless the fit between the product class and the endorser is perceived as intrinsically high.

This session is likely to appeal to a broad audience of researchers. The strengths of the session include the number of studies which are presented, the broad areas of investigation (e.g., brand extension, sponsorship and endorsement) and exploration of new ideas about fit. While this session is likely to be of interest to those researchers in the areas of brand extension, sponsorship and endorsement, it is also likely to be of interest to any researchers who are interested in affect transfer.

We hope the session will spark considerable interest and dialogue on the role of fit in various domains. As such each presenter will be limited to 20 minutes, allowing for 30 minutes of discussion.
approach. Additionally, the depth of associations used in fit judgments tend to increase with age. Similarities in brand meaning are found within cohort groups and the types of associations that are used to justify fit perceptions appear to be related to the period in which the brand has been experienced.

“The Impact of Sponsor/Event Fit on Irish and American Consumer Perceptions”
John W. Pracejus, University of Alberta, Canada

The positive impact of fit between a brand and some associate of the brand has been demonstrated in several domains. In brand extension, for example, it has been generally found that brands can more easily extend into high fit, as opposed to low fit, product classes (Aaker and Keller, 1993). Likewise, celebrity endorsers who fit well (or “match-up”) with the brand have generally been shown to be more effective as spokespeople (Kamins and Gupta, 1994). Currently sponsorship, or the intentional association of a brand with an event, is emerging as an important part of the promotional mix. Over $9B was spent on sponsorship in North America in 2001 (IEG, 2001), yet little is known about how fit between a brand and an event impacts the success of such an association.

Two experiments (N=79) and a stratified sample survey of Irish Households (N=524) explore the relationship between brand/event fit, and consumer perceptions, attitudes and beliefs. Across the two experiments, the internal validity of the fit construct is maximized by finding a pair of events and a pair of brands for which fit can be “flipped.” Specifically the brands were (1) Texaco and (2) Evian, and the events were (A) the US Open tennis tournament and (B) the Indianapolis 500 auto race. Experiment one pairs A with 1 (low fit) and A with 2 (high fit). Experiment 2 pairs B with 1 (high fit) and B with 2 (low fit). Note that 1 is low fit in Exp1 and high fit in Exp2, whereas 2 is high fit in exp1 and low fit in Exp2. Results show that Evian was perceived as facilitating the US open more than Texaco (p<.02) and that Texaco was perceived as facilitating the Indy 500 more than Evian (p<.03).

This effect of fit, therefore, cannot be explained by idiosyncrasies of individual brands. Across the two experiments, fit and brand are unconfounded. The key finding across the two experiments is that the high fit brand is perceived to be helping the event more than the low fit brand. This is particularly interesting in that the two brands used were, in fact, identical level sponsors of the US Open at the time.

While these experiments maximized internal validity, external validity was perhaps weak. A stratified sample survey was therefore conducted using real brands and real events with high familiarity. Five hundred twenty four Irish households were selected through a stratified sample of the population. Surveys were administered in the homes of those selected.

Here, perceived fit was measured rather than manipulated. Only respondents who correctly identified the sponsor of each event were included. This means that they were at least familiar enough with the event to know who the sponsors were in a recall task. Results show a significant (p<.01) correlation between perceived fit and perceived helping of the event by the brand for 5 of the 7 brand/event pairs tested. The other two, while not significant, were in the same direction (i.e. positive coefficients).

Specifically, Irish Permanent’s association with the FAI Schools Soccer Competition showed the strongest correlation between perceived fit and perceived helping (Pearson R=.458, t=5.5, p<.001). Murphy’s association with the Irish Open Golf event showed a similarly strong correlation (Pearson R=.33, t=6.22, p<.001). These results indicate that as people’s perceived fit increased, their perception as to how much the brand was doing to facilitate the event also rose. While the direction of causality cannot be determined solely from this correlational survey, in combination with the findings from the two experiments, it can be argued that perceived fit leads people to believe the brand is doing more for the event. Implications of these findings for sponsorship research are discussed.

“When Nice Guys Finish First: An Investigation of Celebrity Character and Fit on Brand Evaluations”
Karen Becker-Olsen, New York University, USA
B. Andrew Cudmore, Florida Institute of Technology, USA
Scott D. Swain, Boston University, USA

Extant research on endorsers has demonstrated the importance of fit on consumer perceptions (Kahle and Homer 1985; Kamins 1990; Till and Busler 2000). Yet we see Michael Jordan successfully endorsing products that are not linked to his physical attractiveness or area of expertise (e.g., phone services). If Michael Jordan can do this successfully, do other celebrities also have the power to endorse products which are not perceived as high fit? In this study, we explore the notion that fit does not always matter.

This investigation is the first of its kind to suggest that there are times when the effects of fit are outweighed by sheer notoriety.

In a content analysis of celebrity endorsement print ads, it was found that roughly one-third of the endorsement ads used celebrities which had a direct link to the product. Most of these high fit ads used expertise as the basis of fit. Thus some specific skill of the endorsement made him or her an expert on the product. These ads tended to be skewed towards athletic apparel and supplies. However, two-thirds of the ads featured celebrities with no direct link to the product being endorsed. We did find that these low fit ads featured celebrities that have positive character associations. Product type varies across many categories of consumer products. Thus, despite the theoretical research which suggests that high fit creates more effective endorsement advertising programs and stronger brand attitudes, it appears that many companies are hoping that the celebrities personality will cut through the clutter to increase brand awareness and create a point of differentiation. This suggests that it may not be necessary to have a high degree of fit between the celebrity and the brand for the brand to be positively evaluated.

In order to empirically test the claim that there are times when fit does not matter, a 2 (positive character/ negative character) x 3 (high fit, low fit and created fit) study was conducted. This study used real endorsers and fictitious brands to determine the effect of character and fit on brand evaluations. We find that no matter what the level of fit, the brand benefited when the most salient endorser associations were positive. However, when the celebrity had a negative character, the brand suffered unless the fit between the product class and the endorser was perceived as intrinsically high.

The results of the experimental study, combined with the content analysis findings suggest that fit matters when the most salient endorser character traits are negative, indicating that the use of nice guys as celebrity endorsers may override the effects of fit. As with much of what we do in marketing, it may be important to match our objectives with the program. If our primary objective is to strengthen awareness or cut through the clutter, any positive endorser may work. However, if our objective is to create specific brand associations, then we might need to be more careful in terms of choosing our endorser. As evidenced by the content analysis, this effect is likely to hold in product categories which are highly fragmented and have numerous me-too type products in that the endorser is used to increase top of mind awareness rather than develop specific brand associations.
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Consumer Response to Corporate Social Initiatives: A Look at the Effects of Fit and Motivation
Karen L. Becker-Olsen, New York University, USA
B. Andrew Cudmore, Florida Institute of Technology, USA

ABSTRACT
The use of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives to influence customers and differentiate products has become quite common. This research builds on the growing body of literature on CSR and investigates the role that fit and perceived motivation play in determining consumer response to social initiatives. We find that initiatives, which are perceived as low fit consistently decrease consumer responses, while self interested corporate motivation also leads to lower consumer response.
Consumer Skepticism Toward New Products
Kaj P.N. Morel, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands
Ad Th.H. Pruyn, University of Twente, The Netherlands and ESADE, Spain

ABSTRACT
The present article introduces the concept of consumer skepticism toward new products (CSTNP) as a more comprehensive notion of consumer skepticism than skepticism toward advertising. CSTNP is conceptualized and defined in relation to related constructs (doubt, disbelief, and distrust). The underlying structure of CSTNP is empirically examined and several antecedents and consequences of CSTNP are proposed and tested.

CONSUMER SKEPTICISM TOWARD NEW PRODUCTS
Parallel to the development of companies’ orientation to the marketplace, from the production concept to the concept of one-to-one marketing, consumers’ position toward new products and marketing has changed from that of a gullible, all-accepting customer into a self-aware, highly critical individual. Over time, consumers have developed personal knowledge, called ‘persuasion knowledge’ (Friestad and Wright 1994), about the tactics marketers use to persuade them to buy their products. As a result, consumers are less likely to offer unquestioning trust to suppliers; they are skeptical:

“New consumers tend to be much less trusting than Old ones. Since they are more suspicious of authority in general, simply being told that something is the case fails to impress them. They want to be given concrete evidence that things are as they are claimed to be before judging them either credible or unreliable. Old consumers, by contrast, tend to require a less rigorous standard of proof before accepting such claims” (Lewis and Bridger 2001, p. 42).

According to public policy makers and consumer interest groups who are concerned with the potential to mislead consumers, skepticism is a necessary, beneficial, and healthy skill that protects consumers from marketers’ deceit and enables them to make sound and objective product evaluations (Koslow 2000). Therefore, skepticism should be enhanced through education and training (Mohr, Eroglu, and Scholder Ellen 1998).

In the eyes of suppliers and marketers, however, consumer skepticism is both a curse and a blessing. The marketplace cannot cope with skepticism, but it cannot do without it either (Obermiller and Spangenberg 1998). Marketing practices, often characterized by exaggeration and bias, rely on some level of consumer skepticism. Consumers are expected to be capable of distilling the true message out of ads and commercials; they are expected to know what to take literally and what not. At the same time, to the extent that consumers are skeptical of the truthfulness of marketing communications and product offerings, their information value is diminished and the costs of communicating the benefits of new products to consumers are wasted (Mohr et al. 1998; Obermiller and Spangenberg 1998). Furthermore, skepticism may lead consumers to become suspicious of honest marketing practices (Koslow 2000) and may lead them to ignore or reject truly beneficial “deals” (Mohr et al. 1998). Clearly, such a situation would be in nobody’s interest. A desired state for consumers appears to be one in which they are capable of deciding when there is a need to be skeptical (i.e. when they run the risk of being misled or deceived) and when there is no such need (i.e. in situations where being skeptical would be counterproductive).

The aforementioned considerations have stimulated research into consumer skepticism. Strikingly, practically all the studies carried out thus far are characterized by an exclusive focus on consumer skepticism toward (some form of) advertising. Investigated objects of consumer skepticism are seals of approval information in advertising (Beltramini and Stafford 1993), environmental claims in marketing communications (Mohr et al. 1998), advertising claims about different durables and services (Ford, Smith, and Swasy 1990), pizza advertising (Koslow 2000), pharmaceutical advertising (Koslow and Beltramini 2001), TV advertising (Boush, Friestad, and Rose 1994), lawn mower advertising (Hardesty, Carlson, and Bearden 2002), and advertising in general (Mangleburg and Bristol 1998; Obermiller and Spangenberg 1998, 2000). Only one study was found that takes a broader perspective than ad skepticism, namely that of Bronn and Vrioni (2001) who discuss consumer skepticism toward cause-related marketing campaigns.

In the present study, consumer skepticism toward new products (CSTNP) is examined. We will particularly focus on the definition and the construction of a measurement instrument. There are several reasons for doing so. Firstly, consumer skepticism toward advertising represents too limited a view of consumer skepticism. Clearly, consumer skepticism may be directed towards many other aspects of product offerings such as quality, environmental hazard, novelty, advantage, price fairness, warranty, and manufacturer motives. Secondly, consumer skepticism appears to be a particularly relevant construct in the case of new, unfamiliar products, as uncertainty and risk are likely to be high and as it is believed that most consumers are intrinsically wary of new things (Moston 1996; Rackham 1998). Finally, research into CSTNP is of high practical relevance. Understanding why and under which conditions people are skeptical about new products will (1) enable marketers and product developers to anticipate consumer skepticism and it will provide them with directives as to how to reduce skepticism and accelerate adoption and diffusion, (2) enable public policy makers and consumer interest groups to educate consumers to become productive rather than unproductive skeptics.

DEFINING CONSUMER SKEPTICISM TOWARD NEW PRODUCTS
Research into consumer skepticism has suffered from the lack of a clear and consistent definition of consumer skepticism. Reported studies are largely incomparable and have hardly contributed to coherent and progressing theorizing, due to the use of different definitions. To mention a few, skepticism (toward advertising) has been defined either as a mistrustful predisposition (Boush, et al. 1994) or a negatively valenced attitude (Mangleburg and Bristol 1998) toward motives of and claims by advertisers, as a general tendency toward disbelief of advertising claims (Hardesty et al. 2002; Obermiller and Spangenberg 1998, 2000), as consumers’ distrust or disbelief of (the sincerity of) marketer actions (Forehand and Grier 2002), or as a tendency to question the truth of advertising claims (Koslow 2000). What these definitions have in common is that consumer skepticism not only implies that someone is in doubt about (marketing) information, but also that that person

8The authors thank Leonie Henraat for her assistance with the data collection.
tends to believe that the information is untrue rather than true. A negative bias thus seems to exist. Although in principle, upon the exposure to supporting evidence, the skeptic can still be persuaded to accept the information as true, deep inside (s)he does not expect that to happen.

Reading these definitions, at least two questions spring to mind: (1) Is consumer skepticism a predisposition or a temporary, context-induced state of mind? and (2) What is the difference between consumer skepticism, doubt, disbelief, and distrust?1

In answer to the first question, consumer skepticism is regarded as an inclination that can either be predisposed (trait) or context-induced (state). The distinction between trait and state skepticism is also made by Forehand and Grier (2002) who argue that consumers vary in their predisposition toward skepticism, but that skepticism is also produced by situational variables that induce a (temporary) state of skepticism. Thus, at the more general level, someone may possess a skeptical personality (trait). Whatever the nature of the information, a skeptical person will always tend to question it. At a more specific level, skepticism may especially be triggered when the subject is confronted with specific (e.g. marketing) stimuli. Someone may become more skeptical when, for example, dealing with new products, advertising, or salespeople.

Consumer skepticism towards new products (CSTNP) is thus considered a form of state skepticism that occurs when someone (not necessarily having a more general skeptical predisposition, although a strong positive relationship can be expected) is occasionally confronted with a new product about which (s)he is skeptical. Obviously, CSTNP will be set off by a number of situational variables and product characteristics such as product novelty (“Is it truly new?”), product performance (“Will it really do what it is supposed to?”), durability (“Will it truly work properly for at least 5 years?”), or value for money (“Is this a fair price?”).

With respect to the second question, distinguishing skepticism from doubt, disbelief, and distrust may seem a semantic issue only, but it is not. Notwithstanding their apparent semantic similarity, these constructs are conceptually different. The difference between doubt and disbelief constitutes the difference between knowing and believing. Lack of knowledge is related to insufficient information which makes it difficult or impossible to make up your mind about something. As such, doubt is considered to be an antecedent of attitude strength. Not believing something does not imply that there is a lack of information, but rather that there is a lack of conviction that the information is true or reliable. Thus, disbelief has to do with the credibility rather than the sufficiency of information. Disbelief and skepticism differ from each other in that disbelief is more definitive than skepticism. Somebody who disbeliefes information has accepted it as not true. In contrast, someone who is skeptical about something (e.g. product quality, ease of use, etc.) is still in the process of deciding whether to accept it as true or not. Koslow (2000) makes a similar distinction between skepticism and disbelief and offers supporting evidence showing that people may question information and still believe it tentatively. Finally, distrust is equal to what others have termed cynicism, which has been defined as “the suspicion of other people’s motives, faithfulness, and goodwill” (Kanter and Mervis cited in Obermiller and Spangenberg 1998). Obviously, distrust is a relevant construct for marketers, but it has to be conceptually separated from skepticism. Whereas cynicism (distrust) refers to an evaluation of something or someone as being (dis)honest or (un)reliable, skepticism refers to an evaluation of the extent to which something is true. Kanter and Mervis (cited in Mohr et al. 1998, p.33) have described the difference between skepticism and cynicism as follows: “Skeptics doubt the substance of communications; cynics not only doubt what is said but the motives for saying it”.

In this study, consumer skepticism toward new products is defined as a consumer’s tendency to question any aspect of a new product offering, in any form it may appear (e.g. facts, inferences, or claims). This questioning tendency is a context-induced state and will be stronger for skeptical people (being part of their skeptical nature). CSTNP is biased towards disbelieving, but this bias may be overcome if the evidence is convincing. In other words, consumer skepticism is pre-attitudinal and it can, theoretically, be decomposed to the level of attributes of the new product (consumers may question any aspect of a product offering).

From a practical point of view, it is neither possible nor desirable to include every product aspect in a further conceptualization of CSTNP. For new products we propose the following set of relevant “targets” of CSTNP: product quality (Garvin 1987; Brucks, Zeithaml and Naylor 2000), including product performance, ease of use, durability, serviceability, and prestige, compatibility and relative advantage (Rogers, 1995), novelty (Storey and Easingwood, 1998), value for money, and credibility of the (new) product information upon introduction.

ANTecedents AND CONSEQUENCES OF CSTNP

A number of antecedents of skepticism toward advertising have been identified in the literature. In the present study, the effects of cynicism (Mohr et al. 1998; Obermiller and Spangenberg 1998), consumer sentiment toward marketing (CSTM, Mohr et al. 1998), trait skepticism, and age (Obermiller and Spangenberg 1998) on CSTNP will be investigated in order to replicate the findings from previous studies for skepticism toward new products. In addition, the effect of two previously unexamined antecedents, product interest and product familiarity, is tested. Cynicism and trait skepticism are predicted to have positive effects on CSTNP. People that are generally cynical and skeptical are likely to also be more skeptical toward new products. Age is also predicted to have a positive effect on CSTNP due to increased knowledge, analytical skills, and counter-arguing that are assumed to accompany aging (Obermiller and Spangenberg 1998). CSTM, product interest and product familiarity are all expected to be negatively related to CSTNP. Consumers who possess a positive sentiment toward marketing activities are likely to be less skeptical than those possessing negative sentiments. Consumers who have a strong interest in a particular product are less likely to be skeptical since they are involved with the product (Koslow 2000). Finally, the prediction that familiar products will evoke less skepticism than unfamiliar products is based on the idea that people tend to question what is uncertain and unknown (Moston 1996; Rackham 1998). In summary, the following hypotheses will be tested.

H1: Higher cynicism leads to higher CSTNP.
H2: Higher trait skepticism leads to higher CSTNP.
H3: Higher consumer sentiment toward marketing leads to lower CSTNP.
H4: Higher age leads to higher CSTNP.
H5: Higher product interest leads to lower CSTNP.
H6: Higher product familiarity leads to lower CSTNP.

Regarding the consequences of CSTNP, the focus is on consumer judgment of new products and their purchase intention.

1Distrust is synonymous with another commonly used term, suspicion.
Skeptical consumers are hypothesized to have more negative product judgments and lower purchase intentions than less skeptical consumers.

H7: Higher CSTNP leads to a more negative product judgment.
H8: Higher CSTNP leads to a lower purchase intention.

METHOD

The purpose of the empirical study was twofold. The first purpose was to establish the targets of CSTNP. What are the aspects of a new product offering that consumers are skeptical about? The second purpose was to test the relations between the proposed antecedents and consequences of CSTNP. The details of the survey study are given below.

Respondents, Stimulus Material, and Procedure

Consumers were randomly selected from a consumer panel. Of the 128 questionnaires, 94 were returned (73.4 percent). Of the respondents that returned the questionnaire, 49 were men and 45 were women. Their age ranged from 18 to 65 years (median 41 years). Filling out the questionnaire took approximately 30 minutes. Participation was rewarded with a small token of appreciation (a pen).

Respondents received a mail questionnaire including product descriptions with picture of three different new products. These three products were randomly selected from a pool of six: Aibo robot, auto mower, TiVo, flat TV, super audio CD player, and wrist watch camera (see Appendix for the product descriptions). Six products were selected in order to enhance generalizability of the results. All of the products selected for this study were really new, in the sense that they were introduced to the Dutch market less than six months before the study took place (and some had not even been introduced yet). After a general introduction, the questionnaire presented respondents with a picture and short description of the first of the three products. Following this description were items measuring respondents’ skepticism toward the product, their evaluation of the product, their interest in and familiarity with the product, the clarity of the product description, the amount of information in and the “informativeness” of the description, and their purchase intention. After the second and third product descriptions and corresponding questions, the questionnaire concluded with items measuring trait skepticism, cynicism, consumer sentiment toward marketing, and age.

Measures

Answering scales for all measures were seven-point rating scales. CSTNP was measured by means of 20 specific items assessing skepticism toward different aspects of the new product and two general items. The aspects were performance, ease of use, durability, serviceability, value for money, prestige, quality, compatibility, relative advantage, novelty, and credibility of the information. The items reflecting skepticism toward each product aspect can be found in Table 1. The two general CSTNP items read “I am skeptical about the product” and “I cannot imagine that the product will become a success”. Scale ends were completely disagree/completely agree.

Cynicism was measured with the six-item Kanter and Mervis scale (Mohr et al. 1998). Examples of items are “Most people will tell a lie if they can profit from it” and “Most people are just out for themselves” (completely disagree/completely agree).

Consumer sentiment toward marketing was scored on the 24-item Gaski and Etzel scale (cf., Mohr et al. 1998). For the sake of uniformity the original five-point Likert scale (completely disagree/completely agree) was adjusted to a seven-point one. Accidentally, one of the items related to product quality was not included in the questionnaire, resulting in a total of 23 instead of 24 items.

A measure of trait skepticism was developed, consisting of eight items (completely disagree/completely agree). Examples of items are: “My attitude in life is: seeing is believing”, and “My friends and acquaintances think that I am a skeptic”.

One item measured product interest: “How interesting do you find this product?” (not at all interesting/very interesting).

Two items assessed product familiarity: “How familiar are you with the product?” (not at all familiar/very familiar) and “How often have you read, seen or heard something about the product?” (never/very often).

Overall product judgment was assessed by one single item: “Taking everything into account, how positive or negative would your judgment of the product be?” (very negative/very positive).

Purchase intention was also determined by means of one single item: “Taking everything into account, how likely is it that you will buy the product within a half year from now?” (I will definitely not buy the product/ I will definitely buy the product).

RESULTS

Targets of Consumer Skepticism toward New Products

The 20 CSTNP items were subjected to factor analysis to establish whether they represented different targets of consumer skepticism. Factor analysis results are shown in Table 1. The eigenvalue>1 criterion suggested a five-factor solution, accounting for 39.4, 9.3, 8.5, 6.9, and 5.4 percent of the variance, respectively. Total variance explained by these five factors was 69.6. Two items (items 8 and 16) were dropped due to communalities of less than .50 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black 1998). One additional item (item 17) was dropped because of an item-to-remaining-total correlation of .35 with the remaining Relative Advantage items (14 and 15) and because it suppressed the Cronbach’s alpha substantially, from .90 to .75.

The resulting factor structure can be interpreted as follows. Factor 1, comprising six items, represents consumers’ skepticism about the quality of the product. This quality judgment is composed of judgments about the product’s performance, ease of use, durability, and general quality. These are all variables that have been identified as dimensions of product quality (Brucks, Zeithaml, and Naylor 2000; Garvin 1987). Skepticism about the compatibility of the product is captured by the second factor. It is not clear why Prestige also loads on this factor. Factor 3 holds the three items measuring skepticism about the credibility of the product information and Factor 4 the two remaining items indicating consumers’ skepticism toward the relative advantage of the new products. Skepticism about warranty and service (serviceability) is captured by the fifth factor.

In an attempt to refine the factor structure further, i.e. to account for the distinction between the quality dimensions and to separate prestige from the compatibility factor, another factor analysis was run with nine factors to be extracted. The nine factors accounted for 89.2 percent of the total variance and were exactly the factors that could be expected on the basis of face validity (and our own previous expectations): Credibility (42.1 percent), Relative Advantage (10.1), Serviceability (9.0) Compatibility (7.5), Ease of Use (6.0), Performance (4.4), Prestige (3.8), Quality (3.6), and Durability (2.6). It is acknowledged that the extra amount of variance that is explained by Factors 6 to 9 is relatively low, but considering that the main purpose of the analysis is to identify the
structure underlying skepticism toward new products (i.e. the targets of skepticism) rather than data reduction, the nine factor solution is preferred over one that is more parsimonious but less theoretically consistent.

Based on the result from the factor analysis, summary variables were created for Credibility (α=.90), Relative Advantage (r=.82, p<.01), Serviceability (r=.71, p<.01), Compatibility (α=.85), Ease of Use (r=.79, p<.01) and Performance (r=.65, p<.01) by calculating the average of the corresponding items. Next, content validity of the targets of CSTNP was tested by correlating each target with the general measure of skepticism toward the new product (r=.79, p<.01). All targets were significantly and substantially correlated with skepticism toward the new product (see Table 2). To examine the relative contribution of each target to CSTNP, general skepticism toward the new product was regressed on the nine targets. The full model was highly significant (R=.79, F(9,270)=48.5, p<.001). The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values (Table 2) are below the harmful level of 10 (Hair et al., 1998), so multicollinearity is not a problem. The beta coefficients indicate that the main targets of CSTNP are Credibility (β=.28), Compatibility (β=.27), and Prestige (β=.21). Slightly less important targets are Relative Advantage (β=.14), Performance (β=.11), Durability (β=.10), and Ease of Use (β=.09). Targets not contributing to CSTNP are Serviceability and Quality.

### Antecedents and Consequences of Consumer Skepticism toward New Products

A scale of cynicism was constructed by taking the average of the six items. Cronbach’s alpha was .79 which is almost identical to the value of .78 found by Mohr et al. (1998). A scale of trait

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
<th>Factor 4</th>
<th>Factor 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>1. I doubt if the product really does what it is supposed to do</td>
<td>.53</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. I doubt if the product will always function properly</td>
<td>.62</td>
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<td>Ease of use</td>
<td>3. I would first like to see if the product is easy to use</td>
<td>.81</td>
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<td>4. I doubt if using the product is truly simple</td>
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<td>Durability</td>
<td>5. I would first like to see if the product lasts long</td>
<td>.63</td>
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<td>Serviceability</td>
<td>6. I doubt if there is a good warranty on the product</td>
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<td>.80</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7. I doubt if the service is truly good when something</td>
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<td>.83</td>
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<td>Value for Money</td>
<td>8. I doubt if the product is worth its money</td>
<td>.52</td>
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<td>Prestige</td>
<td>9. I doubt if I want to be seen with this product</td>
<td></td>
<td>.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>General quality</td>
<td>10. I would first like to see if this product is truly of good quality</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Compatibility</td>
<td>11. I doubt if I really need the product</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. I doubt if the product is something for me</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13. I doubt if I would really use the product</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative advantage</td>
<td>14. I doubt if the product is truly better then similar products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15. I doubt if the product has more to offer than similar products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.88</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16. I would first like to see if there are people who need this product</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novelty</td>
<td>17. I doubt if the product is truly new</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>18. I doubt if I should believe the information in the product description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19. I doubt if what is said in the product description is really true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20. I would first like to see if the information in the product description is correct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. Factor loadings < .4 are eliminated to facilitate interpretation. Bold-printed items have been removed from further analysis.

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
<th>Factor 4</th>
<th>Factor 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>1. I doubt if the product really does what it is supposed to do</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. I doubt if the product will always function properly</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of use</td>
<td>3. I would first like to see if the product is easy to use</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. I doubt if using the product is truly simple</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durability</td>
<td>5. I would first like to see if the product lasts long</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serviceability</td>
<td>6. I doubt if there is a good warranty on the product</td>
<td></td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. I doubt if the service is truly good when something</td>
<td></td>
<td>.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value for Money</td>
<td>8. I doubt if the product is worth its money</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige</td>
<td>9. I doubt if I want to be seen with this product</td>
<td></td>
<td>.59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General quality</td>
<td>10. I would first like to see if this product is truly of good quality</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatibility</td>
<td>11. I doubt if I really need the product</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>12. I doubt if the product is something for me</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Relative advantage</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Credibility</td>
<td>18. I doubt if I should believe the information in the product description</td>
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<td></td>
<td>.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. Factor loadings < .4 are eliminated to facilitate interpretation. Bold-printed items have been removed from further analysis.

A scale of cynicism was constructed by taking the average of the six items. Cronbach’s alpha was .79 which is almost identical to the value of .78 found by Mohr et al. (1998). A scale of trait
skepticism was created by taking the average of seven of the eight items. One item was dropped due to an item-to-remaining-total correlation of .26. Cronbach’s alpha for the seven-item scale was .74. The index of consumer sentiment toward marketing was calculated using the procedure outlined by Gaski and Etzel (1986, p. 73). The total range of the CSTM index was wider [-399 to +399] than that of Gaski and Etzel [-200 to +200], because a seven-point scale rather than a five-point scale was used here. The two items measuring Familiarity were averaged (r=.80, p<.001) into a single variable. In order to test Hypotheses 1 to 6, correlations between each antecedent and CSTNP (a new variable created by summing the scores on the nine targets) were computed. In addition, a multiple regression analysis was performed to establish the relative impact of the antecedents. Product (1 to 6) was included in the regression analysis as well to assess potential differences in CSTNP that are due to the specific product respondents judged. Table 3 shows the results.

All correlations, except the one between cynicism and CSTNP, were significant and in the expected direction. The correlations between CSTNP and Trait Skepticism, CSTM, and age were low, however. The relative impact of each antecedent was determined in a subsequent regression analysis. The full model was statistically significant (R=.65, F (7, 268)=27.6, p<.001), accounting for 41.9 percent of the total variance. Inspection of the beta weights revealed that all antecedents except Age significantly predicted CSTNP. Note that this is true, even when the particular product that respondents judged is most appropriate. It refers to the aspect(s) of a product skepticism the term target is most appropriate. It refers to the aspect(s) of a product skepticism, namely skepticism about the new product at which consumers direct their skepticism. When talking about the origin of consumers’ skepticism, the term source is more appropriate. The terms target and source will be used interchangeably depending on the perspective that is taken.

### DISCUSSION

The present article introduced the concept of consumer skepticism toward new products (CSTNP) as a more comprehensive notion of consumer skepticism than skepticism toward advertising. Three main objectives were the development of a conceptualization and definition of CSTNP, the empirical examination of the underlying structure (i.e. the targets) of CSTNP, and the empirical test of several antecedents and consequences of CSTNP.

### Conceptualization of Consumer Skepticism

The first objective catered to the observation that consumer research has paid (too) little theoretical attention to conceptualizations of consumer skepticism and related constructs (Forehand and Grier 2002). In defining CSTNP, explicit attention was given to the difference between skepticism and the closely related constructs doubt, disbelief, distrust, and cynicism. The cause for putting so much emphasis on a clear definition of skepticism was the observation that the lack hereof has led to a number of individual studies into consumer skepticism that are interesting and relevant on their own, but that have not contributed to the development of a “theory of consumer skepticism”. Hopefully, the conceptualization and definition of consumer skepticism that have been outlined here may serve as a collective starting point for future research into consumer skepticism.

### Targets of Consumer Skepticism toward New Products

An important part of the current conceptualization of CSTNP concerned the identification of its underlying structure, or targets. The results suggest that CSTNP is composed of nine individual ‘sources’ of product skepticism, namely skepticism about the new product at which consumers direct their skepticism. When talking about the origin of consumers’ product skepticism, the term source is more appropriate. The terms target and source will be used interchangeably depending on the perspective that is taken.

### TABLE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Correlation with general skepticism toward the new product</th>
<th>Beta coefficient</th>
<th>VIF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.28 ***</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Advantage</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.14 ***</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serviceability</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatibility</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.27 ***</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Use</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.09 *</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.11 *</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.21 ***</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durability</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.10 *</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 For all correlation coefficients p<.01  
2 One-tailed significance: * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001
product’s performance, ease of use, durability, serviceability, quality, prestige, compatibility, relative advantage, and skepticism about the credibility of the information accompanying a product offering. These nine sources appeared as separate factors in a factor analysis and jointly accounted for nearly 90 percent of the total variance. Moreover, each of them significantly and substantially correlated with an overall measure of CSTNP. When their relative impact was assessed, credibility, compatibility, and prestige were found to be the most important sources of product skepticism. Overall product quality was an insignificant source of skepticism, and so was serviceability. The finding that product quality was a non-significant source is surprising given the fact that other dimensions of quality (Brucks et al. 2000; Garvin 1987), namely performance, ease of use, prestige, and durability, all appeared to be significant sources individually. The observation that serviceability did not significantly contribute to overall product skepticism may be explained by the fact that serviceability is not an aspect of the product per se, but of the supplier or seller instead. Also, it is quite difficult for respondents to judge the degree of serviceability on the basis of a product description only. Serviceability can be expected to play a much more important role, however, when consumers judge services instead of products, since serviceability is an implicit (quality) aspect of a service.

The finding that respondents are skeptical about the compatibility of the product suggests that when consumers are confronted with a really new product, they may well react to it as an attractive product, but that they may also question whether it is an interesting product for themselves. Hence, their skepticism does not result from their belief that the product is not good, but rather from their idea that they do not need it or that it does not fit them.

The relative importance of prestige as a source of CSTNP is interesting, because it stresses the social dimension of consumption. Apparently, when confronted with a new product, consumers are wary of the impression they will make on others if they are seen with it.

Antecedents and Consequences of Consumer Skepticism toward New Products

Cynicism, CSTM, and age were included in the present study, because they have been empirically demonstrated to be significantly related to skepticism toward advertising claims. Mohr et al. (1998) included cynicism in a nomological model of consumer skepticism toward environmental claims and found a positive indirect effect (through CSTM) of cynicism on skepticism. In this study, a negative effect of cynicism on CSTNP was found. We have no idea why this occurred. Respondents’ age did not affect CSTNP either. This contrasts with the findings of Boush et al. (1994) who demonstrated a (weak) effect of age on consumer skepticism toward advertising, and of Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998) who found a significant correlation of .27 between age and ad skepticism. The absence of an age effect is particularly odd given the finding that general (trait) skepticism, a characteristic that is believed to be positively correlated with age, did have a significant effect on CSTNP. With respect to the relation between CSTM and CSTNP, the results were as expected. Mohr et al. (1998) found a significant squared multiple correlation of .30 between CSTM and consumer skepticism. Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998) obtained a significant correlation of .49 between CSTM and ad skepticism. Here, a lower but significant correlation of .18 was observed. In addition to respondents’ skeptical predisposition and their general sentiment toward marketing, CSTNP appears to depend on product-specific factors such as respondents’ interest in and familiarity with the product. This latter factor may seem paradoxical since new products are by definition unfamiliar to consumers. In this study, although all products were unfamiliar to respondents (the TiVo was least familiar with a mean score of 1.94 and the Flat TV was most familiar with a mean score of 3.86), some variance occurred nevertheless (all standard deviations were around 1.5).

This study also showed that CSTNP has strong negative effects on consumers’ product judgment and purchase intention. This finding emphasizes the practical relevance of research into CSTNP. Consumers neither like nor buy new products toward which they are skeptical.

Suggestions for Future Research

The present study was the first study into consumer skepticism toward new products. In order to measure this construct, a scale was developed and adjusted. The definitive measure consisted of 17 items assessing nine targets of CSTNP. This scale of CSTNP measured product-specific skepticism, that is, state skepticism. A seven-item trait scale of skepticism was also developed and applied in this study. Evidently, both measures need further validation and adjustment.

Apart from the development of a measure of CSTNP, a theoretical model of CSTNP should be developed. A start has been

### TABLE 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedents</th>
<th>Correlation with CSTNP</th>
<th>Beta coefficient</th>
<th>VIF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.15 **</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trait Skepticism</td>
<td>.17 **</td>
<td>.10 *</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSTM</td>
<td>-.18 **</td>
<td>-.14 **</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.12 *</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Interest</td>
<td>-.53 ***</td>
<td>-.39 ***</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product familiarity</td>
<td>-.45 ***</td>
<td>-.36 ***</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td></td>
<td>(-.12 *</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 One-tailed significance: * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001
made here by proposing a conceptualization of CSTNTP and investigating potential antecedents and consequences of CSTNTP. Clearly, more research is needed to identify and assess the importance of other variables that affect CSTNTP or are affected by it, in order to end up with a comprehensive model of CSTNTP. Examples of individual factors that could affect CSTNTP are self-esteem, need for cognition, socialization in the family, innovativeness, and risk aversion. Product factors that could affect CSTNTP are country-of-origin, innovation rate, and satisfaction with current products. Consequences of CSTNTP that are worth investigating are consumer information processing (including information search behavior), product adoption, product beliefs, and product attitudes. As was argued in the introduction, a comprehensive model of CSTNTP would be of highly practical value to producers and marketers of new products as well as to public policy makers and consumer organizations.

REFERENCES


### APPENDIX 1

#### Product Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Super Audio CD player</strong></td>
<td>The Super Audio CD Player is a CD player on which you can play both CDs and DVDs. You can connect the Super Audio CD Player to your stereo set and television. Actually, the Super Audio CD Player is a CD player and DVD player in one. By making use of Direct Stream Digital technology the audio quality is as close as possible to the original sound. The image quality is optimal too. It is possible to freeze the image perfectly and you can zoom in without losing image quality. You can fast forward and rewind. The Super Audio CD Player is able to copy the Surround Sound effect by means of two speakers, without having to connect special surround speakers. There is a child lock installed on the Super Audio CD player, allowing you to determine which CDs en DVDs can be played by your children. The Super Audio CD Player comes in silver color and with remote control. There is a one-year warranty on the Super Audio CD Player. The price is 1.799 Euro.</td>
<td>1.799 Euro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AIBO - robot</strong></td>
<td>AIBO is a robot pet. AIBO has been designed to look like both a cat and a dog. As a result, the owner can decide what AIBO is. It also has the size of a cat or a small dog. AIBO is an intelligent robot. It can learn things and its behavior depends on its interaction with the owner. The type and quantity of attention determine AIBO’s personality. This causes all AIBO’s to be different from one another. AIBO can hear, see and feel, and keeps its balance by itself. In addition, it has emotions; it is kind and curious; it is able to recognize human voices, and it responds to greetings. AIBO moves freely and energetically; it can move its legs, head, tail, ears, and mouth. It is eager to perform well and is even able to take pictures of whatever it sees. AIBO functions on a rechargeable battery. Various facets of AIBO’s behavior can be altered by changing the software. There is a one-year warranty on AIBO. The price is 1.815 Euro.</td>
<td>1.815 Euro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Automower</strong></td>
<td>The Automower is an automatic lawn mowerer. When the Automower is activated by keying in a code, it will mow the lawn completely independently every day. It detects places where the grass is too long and mows this. The area that the Automower has to mow is determined by underground cables. The cables have to be laid before the Automower can be used for the first time. The Automower mows places that are hard to reach with a regular mower and avoids obstacles such as trees and garden furniture. Because the Automower mows the lawn every day, the amount of cut grass is little. This does not have to be removed because it serves as fertilization for the lawn. The Automower functions on a rechargeable battery. When the battery runs low, the Automower will automatically return to the supplied charger and will continue mowing after recharging. The Automower is 71 cm long, 60 cm wide and 26 cm high and comes in a green color. There is a one-year warranty on the Automower. The price is 1.999 Euro.</td>
<td>1.999 Euro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flat TV</strong></td>
<td>The Flat TV is a television that is only 9 cm deep. As a result, it can be fixed on a wall or mounted on a stand which can be ordered with the Flat TV. The Flat TV is so flat because the tube is a plasma screen. This offers a clear and stable image with beautiful color, and without disturbance from reflections of light. The Flat TV has a diagonal screen size of 82 cm. Furthermore, it continuously adapts the image for optimal color, sharpness, and contrast. The Flat TV has stereo sound and can be connected to practically all VCRs and DVD players. Multiple images can be simultaneously displayed on the screen allowing for viewing of multiple channels at the same time. Videotext pages can be loaded quickly and browsed without waiting. The frame surrounding the plasma screen is available in various colors at a surcharge. The Flat TV comes with remote control. There is a one-year warranty on the Flat TV. The price is 7.999 Euro.</td>
<td>7.999 Euro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wrist Watch Camera</strong></td>
<td>The Wrist Camera is both a wrist watch with a color display and a built in digital photo camera. The Wrist Camera is lightweight and can do whatever a standard wrist watch can. The Wrist Camera, allows you to take pictures wherever and whenever you want. One hundred pictures can be stored in the Wrist Camera’s memory and you can view them immediately. Four pictures can be shown simultaneously on the display, allowing you to view multiple photos in a short space of time. Furthermore, you can look them up quickly because they are numbered. With the Wrist Camera you can zoom in and out and add text and data to the pictures. You can also create a visual address book with the Wrist Camera by adding text to people’s pictures. The photos can later be loaded into a computer, after which they can be edited and printed. The Wrist Camera is water-resistant with a stopwatch and alarm clock. There is a one-year warranty on the Wrist Camera. The price is 315 Euro.</td>
<td>315 Euro</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **TiVo** | TiVo is a digital video recorder which can be connected to your television set. TiVo does not use video tapes but a disc with a capacity of 60 hours. TiVo automatically records programs that you watch regularly. Whenever you are disturbed during a show, TiVo can directly record it so that you can watch it later. With TiVo you can even watch a program while it is being recorded. You can program TiVo so that it will record all shows featuring your favorite actor, for example. In this way, you do not have to miss anything and you can watch programs whenever you want to. TiVo only works in combination with TiVo Service. You are connected via your telephone network to this TiVo Service, which ensures that everything is recorded at the right moment. Recorded programs and other installations can be viewed on the screen of your television. TiVo comes with remote control. There is a one-year warranty on TiVo. The price of the recorder is 455 Euro. The TiVo Service costs 15 Euro per month. | 455 Euro
| **Euro. clock. There is a one-year warranty on the Wrist Camera. The price is 315 printed. The Wrist Camera is water-resistant with a stopwatch and alarm can later be loaded into a computer, after which they can be edited and book with the Wrist Camera by adding text to people because they are numbered. With the Wrist Camera you can zoom in and out photos in a short space of time. Furthermore, you can look them up quickly can be shown simultaneously on the display, allowing you to view multiple Wrist Camera wherever and whenever you want. One hundred pictures can be stored in the AIBO is a robot pet. AIBO has been designed to look like both a cat and a dog. As a result, the owner can decide what AIBO is. It also has the size of a cat or a small dog. AIBO is an intelligent robot. It can learn things and its behavior depends on its interaction with the owner. The type and quantity of attention determine AIBO’s personality. This causes all AIBO’s to be different from one another. 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The Automower mows places that are hard to reach with a regular mower and avoids obstacles such as trees and garden furniture. Because the Automower mows the lawn every day, the amount of cut grass is little. This does not have to be removed because it serves as fertilization for the lawn. The Automower functions on a rechargeable battery. When the battery runs low, the Automower will automatically return to the supplied charger and will continue mowing after recharging. The Automower is 71 cm long, 60 cm wide and 26 cm high and comes in a green color. There is a one-year warranty on the Automower. The price is 1.999 Euro. The Flat TV is a television that is only 9 cm deep. As a result, it can be fixed on a wall or mounted on a stand which can be ordered with the Flat TV. The Flat TV is so flat because the tube is a plasma screen. This offers a clear and stable image with beautiful color, and without disturbance from reflections of light. The Flat TV has a diagonal screen size of 82 cm. Furthermore, it continuously adapts the image for optimal color, sharpness, and contrast. The Flat TV has stereo sound and can be connected to practically all VCRs and DVD players. Multiple images can be simultaneously displayed on the screen allowing for viewing of multiple channels at the same time. Videotext pages can be loaded quickly and browsed without waiting. The frame surrounding the plasma screen is available in various colors at a surcharge. The Flat TV comes with remote control. There is a one-year warranty on the Flat TV. The price is 7.999 Euro. The Wrist Camera is both a wrist watch with a color display and a built in digital photo camera. The Wrist Camera is lightweight and can do whatever a standard wrist watch can. The Wrist Camera, allows you to take pictures wherever and whenever you want. One hundred pictures can be stored in the Wrist Camera’s memory and you can view them immediately. Four pictures can be shown simultaneously on the display, allowing you to view multiple photos in a short space of time. Furthermore, you can look them up quickly because they are numbered. With the Wrist Camera you can zoom in and out and add text and data to the pictures. You can also create a visual address book with the Wrist Camera by adding text to people’s pictures. The photos can later be loaded into a computer, after which they can be edited and printed. The Wrist Camera is water-resistant with a stopwatch and alarm clock. There is a one-year warranty on the Wrist Camera. The price is 315 Euro. TiVo is a digital video recorder which can be connected to your television set. TiVo does not use video tapes but a disc with a capacity of 60 hours. TiVo automatically records programs that you watch regularly. Whenever you are disturbed during a show, TiVo can directly record it so that you can watch it later. With TiVo you can even watch a program while it is being recorded. You can program TiVo so that it will record all shows featuring your favorite actor, for example. In this way, you do not have to miss anything and you can watch programs whenever you want to. TiVo only works in combination with TiVo Service. You are connected via your telephone network to this TiVo Service, which ensures that everything is recorded at the right moment. Recorded programs and other installations can be viewed on the screen of your television. TiVo comes with remote control. There is a one-year warranty on TiVo. The price of the recorder is 455 Euro. The TiVo Service costs 15 Euro per month. |
Consumer Motivations for Boycott Participation: A Field Study

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ABSTRACT

While boycotts are increasingly relevant for management decision-making, there has been little research of an individual’s motivation to boycott. We present a study of an actual boycott in which we examined motivations for participation. Consistent with our hypotheses, moderators of the relationship between perceived egregiousness of the firm’s act and boycotting were four sets of variables, reflecting: the desire to promote change, the scope for self-enhancement, rationalizations that inhibit boycotting, and costs to the boycotter of participation.
Willingness to Take Action Against Foreign Products: An Analysis of Brazilians’ Reaction to Nationalistic Feelings
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ABSTRACT
This study draws on the theories of social dominance and intergroup relations to explore the impact of nationalistic feelings on consumers’ willingness to take action against foreign products. This exploratory study was conducted in Brazil, using two countries as treatment conditions: Paraguay and USA. Consistent with the expectation, the mere existence of a commercial conflict involving the home country and a foreign nation seems to be sufficient to raise nationalistic feelings (a “they” against “us” feeling). The results also showed that consumers’ willingness to take action against the products of the adversary country prompted by those nationalistic feelings might be mediated by their perception of group (nation) economic power (dominance).
What Characterizes ‘Truly’ Loyal Online Shoppers?  
Modeling the Influence of Variety Seeking, Satisfaction, Trust and Involvement on Online-Store Commitment

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this paper is to develop a theoretical model to explain the effects of consumer variables on online store-commitment. We distinguish between calculative and affective store commitment and argue that the affective component of commitment is the decisive one for ‘true’ loyal customer behavior to manifest online. In accordance with existing research we include satisfaction and trust as core predictors of affective commitment. We further argue for the inclusion of different facets of involvement, which are product, purchase, and task involvement, as well as experiential factors that hitherto lack theoretical and empirical consideration in the loyalty literature. We expect different effects for different types of involvement on store commitment, due to different underlying predispositions of the individual. Finally, a theoretical model is constructed and tested to predict the varying effects of the proposed antecedents of affective online store-commitment, and its implications and limitations are discussed.

INTRODUCTION
E-loyalty has recently received considerable attention, first in the management literature and increasingly in academia (see: Webber, 1998; Reichheld and Schechter, 2000; Szymanski and Hise, 2000; Schultz and Bailey, 2000; Abbott et al., 2000; Srinivasan et al., 2002; Reibstein, 2002). The contributions mainly focus on the importance of the factors trust and satisfaction for e-customer loyalty. Especially with regard to satisfaction measures have been developed and tested that take different online context into account. E-loyalty still lacks conceptual thinking and empirical research, especially with regard to consumer variables and their effects on different types of commitment (Abbott et al., 2000). One of the main issues is whether or not existing models of brick and mortar retailer loyalty are applicable to an online setting. If not, what are the differences and what specific factors influence customer loyalty to Internet offers?

The main objective of our article is to shed light on consumer variables influencing e-loyalty. To this end, we will discuss important characteristics of online consumer behavior and their implications for e-loyalty, based on a brief summary of existing research on loyalty in general. We will further argue that affective commitment represents the most relevant concept to be explained in an online context. Consequently, the main objective of our contribution is to uncover the factors influencing affective commitment towards an online retailer, in particular. To this end, a variety of cognitive-affective, and experientially based antecedents of affective store-commitment is reviewed and built into a comprehensive theoretical model. In accordance with existing research satisfaction and trust are included as core predictors of affective commitment (Bloemer and de Ruyter, 1998; Surprenant and Solomon, 1987; Kelley and Davis, 1994; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Geyskens et al., 1996). Considering the environmental context of online shopping and the more active role of online shoppers in the service encounter we argue for the integration of different sources of involvement as important antecedents of e-loyalty. We present a theoretical model and empirical testing of affective online store-commitment and end with a discussion of its implications.
a person feels a need to maintain a relationship based on a ‘cold’, rational calculus of benefits in relation to switching costs. Calculative commitment is almost exclusively due to non-psychological exit barriers. In contrast to this, affective commitment is defined as the desire to continue a relationship and expresses a sense of loyalty and belongingness (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). We find this distinction to be important as different types of commitment will lead to different behavioral outcomes. In the absence of affective commitment, consumers are likely to switch to other providers when switching costs are low, whereas, if they are affectively committed to a store they feel the desire to stay within the buyer-supplier relationship.

IN WHAT WAY IS E-LOYALTY DIFFERENT?

Many successful e-businesses benefit from the compelling advantages the Internet offers over conventional brick-and-mortar stores, including greater flexibility, enhanced market outreach, lower cost structures, faster transactions, broader product lines, greater convenience, and customization (Srinivasan et al., 2002). However, the characteristics of the Internet also led to challenges with respect to relationship building and customer loyalty. Due to the easiness to obtain nearly full information about prices, products, and services offered exit barriers and switching costs are fairly low for customers (Nielsen, 2000). What follows is that calculative commitment is less likely to occur in an online context. Moreover, loyal behavior which is exclusively based on a calculative rationale is rather vulnerable to price offers of competitors, whereas affective store-commitment results in lower price sensitivity (Reibstein, 2002). Affectively committed customers are paying to pay a premium to continue doing business with their preferred retailers rather than incur additional search costs (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990). In the light of these arguments, affective commitment seems the more important facet of e-loyalty and should be looked at in detail.

Gutek et al. (1999, 2000) found that personal relationships lead to higher perceived customer satisfaction, trust and commitment. However, in an online context fostering commitment is challenged by the absence of face-to-face interaction. Even in self-service retail contexts customers have at least the possibility to get help from personnel whereas in an online setting there is none. The question arises how online stores could establish affective commitment of consumers to the store without personal interaction. Successful service providers, like amazon.com, therefore concentrate on personalization to establish a trustful ‘pseudo-individual’ relationship on the one hand, and managing exit barriers on the other hand. Moreover, customers are much more integrated in and active creators of the service encounter, hence their level of involvement in an online shopping task should be higher than in an offline context. As long as researchers and practitioners are not aware of how affective commitment develops and thus, are not alert to factors that might influence customers’ propensity to stay or leave, e-loyalty is being reduced to managing exit barriers. Hence, in the sequel we will concentrate on discussing antecedents of affective commitment towards an online store as proposed in the literature as well as argue for the inclusion of different sources of involvement and experiential variables.

Satisfaction and trust

Research has shown that customer satisfaction is an important antecedent of store loyalty (Bloemer and de Ruyter, 1998; Surprenant and Solomon, 1987). Store satisfaction is defined as the customer’s overall evaluation of the store experience. Greater rewards as reflected in higher satisfaction evaluations increase the attractiveness of a relationship to customers and, hence, their commitment to the relationship (Kelley and Davis, 1994; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Whereas earlier research proposed a direct effect of customer satisfaction on purchase intentions, Dick and Basu’s (1994) conceptual framework suggests that the attitudinal component mediates the effects of satisfaction on purchase intention. Therefore, we expect a positive direct effect of satisfaction on affective commitment which reflects the attitudinal component of loyalty. However, satisfaction is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for affective commitment to prosper. Dick and Basu (1994) argue that commitment also implies a belief in the superiority of the service compared to alternative suppliers. We consider this to be an important argument because it relates to the distinction between calculative and affective customer commitment. Customers may be satisfied and loyal simply because of a lack of attractive alternatives. This form of commitment is purely calculative and it is very likely that customers would switch to new attractive offers when affective commitment is absent (Stauss and Neuhaus, 1999). However, when the product and service offer is experienced as superior, customers are more likely to develop affective commitment towards the service provider. Hence, contrary to most operationalizations of satisfaction in loyalty research, we argue that satisfaction measures should reflect consumers’ evaluation of the service compared to relevant other service offers.

H1: customer belief in service superiority is positively related to affective commitment

In the relationship marketing literature trust has been found to be one of the most important antecedents of commitment (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Geyskens et al., 1996). Morgan and Hunt (1994) define trust as one party’s confidence in an exchange partner’s reliability and integrity. This definition is consistent with others in the marketing literature. Recent research on privacy and security concerns of online buyers underlines the importance of trust in the online context (Aksyon and Bloom, 2001; White and Schneider, 2000; Morris, 2001). Trust is an indicator of a growing relationship that tends to foster higher levels of commitment. Therefore, we expect a strong effect of trust on affective online store-commitment.

H2: trust is positively related to affective online store-commitment

When customers once bought a product and are satisfied, they will be assured that they can trust an online store, thus the level of trust should remain stable or even increase when consumers believe in the superiority of the service. On the other hand, when a trustful relationship is established, we would also expect a positive bias on perceived service superiority. Consequently, we define the relationship between trust and perceived superiority of the service as bi-directional.

H3: trust positively influences perceived service superiority and vice versa

Product, purchase and task involvement

It has been argued before that involvement constitutes an important concept that should be included in loyalty research (Engel et al., 1995; Peter and Olson, 1996). Involvement is an affective-cognitive concept and generally refers to the perceived personal relevance of an object or event to a consumer (Zaichkowsky, 1985).

According to Bloemer and Kasper (1999) brand and retailer involvement positively influences loyalty towards the brand and
towards the retailer. The authors additionally argue for a differentiated view of involvement including product and purchase involvement (Mittal and Lee, 1989). In addition to this, the different environmental context of the Internet suggests different and additional effects of involvement that could be explanatory with respect to e-loyalty. Much has been written with regard to the emancipatory function of the Internet. Consumers can play a much more active role in e-business and they do. The Internet allows them to compare prices, products and services across a wide variety of stores and decide for the ones that perfectly fit their expectations. As consumers turn from more passive ‘reaction’ to a retail service into active participants in the service delivery process, a number of additional factors are likely to moderate the buying experience, including product and service involvement and shopping goals (Woodruff, 1997; Mathwick et al., 2001).

Purchase involvement is situational and may be defined as “the extent of interest and concern that a consumer brings to bear upon a purchase-decision task.” (Mittal, 1989, p.150). It represents perceived financial and social risk associated with buying a product (Mittal and Lee, 1989) or what the right or wrong choice would mean to a customer. Higher purchase involvement reflecting perceived financial risk would probably lead to browsing different stores or price agents to compare prices and make an optimal choice. Reifstein (2002) found that price is decisive for attracting new customers however, price is least important for re-purchase decisions. Hence, we conclude that higher purchase involvement is more likely to reflect social risk and/or the risk of not being satisfied with the product chosen. However, social risk and the risk of choosing the wrong product is much lower when customers buy from an online store they already know. Bloemer and Kasper (1999) found a direct positive effect of purchase involvement with cars on brand loyalty. In the context of an online book store where the store is the brand, we can conclude that higher purchase involvement will lead to higher affective commitment towards the store.

**H4:** consumer purchase involvement positively influences affective commitment

The antecedents of product involvement are different. Product involvement has a long-term character. It has been defined as the instrumental and enduring importance of a product class for a consumer which refers to the social significance as well as the personal relevance for the consumer (Laurent/Kapferer, 1985). We expect that consumers who are highly interested in books in general will be active information searchers and, thus, regularly browse different sites and stores in order to obtain full information and make an optimal purchase decision. Furthermore, high product involvement may also result in a desire to hold the product in one’s hand, browse the content, and look for face-to-face communication with experts. Hence, highly involved customers are probably more likely to prefer a brick-and-mortar shopping environment.

**H5:** higher consumer product involvement leads to lower affective online store-commitment

In addition to being involved with the purchase situation or with a specific product class, customers also have to fulfill an online shopping task they may be involved with or not. According to Rothschild (1979) response involvement or involvement with the task encompasses information processing and learning. Thus, it will lead to increasing knowledge and familiarity of the shopping task and, as a consequence, determines the consistency in decision making (Johnson and Payne, 1985; Payne, 1982). Consequently, higher task involvement should lead to a more consistent decision for/against a specific e-tailer. A person who is less involved with the task will less likely consider the shopping experience as stimulating and search for more variety and different stores. Additionally, a familiarity effect could be expected which leads to a positive effect regarding the attitudinal component of e-loyalty. Moreover, Srinivasan et al. (2002) found that the character of an e-tailer’s website, comprising design features, tools and the attractiveness of the shopping task, had the highest impact on e-loyalty among eight e-business characteristics. We therefore expect a strong positive effect of high task involvement on affective store-commitment.

**H6:** consumer task involvement is positively related to affective online store-commitment

**Experiential variables**

In addition to the cognitive processing and evaluation of the online service encounter, Internet shopping has a highly experiential and playful facet as well (Mathwick et al., 2001). Whether or not an individual experiences high task involvement with online shopping certainly depends on the degree to which a person is involved with browsing the Web in general. Novak et al. (2000) argued that creating a compelling online experience is the key to success in e-business. They found, what they call ‘telepresence’ or total immersion to be an important predictor of flow which represents a highly enjoyable experience. In order to measure this experiential aspect we included this variable in our model. We propose that the higher an individual is involved with browsing the Web, the ‘smoother’ and more enjoyable the shopping task will be experienced. Consequently, we hypothesize that telepresence leads to higher task involvement.

**H7:** telepresence is positively related to task involvement

Browsing the Web is also a playful activity and often leads to exploratory behavior. Surfing the Web then becomes a goal of its own and leads to browsing several sites and stores rather than finishing the shopping task. If individuals like to browse several different Websites—are online variety seekers—they will, similar to ‘real-world’ shoppers, rather visit several different online stores and be less committed to a specific e-tailer. It is important to note here that in an offline setting variety seeking mostly refers to the variety of product offers customers are looking for. In contrast to this, here we focus on variety seeking in terms of online experience. The rationale behind this proposition is that, contrary to ‘brick and mortar’ stores, offering a great variety of products and services in online stores is very common and a much easier task because the products offered do not have to be physically present at the time. On the other hand, customers who do not need or want a broad assortment can easily focus their search on a specific product or category without getting confused or irritated. As a consequence, empirical reality shows that most e-tailers offer a broad range of products and assortments. Thus, we argue that the influencing variable on store commitment is exploratory behavior in general rather than seeking for product variety.

**H8:** variety seeking negatively influences affective commitment towards an online store

**METHODOLOGY**

**Data Collection.** Data collection has been carried out in different undergraduate and graduate classes. Only students who had at least bought a book once at an online bookstore in the last year, have been selected. The majority of the respondents (79%) were graduate students. Of the 329 questionnaires collected, 318
What Characterizes ‘Truly’ Loyal Online Shoppers?

Measures. All measures used have been validated and used in previous research. Some scales or parts of it have been adapted to the online context. Affective commitment was measured with three statements which refer to Garbarino and Johnson’s (1999) study on different roles of satisfaction, trust, and commitment in customer relationships. Trust was measured according to Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001). Measures of satisfaction with an online retailer were based on Szymanski and Hise’s (2000) study on dimensions of e-satisfaction. However, the scale was adapted to fit our proposition that commitment is based on an individual’s belief in the superiority of the service offered rather than an independent evaluation of the online store. Product and purchase involvement were adapted from Laurent/Kapferer (1985) and Mittal (1989) by modifying the items to fit the retail context. The task involvement scale was adapted from Tyebjee as reported in Mishra et al. (1993). Additionally the Novak, Hoffman and Yung’s (2000) ‘exploratory behavior’ scale was used, a modified scale from Baumgartner and Steenkamp (1996) made applicable to exploratory behavior on the Web, as well as their ‘telepresence’ scale (Novak, Hoffman and Yung, 2000). The reliability of the scales was tested in a first step using exploratory factor analysis and coefficient Alpha. All Eigen-Values exceeded 1.9, factor loadings range from 0.711 to 0.91 and all Coefficient Alpha’s range between 0.73 and 0.86.

RESULTS

The model and hypotheses were tested using EQS, a structural equation modeling software. The results showed that the proposed theoretical model (Fig 1) did not fit the data with a χ² (373) / df (202) ratio=1.8, CFI=0.94, Robust CFI=0.93 and RMSEA=0.05 (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). The revised model explains 36% of the variance of the dependent variable.

Perceived service superiority leading to trust turned out to be an important predictor of affective commitment, hence we kept hypothesis 2 and 3. The revised model shows a significant effect. Trust constitutes an important requirement for commitment to establish; however, in order to excite consumers it seems that experiential variables are of considerable importance in an online retailing context. If so, individuals who like to browse different sites– are online variety seekers– will get deeply involved with this different online ‘world’ (telepresence) and vice versa. The revised model shows that the more individuals get immersed in the browsing experience, the more they feel affectively committed to an online retailer who provides this experience. On the other hand, if people like browsing the Web they are also more involved with the

FIGURE 1
A Theoretical Model of Affective Online Store–Commitment

could be used for analysis. Although the use of college students may restrict the generalizability of the findings, a relatively homoge-

nuous sample is deemed appropriate for theory testing (Calder et al, 1981).

FIGURE 1
shopping task. The effects of variety seeking on telepresence and on task involvement are considerable with 0.41 and 0.43, respectively. The results also show that task involvement constitutes a central variable for explaining affective commitment towards an online store. Task involvement in turn is influenced by perceived service superiority and to a considerable extent by online variety seeking.

**DISCUSSION**

The conceptual model developed in our paper was designed to predict the various influences of consumer variables on affective online store-commitment. We know a fair amount about the influence of satisfaction and trust on loyalty for which there is ample empirical evidence. However, we know much less about the effects of consumers’ individual predispositions in an online context. The fact that in an online environmental context consumers are far more active and play an integral role in the service delivery process gave reason to suspect that consumer involvement may play an important role. However, consumer involvement has many different facets and only a few of them seem to be relevant in an online context. Neither purchase involvement nor product involvement had an impact on affective store commitment in our sample. A replication study will be necessary because other studies—at least in an offline context—showed different results (Bloemer and Kasper, 1999). However, if our results make sense, then we would have to conclude that diving into a different world online creates a different experience, also in a shopping context. Hence, experiential variables, such as being involved in browsing the Web in general, browsing an e-tailer’s site, enjoying the task of buying products, playing with a virtual shopping basket, filling it, putting things aside again, enjoying oneself by playing a virtual ‘monopoly’ game, and eventually buying something seems to be the best explanation for affective commitment to an online store alongside with trust. Establishing trust and creating a compelling online experience then become the most important success factors in online retailing.

Nevertheless we have to be aware of some important limitations of the study. Buying books may not be very risky in general which could explain the nonexistent effect of purchase involvement on affective commitment. Secondly, we sampled only customers who already bought online. Most of them are regular buyers—although not heavy buyers—at the biggest online bookstore, hence they had a positive experience before and thus are already committed to a specific store. This familiarity effect might explain why task involvement and telepresence had such a strong direct effect on affective commitment in our study.

Like all models, we discussed only a part of reality which in our case is limited to consumer variables influencing online store commitment. We argued for affective commitment as core dimension of e-loyalty however, calculative commitment should not be overlooked in future research. Although calculative commitment tends to produce ‘spurious’ as opposed to ‘true’ loyal behavior (Liljander and Roos, 2002), managing exit barriers is a valid and interesting option to bind customers in the first place before they develop an attachment or sense of belonging towards a specific online store. We also believe that other forms of commitment, as is for instance commitment towards the consumer community of an online store, are important to consider for future research into e-loyalty. As suggested by Srinivasan et al. (2002) consumer-to-consumer interaction could reduce perceived risk and enhance trust in an online store. Understanding the complex interplay of consumer variables on various forms of commitment towards an online store could be an important prerequisite for the long-term success of online retailers.
REFERENCES


Making Tracks: Loyalty Cards as Consumer Surveillance
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ABSTRACT
We investigate ethical and privacy issues concerning the use by retailers of loyalty card (club-card) transaction records. To investigate these issues we use one individual record for our case study (selected from a random sample of two-year purchase records of 254 cardholders from a major UK retail loyalty scheme). The individual selected has the greatest number of transactions, and therefore more data to interpret/reveal than others in the sample. This data record is interpreted to develop a ‘picture’ of an individual. The direction and extent of our interpretation raises ethical and privacy issues. Such issues are becoming increasingly important given loyalty scheme, technology, competition and surveillance developments.

INTRODUCTION
Foucault, Marx and Weber all predicted that surveillance would increasingly pervade society as technology developed (see Lyon 1993). The retail environment is no exception; shoppers are watched and studied in a number of ways and purchases are recorded and analysed. Loyalty cards provide unique opportunities to track an individual. On the basis of the information consumers provide and leave behind, retailers (and others) refine their understanding of shopping behavior. Products are developed to meet emerging needs. Retailers stock shops according to local demand patterns. Products are placed in known associations to encourage purchase. Switching patterns are encouraged and discouraged in the battle for market share. Reactions to layouts, fixtures, facilities and services result in re-designs and changes. Evans (1999) argues that this is a function of our increasing reliance on multiple retailers who are not ‘grounded’ in local neighbourhoods i.e. we are more alienated or distant from retailers than we were in the past. Whilst general observation of consumers is helpful to retailers, the development of loyalty schemes and associated technology and software has transformed basic market research into an ongoing consumer surveillance system.

The aim of this paper is to investigate some of the ethical and privacy implications of this collection and potential use of individual-level loyalty card data. Previous papers on this issue have tended to focus at an aggregate level (e.g. Evans 1999), be theoretical or perceptual or be based on observations of and interactions with consumers (Sayre and Horne 2000). Here however we investigate these issues by examining and interpreting an individual’s behavior/record. We have a sample of 254 cardholders from one retailer’s loyalty card, providing a two-year record of purchase. From this we have selected one individual. Her record identifies her 1551 purchase transactions over this two year period and is the largest (i.e. most transactions) record in the data set. We introduce her here as ‘Brenda’ – aka ‘The Big Spender’.

LOYALTY SCHEMES AND CONSUMER PRIVACY
Loyalty schemes always offer some kind of ‘reward’ or incentive to the customer. They are in essence forms of operant conditioning (Sayre and Horne 2000). In most cases, the greater the degree of patronage, the greater the potential to reap the rewards offered. Beyond this common feature though, reward schemes differ greatly in terms of context, technology, delivery mechanisms and sector (Hart et al 1999). Previous research has suggested that the aims of a scheme may relate to data collection, sales promotion, more sophisticated strategic ends or any combination of these (Boussofiane 1996, Hart et al 1999). These aims might be additional to or even instead of the pursuit of customer loyalty, although there must be a large enough pool of repeat purchasers in order for the scheme to be viable. There is also a substantial debate about the effectiveness and impact of such schemes as well as the motivations and operational mechanisms by which repeat purchase and/or loyalty is engendered (eg Uncles 1994, O’Brien and Jones 1995, Comeran and Lawlor 1997, Dooling and Uncles 1997, O’Malley 1998, East et al 1998, Oliver 1999, Bolton et al 2000). However the crucial point about loyalty schemes in the context of this paper is that the consumer is, on the face of it, a willing participant, and as such may be complicit in the use of individual data and any compromise of privacy: they ‘participate in their own surveillance’ (Lyon 2001:44). Indeed, consumers give up considerable data on application to join such schemes. This is very different for example to the privacy and ethical issues raised by video surveillance in shops (see Kirkup and Carrigan 2000), where acquiescence is implicit on entry to the store (normally through a small window sign indicating surveillance is operational for security reasons).

Privacy is a much debated construct and is subject to very different interpretations. As Nowak and Phelps (1995: 48) note: “To some “privacy” is a problematic, conceptually murky and constitutionally questionable concept”. We all have some sense of what it is, but herein lies the problem. A sense of privacy is, paradoxically, a personal and singular thing. However, DeCew (1993) describes three primary types of privacy that provide a useful touchstone for this debate: i] Informational privacy ii] Expressive privacy and iii] Accessibility privacy. The first concerns our right not to have things divulged about us. The second concerns our right to be free from surveillance when making personal decisions. The third concerns physical surveillance of our public or private actions. Indeed loyalty cards and thus retailers and marketers are seen as potentially challenging all three privacy dimensions (Kirkup and Carrigan 2000).

In recent years, consumer privacy has become a greater concern due to the expansion of direct and database marketing, the Internet and surveillance and data capture techniques (eg Horne and Horne 1997, O’Malley et al 1999, Christy and Mitchell 1999). Phelps et al (2000) demonstrate how individual concerns vary, but can be ameliorated through disclosure and data management principles. Legal aspects of data protection remain vital (see http://www.dataprotection.gov.uk/for example), but are variable amongst countries. Privacy issues might be expected to arise in loyalty schemes. The numbers of consumers signing up for loyalty schemes however would tend to suggest that privacy concerns are not a very powerful disincentive, compared with perceived benefits, or alternatively that consumers are in denial. Previous research has questioned the ethical basis of such data collection (Evans 1999) and provided evidence that consumers do have ‘underlying’ privacy concerns (Long et al 1999, Sayre and Horne 2000). Recent work has suggested that consumers are often quite ignorant of how loyalty card data are used (Graeff and Harmon 2002), and this may help explain their willingness to sign up for such schemes.

In any retailer loyalty scheme there are at least three sources of data. First, consumers provide data on application to join the scheme. Secondly, retailers link these personal data with internal and external databases e.g. geodemographic and lifestyle data.
Thirdly, transaction data from purchasing in store becomes available on a regular basis. Of these, only the first is obviously ‘visible’ to consumers and it may be these data that they believe retailers’ hold and use. The more sophisticated components of loyalty scheme utilization may be less than apparent to most consumers. Even transaction data may be mis-understood with a view that the ‘card’ is used to allocate points rather than to identify an individual (though this view may alter with Internet grocery shopping and dynamic shopping list development systems). O’Malley et al (1999) point to privacy problems in the fusion of these streams of data, whilst the potential to develop ‘biographies of consumption’ through the combination of transactional and personal data has been raised by Evans (1998). This variation and potential integration amongst data types also questions the supposition that by signing up consumers are sanctioning all possible uses of the data.

**METHODOLOGY**

Here we adopt what is essentially a case study approach. To this end this paper focuses on an individual loyalty record to raise issues of ethics and privacy and to explore some of the points discussed above. We accept that it is only a fragment of the subject’s consumption life (and life in general), however it is a potentially revealing fragment. There are relatively few examples of single consumer case studies in the academic literature. Analyses of small cohorts are more common and are more often than not based within the interpretive tradition (e.g. Ritson et al, 1992, Mick et al, 1992). An important premise upon which our methodology is based is that the ethical and privacy issues of loyalty card data are best demonstrated, in the first instance, through the discussion of an individual case; ‘Brenda’ is a device.

Brenda was selected from a random sample of 254 loyalty card purchase records obtained from a national retail chain operating a loyalty card scheme in the UK. Women customers account for the vast majority of loyalty scheme members for this retailer. The retailer, to satisfy data regulations, anonymised this data set and removed personal identifiers or descriptors. The data set comprised the loyalty card records of 254 single women, aged 18-35, for a 104 week period (running from September 1998 to September 2000). In total there are 46797 product purchase transactions in the data set. The records were drawn from the corporate database using random sampling and are not restricted to one store or one region of the United Kingdom. The retailer is one of the UK’s leading retailers. The retail component of the group is engaged in the retailing of general merchandise with an emphasis on health and beauty and in the provision of services. The retailer trades particularly in cosmetics, snack food, medicines, toiletries and grooming products, household items and small gifts. It has over 1400 retail shops across the UK and achieves sales of £64bn per annum. The stores are primarily high street locations, which attract a considerable proportion of the UK’s population each week. The loyalty scheme is long established, has almost 14 million cardholders and is used on over 50% of all sales (source: company annual report).

The data set consists of eight variables and details all purchases made with the retailer when the loyalty card was used. The loyalty card number and the date of transaction are identified on each case. A transaction number is also recorded which links products purchased at the same time (i.e. till visit). The volume of any individual item purchased is available (e.g. two bars of chocolate) as is the total spend on that item at that transaction. Each case also has an item descriptor and a product merchandise group allocated by the company. Finally, the points adjustment per transaction for the loyalty card scheme for each till visit is also available (including any redemptions).

There are many questions that could be explored via this data set as a whole (i.e. all 254 records). In examining basic descriptive statistics of the data however, variation was immediately noticeable. For example, the number of product purchase transactions made by any individual over the time period varied from a low of 2 to a high of 1551. Brenda was ‘created’ both because she had the highest total number of product purchase transactions and because she accounted for the greatest percentage of spend in the categories of good (snack food) which itself accounted for the greatest percentage of transactions in the data set as a whole. Her transaction record is the most extensive in our sample. It is thus the most suitable for our case study approach to the data and privacy issues, as the more Brenda shops, the more the retailer knows about her.

**A PICTURE OF ‘BRENDA’**

The data set allows us to track purchase when she uses her card; and from the sheer volume of recorded transactions it is reasonable to conclude that she uses the card the vast majority of the time. We therefore know when Brenda visits the retailer and purchases goods and can draw conclusions about her shopping behavior, her life in general and potentially aspects of her personality. We can try to develop a ‘biography of consumption’ (Evans 1998). Over the two-year period, Brenda uses the card on 243 different days and spends £2283.25. She undertakes 1551 product purchase transactions, resulting in 1667 items being purchased. Her mean spend per visit is £9.31. This is subject to wide variation (standard deviation 9.6), with the minimum spend per visit being £0.81 and the maximum £54.03. The average price of an item purchased is £1.36. Only eleven items are purchased at an item price of over £10. Of these eleven, 7 are branded products and 4 are retailer brands. This is inverse to her overall product purchase pattern where 77% of products purchased are retailer brand, although they represent only 58.5% of sales value. Two of the top four most expensive products purchased are ‘bought’ using loyalty points redemption.

Brenda’s days visited per week are highly variable, with on average a slight tendency to visit more often than once or twice a week. However for substantial numbers of weeks she uses the retailer either four or five times a week. On the surface these figures show she is retailer (and probably store) loyal. Figure 1 shows however that Brenda’s two-year period contains at least two ‘stages’ of behavior. This change in behavior appears to begin around week 43 (July 1999), Week 42 is the last ‘four or more visit’ week for a long time and represents a change in the behavior pattern. Figure 1 also hints at a new pattern being established around week 94. Before week 43, Brenda has on average 3.7 visits a week and spends £27.27 on average per week (average spend per visit of £0.74). After week 43...
42 the comparative figures are 1.4 visits and £17.07 (with an average spend per visit of £1.22). This is clearly a major shift in behavior in the visit (repeat purchase) pattern. Why does it happen? Does she move job/house, is she pregnant/a mother, or having to care for someone? Has the local competition changed?

The daily pattern of store visits in weeks 1-42 could indicate association with work (possibly lunchtime visits to the store). Many of the weeks contain Monday to Friday visits only and there is little evidence of weekend visiting (at least initially). The only examples of Sunday shopping in these first 42 weeks are associated with the run-up to Christmas. After Christmas 2000 however Sunday shopping becomes relatively more common, although still only seven times in nine months. Perhaps Brenda is/was religious or perhaps she has other commitments or better things to do on a Sunday? The change in pattern is again suggestive of a major shift in situation and/or lifestyle.

The data show what Brenda is buying at the merchandise group and individual product levels. It is clear from the number of products that her most common purchases are savoury and sandwich items together with soft drinks and chocolate (countlines). By value however, most money is spent on beauty aids and cosmetics, although the food items, through their regularity, again come high up. By item count, retailer brand products appear to dominate, whereas by value of spend, manufacturer (proprietary) branded products are more prevalent. An example of a typical week 1-42 shopping trip is given in Table I. A sandwich (or often flatbread) and a drink are the core purchases, but these are supplemented with various savoury snacks and chocolate bars. Retailer brand products dominate this visit. To some minds this may not be the most obviously healthy diet, despite the fact that many of these purchases are reduced calorie or low fat ‘healthy’ items. The combination of this with the savoury items, chocolate and snacks is curious however. The sheer volume of these in the overall record is remarkable. Can we conclude that Brenda is a greedy and indulgent individual or could she be buying for others? Is Brenda happy with this consumption pattern? Perhaps, given the volume of healthy eating

TABLE I
A Typical Lunch?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>21st September 1999</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kelloggs N/Grain Cherry</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrig Extra Spearmint</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XYZ Choc Orange Bar</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XYZ Mint Bar</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XYZ Turkish Delight</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XYZ Org &amp; Rasp Drink 250</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XYZ Bacon Lettuce &amp; Tom</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XYZ Crispy Bacon Bites</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XYZ S&amp;V Crunchy Sticks</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>£</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.26</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * XYZ=Healthy or diet retailer brand products. In order to protect the anonymity of the retailer we have altered the descriptions of products and merchandise groups.
and diet products, she could be targeted for offers relating to weight management products. Would she welcome this or is this intrusive/unethical?

We would suspect that Brenda is retailer (and probably store) loyal, despite the shift in behaviour pattern. We can also consider brand and product loyalty. The prevalence of retailer brands has already been noted. They comprise 77% of the volume of purchases and 58.5% of the value. Proprietary products are bought in the more expensive categories generally. Does this make Brenda an astute value seeker or is it a function of her income? Or is she simply tight-fisted!

Brenda purchases a lot of broad health and beauty products and appears to take care of her appearance. She wears contact lenses not glasses, but does return to glasses for occasional use (glass cleaning cloths are purchased). She is a regular purchaser of lipstick (often shades of red) and a considerable user of lip salve, possibly in an effort to ward off cold sores (Blistize). She purchases a lot of nail varnish and handwashes and spends a regular amount on hair care. She probably has long hair, as attested by hair grips, pony tail clasp etc. She could suffer from poor circulation if the hot water bottle purchased in April is symptomatic. From June 1999 onwards (week 42!) she has problems with her feet and there are regular purchases of insoles, foot deodorants, corn plasters and other Scholl products. She suffers from hay fever. When she gets a cough or cold (approximately once a year) she takes several weeks to shake it off. She occasionally buys vitamin pills. Brenda also resorts to instant tan products despite (or because of) taking holidays. As a loyal customer and big spender with this retailer, Brenda gains substantial reward points on her loyalty card. She redeems these points on 5 occasions, saving her £105.72 (an approximate return of 4.5%). The first four points redemptions are effectively special purpose purchases. The first is after shave, bought in December, presumably as a gift for Christmas. The fourth redemption is another pre-Christmas purchase on a beauty aid, again possibly as a gift. Holidays would seem to be the theme of redemptions two and five. Both occur at the same time of the year and involve sunscreen products. The third redemption is far more mundane. It is unclear why this redemption is so different to the others. Is it fair to conclude vanity is a trait and that appearance (of herself and others) is very important to Brenda? Brenda however appears to suffer from spots 

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Clearly some of our more speculative interpretations of the data are somewhat mischievous. Some might feel that they are cruel or prurient. However, they have been developed to illustrate a point. Retailers can choose to draw conclusions from the raw data, which could be questionable, in factual and ethical terms. From a managerial perspective, individual level data raises important questions. As we have shown, various conclusions about Brenda’s lifestyle, health and priorities can be extrapolated from the data. The products she buys say a lot about her. Retailers are party to sensitive information. Some information is societally sensitive. Some is personally sensitive e.g. whether we have suffered from an embarrassing ailment inferred from medical purchases. Clearly the retailer can use such sensitive criteria to segment and target. However this raises various ethical considerations for retailers (and consumers, see below). This retailer could create and target a segment of apparently highly sexually active (very frequent condom buyers) or apparently vain individuals (i.e. high level consumers of particular cosmetics). The group targeting possibilities are, from a managerial point of view, endless and exciting (whatever the ethical implications might be).

However, with 14 million cardholders, whilst segments and groups are an obvious dimension of data use, individual level analysis is also possible. The management issue is whether or not it is rewarding to the retailer. The costs of systems development and the involvement needed to focus on the individual perhaps mitigate against analysis or interpretations such as we have developed here. Retailers might claim that individual level data is not of much use to them as ultimately group behavior is more valuable and actionable. Others may not be so sanguine or relaxed about personal data. Perhaps consumers are protected by the safety of numbers, although through technology the “anonymity of the masses” is no longer certain (Christy and Mitchell 1999). Understanding broad trends and placing consumers in relation to these is commercially important. However knowing what the ‘best’ customers are doing and what individuals do buy must be at the heart of any true loyalty scheme, as the scheme links individuals to the retailer. With the recent interest in the expansion of ethnographic and individualized marketing research in consumer behavior, retailers may be further advantaged in terms of their existing data resources.

One could argue that loyalty schemes are ultimately in the consumers interests as they allow the retailer to target offers and inform the retailer about how best to satisfy the consumer. Indeed there is some evidence that some consumers appreciate this (Evans et al 2001). Whilst this might be the case, other more sinister actions can be conceived with these data (Christy and Mitchell 1999). For example, we could see a retailer seeking to exclude non-profitable customers from schemes, offers or stores and doing this on the basis of income, spend or simply postcode. Infrequent or low-spending customers might be charged higher prices. Other product purchases or associations might raise security issues or questions about parenthood and paternity. Addiction to non-prescription medication or high levels of alcohol consumption could be identified and
used supposedly ‘on behalf of’ or even against the consumer. The retailer could also sell on these data to other external businesses. Are such things flights of fancy or real dangers? Legal protection here is potentially murky.

Within the business, the retailer will merge transactional data sets with other internal and externally purchased data. In our case, the retailer has Brenda’s personal data from her application form and will have linked this to other external lifestyle, geodemographic and possibly personal data bases. They, unlike us, can link the ongoing transactional data with these other data sources. The emergence of super-loyalty schemes in the UK (e.g. Nectar), that collect transactional data across a number of competing but cooperating retailers, can only serve to exacerbate these concerns, and enhance the ‘picture’ or ‘life biographies’ that retailers have of their customers.

These are issues of just how right it is for retailers to act on some of the data that they are able to collect or infer. Fundamentally it remains obscure as to what the retailer’s responsibilities are towards the cardholder (beyond the basic legal obligations). Does the obtaining of initial consent absolve the data collector from further responsibility over data use or ongoing collection? If the business expands into new product categories eg alcohol, is consent still valid? For consumers as well however, ethical questions are apparent. Consumers in the UK appear to be highly unaware of the level and volume of data held on them and the potential interpretations of their lives that can be made. Consumers generally have a right to see the personal data that companies keep on them. The position with loyalty cards is unclear. The personal data that a retailer collects from an application form for a loyalty card have to be revealed. The consumer knowingly supplies these. However transaction data are not necessarily available, nor are data on the meaning of classifications or interpretations of individual patterns of behavior. Should consumers be more concerned about what is held and how is it used? We all live our lives under various gazes. If we wish to avoid all surveillance then we have to take extraordinary steps. However, consumers often seem willing to allow retailers to mark and follow their tracks, mainly for very little by way of return. Is this because they have nothing to fear or is it because of a lack of knowledge of what they should fear, or are they in denial, blinded by the perceived benefits of being in the scheme? If privacy is ‘problematic, murky and questionable’ is this because we, as consumers, fail to care enough about the possible implications of this loss of privacy?

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Using Rewards to Insulate Consumers from the Competition: The Case of Segregated Versus Integrated Frequency Program Rewards
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ABSTRACT
Marketers often use frequency programs (FPs) to reward loyal consumers and/or insulate them from competitive offers. Using the framework of mental accounting, we argue that consumers can either mentally segregate the FP reward from the product being sold or integrate the two together. We report two experiments where student participants imagine that they are enrolled in a credit card frequency reward program and have a choice of switching to a competitor. The results show that an FP reward that is apparently easier to mentally segregate from the credit card (free air tickets upon accumulating sufficient points) can better insulate consumers from the competition compared to an integrated reward (e.g., cash back check at the end of the year). Implications of the results in the choice of reward currency are discussed.
ABSTRACT

People learn about the quality of their decisions by comparing their obtained outcomes to alternative outcomes. Often, feedback is mixed: the chosen option performs better than one alternative but worse than another. We examine how people’s reaction to mixed price comparisons is influenced by their motivation to learn from these comparisons. Our results indicate that people who are motivated to evaluate their choices selectively search for opportunities to improve, leading them to overemphasize unfavorable comparisons and underestimate the value of their current selection.
Consumer Learning Through “Using” and the Role of Prior Knowledge in the Situation of “Really New” Products
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ABSTRACT
Based on a survey of analogical learning and involvement literature, this paper identifies critical factors influencing consumer learning of “really new” products at the “using” rather than the “purchasing” stage of the adoption process. The survey analysis suggests that prior knowledge may have a subsequent effect on the level of learning efforts that a consumer makes during the process of using a new product. Furthermore, the level of cognitive involvement that stems from such learning efforts may influence the level of emotional or physical involvement that a user may experience. On the basis of the survey analysis, we develop a conceptual framework proposing tentative links between prior knowledge and the physical and emotional dimensions of consumer learning through using. A set of hypotheses is generated concerning the likelihood of continued use as an outcome of the interactions among the various dimensions.

INTRODUCTION
New products and services represent a major source of business growth and profit. However, many novel products or services failed to reach their growth or profitable stage (Cooper, 1979; Cooper and Kleinsmith, 1987), despite being successfully brought to the market by the first movers. Classic examples of such products include EMI’s CT scanner and Philips’ Compact Disks. Meanwhile, numerous studies (von Hippel, 1986; Griffin and Hauser 1996) show that continuous involvement with users after a new product has been introduced to the market is critical for sustaining long term profitability.

In the innovation adoption literature, two types of consumer behaviour have been distinguished, namely the “acceptance” and the “continued use” of an innovation (Robertson, 1971). Despite that both “acceptance” and “continued use” are essential for the adoption process, most studies have concentrated on examining factors leading to “acceptance” (i.e. purchase), relatively few studies have been carried out to understand factors leading to “continued use”. The work on the latter can be found in a broader context of brand loyalty and relationship marketing literature. Solomon (1992) indicates that purchase decisions based on loyalty may become simplified and even habitual in nature, and this may be a result of satisfaction with the current brand. However, brand loyalty is a very complex construct, which has been studied and measured in both behavioural and attitudinal terms. Continued use may be considered as the behavioural aspect of brand loyalty, i.e. the incorporation of an innovation into the behavioural pattern (Klongglan and Coward, 1970). It is an important concept for studying durable products, as a durable product is capable of a long and useful life and survives many uses. Compared to brand loyalty, continued use is also a more appropriate concept for studying really new products. This is because in such situation, consumer learning involves the evaluation of a new product category, rather than a comparison of alternative brands (Boyd and Mason, 1999). In this paper, we intend to develop a conceptual framework for understanding consumer learning through using, and the impact of such learning on continued use, in the situation of really new products. We propose that learning acquired through the consumer-product interaction during the using process is a major indicator for continued use. The using process is defined as the process following the initial acceptance or purchase of a new product. It mobilises a series of emotional and psychological status to supplement the cognitive experience (Wilson, 1998).

LITERATURE SURVEY AND ANALYSIS
Prior Knowledge, Product Comprehension and the Knowledge Transfer Process at the Purchase Stage

In consumer research literature, really new products are defined as innovations that defy straightforward classification in terms of existing product concepts (Gregan-Paxton, et al., 2002; Moreau, Markman and Lehman, 2001; Gregan-Paxton and Roedder John, 1997). Consumer learning involves developing preferences for new products that do not fit into any existing category, and are unrelated to direct or indirect consumer experience (Robertson, 1971). Researchers found that because of lack of knowledge about novel products, consumers frequently make inferences about them based on limited information (Broniarczyk and Alba 1994; Brucks, 1984), and judgements are often based on an appraisal of both potential benefits and costs of the novel products (Johnson and Payne 1985). However these findings are based on evidence at purchase, it remains unclear as to how the initial perceptions and preferences may change through the action of using. As the initial goals are likely to be evaluated and adjusted while using the product, we stress that new product learning at the purchasing stage and new product learning at the using stage are interrelated.

Studies have been conducted to understand how consumers use prior knowledge to learn about a new product category and how they form perceptions of the degree of continuity of a new product. Research evidence suggests that this learning occurs through a series of stages: access, mapping and transfer (Gentner 1989; Holyoak and Thagard 1995; Gregan-Paxton and Roedder John 1997). The ease with which consumers can transform their existing category structures to accommodate the new information presented by an innovation will determine how continuous they perceive the new product to be. In their study, Moreau, Markman and Lehmann (2001) refer to this existing product category as the primary base domain, which is defined as the category most similar to the innovation in terms of the benefits provided. In the access stage, a potentially relevant base domain becomes active in a person’s memory and thus can serve as a source of information about the target. When the target shares several surface similarities (i.e. visible attributes) with a base domain, access is likely to occur spontaneously. When a domain has been accessed, consumers can compare the content and structure of the base with the target domain. These mappings then serve as paths on which additional knowledge can transfer from the base to the target. The similarity between the two domains (the base and the target) dictates the ease with which these mappings can be constructed. In turn the types of mappings constructed will influence the type and amount of knowledge that will transfer, the inferences that can be made about the product, and the extent to which consumers comprehend the new product (Moreau, Markman and Lehmann, 2001).

These studies found that prior knowledge or expertise in a primary base domain influences internal knowledge transfer process, which in turn affects consumers’ comprehension and their perceptions of relative advantages and risks. Two different types of
mapping have been distinguished, namely attributes-based mapping and relation-based mapping (Clement and Gentner 1991; Gregan-Paxton and Roedder John 1997). For example, consumers using the camera base domain to understand a new digital camera can map either the attribute “button” or the relation “button opens shutter” from the base to the target. Research evidence indicates that people prefer relation-based mappings to attribute-based ones, because relational mapping enable consumers to create goal-oriented inferences about how the new product will perform. For continuous innovations, an expert in the primary base domain should be able to construct relation-based mappings between the base and the target domain, thus transfer a significant amount of useful attribute and relation-based knowledge. In contrast, a novice is unlikely to recognise the relational similarities between the two domains, and thus to rely more exclusively on attribute-based mapping such as visible product attributes. As a result, novice’s comprehension of the new product is likely to be significantly lower than that of experts.

For discontinuous innovations, or really new products, the relative level of comprehension for experts and for novices at the purchasing stage is less clear from the existing evidence. Experts who prefer relation-based mappings, are more likely than novices to recognise the relation-based dissimilarities between the base and the target as they attempt to map the two domains (Gentner, Rattermann and Forbus 1993). For example, experts will recognise that several relations in the camera domain do not map onto the digital camera domain (e.g. light no longer exposes film). Experts who want to take action shots (i.e. a base domain goal) know that with a traditional camera they can get high-quality pictures using high-speed film and short exposures (i.e. the relations among the features). The same photographers may still have the same goal when evaluating a digital camera, but the relations among the features of the primary base domain will not transfer to the target to indicate how this goal would be achieved. The difficulty even for experts to make relation-based mappings will influence their perceptions of a new product’s relative advantages and risks, as they cannot transfer the knowledge necessary to make goal-oriented inferences effectively. The above discussion of the literature shows that the level of comprehension of experts for discontinuous innovation is such that they are unable to make relation-based mappings, but nevertheless are able to comprehend the product complexity and to recognise its relation-based dissimilarities to an existing category. Therefore, we propose that experts will perceive higher learning costs involved in using the new product than novices. The level of comprehension of novices on the other hand is such that they are neither able to make relation-based mappings nor able to comprehend the product complexity/relation-based dissimilarities to any existing category. The superficiality of their new product comprehension is likely to result in lower perceived learning cost involved in using the new product. Here learning costs refer to the cognitive effort required to accumulate the knowledge necessary for effective usage (Klemperer 1987).

Prior Knowledge, Perceived Learning Costs and the Level of Learning Efforts at the Use Stage

Research in innovation adoption reveals that all the three constructs, namely (1) consumers’ comprehension of a new product, (2) their perception of the relative advantages, and (3) their perception of the risks, influence the adoption process of a new product. In the previous section, we mainly discussed the role of prior knowledge in consumer comprehension of a really new product during the knowledge transfer process and the perceived learning costs that it results at the purchase stage. In this section we will analyse how this relative level of perceived learning costs will impact on consumer learning at the using stage.

In the cognitive learning literature, learning-cost inferences follow from the nature of high-complexity products, i.e. they are more difficult to use and understand. Since knowledge acquisition requires cognitive effort, attributes of high-complexity products should be associated with high learning cost (Farrell and Shapiro 1988). Research on information overload suggests that individuals are vigilant about the mental effort required to process information (Keller and Staelin 1987). Thus anticipated cognitive effort in the form of learning cost is likely to be a negative inference made about the novel products. Research in analogical learning also indicates that compared to novices, experts in the primary base domain are likely to have more unresolved goals, as they are able to recognise relation-based dissimilarities. These unresolved goals will be encoded as risks because the experts are unable to predict whether the new product can favourably satisfy them (Moreau, Markman and Lehmann, 2001).

These findings indicate a negative relationship between the level of prior knowledge and the perceived advantage of a really new product. However, these studies did not take into consideration factors such as confidence and self efficacy, which may also influence the kind of inferences they make about a novel product. Previous research on expertise indicates that confidence in one’s ability to learn may motivate learning efforts (Bandura 1977). As the amount of given information increases, a decision maker’s confidence in his performance increases (Oskamp 1965). Research evidence also indicates that this positive effect of confidence on learning may be retarded by experts’ tendency towards over-confidence in their existing knowledge, and over-confidence may lead to complacency (Wood and Lynch, 2002). However, over-confidence is unlikely to occur if an expert is aware of the relation-based dissimilarities. In this situation, the confidence of experts in their learning ability is likely to generate positive motivational effect on new product learning. For example, a camera expert who wants to take action shots with digital camera will be more motivated to learn how to obtain a good quality action shot even with a camera that does not have either film or lens. He will experiment and practice until he is satisfied with the results. If self-learning is not enough, he may take a training course to improve his knowledge and skills. Whereas a novice who is less motivated to achieve high level performance will either give up taking action shots (because it is ‘too complicated’), or do it incorrectly and result in poor quality picture. Therefore, we propose that despite the higher perceived learning costs, experts may still evaluate the new product favourably due to higher motivation to learn. Consequently, higher motivation to learn is likely to result in higher learning efforts from the experts than from the novices during the subsequent use stage. Therefore, we predict that greater prior knowledge at the purchase stage will have a subsequent impact on individual’s motivation to learn at the use stage. On the contrary, novices who perceived lower learning costs based on attribute-related similarities in the purchasing decision stage may be less motivated to learn during the using stage.

Dimensions of Involvement and Continued Use of Really New Products

Cognitive learning effort represents one of the several dimensions of product involvement. Celsi and Olson (1988) define product involvement as the perceived personal relevance of a product. They suggest that product involvement be determined by the activated cognitive structure of means-end associations that link people’s knowledge about product attributes and benefits with their self-knowledge about important needs, goals, and values. A prod-
Consumer Learning Through “Using” and the Role of Prior Knowledge in the Situation of “Really New” Products

Consumers with a product or system, on the other hand, represents the physical dimension of involvement. The degree of physical involvement is affected by factors such as the operational efficiency, the user interface and the product design features.

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND DISCUSSION

Linking the discussion of the emotional and physical dimensions of involvement with our earlier analysis of the role of prior knowledge at the using stage, in this section we develop a conceptual framework as shown in figure 1 below. The objective is to build initial conceptual links between prior knowledge and the physical and emotional dimensions of product involvement at the use stage.

H1: A user with higher prior knowledge in an existing product category is more likely to make higher cognitive learning efforts while using the new product.

H2: Higher cognitive learning efforts are likely to have a positive effect on a user’s physical involvement with the new product, moderated by the user’s emotional involvement with the new product.

H3: Higher cognitive learning efforts are likely to have a positive effect on a user’s emotional involvement with the new product, moderated by the user’s physical involvement with the new product.

H4: Higher cognitive learning efforts are unlikely to have a positive effect on the level of product involvement when a user’s involvement with the new product is low in both emotional and physical dimensions.

H5: When a user achieves a high level of involvement with a new product in all three dimensions (regardless of the sequence), his or her knowledge of the new product is likely to increase and so is the likelihood of continued and effective use of the new product.

DISCUSSION

As illustrated in the conceptual framework, in this paper we posit that the use stage can be studied in terms of a user’s involvement with a new product in the physical, cognitive and emotional dimensions. The likelihood of continued use is the outcome of the interactions among these three dimensions. We focus our analysis of the cognitive dimension on the role of prior knowledge and the level of learning efforts it results. We propose that interaction between the dimensions may occur if a user is initially highly involved with a new product in any one particular dimension. For instance, a user’s high cognitive learning efforts may enable him to master the physical subtleties of the new product, which in turn increases his or her cognitive understanding of the relations between the product’s attributes and benefits. However, we propose that this positive and interactive effect between the cognitive and physical dimensions of new product learning will only take place when the user feels a certain degree of emotional attachment to the new product. Such emotional attachment may be generated through advertising or other external or internal stimuli. The interaction between the cognitive dimension and the physical dimension will intensify the emotional dimension of the user involvement as the skill level of the users approaches the challenging level of the new product, and ultimately lead to the state of “flow” for some users (see Csikszentmihalyi, 1975).
In a situation where a user is either naturally skilled in mastering physical subtleties or the design of a new product is simple to operate and user-friendly, the user may develop an instantaneous emotional liking or attachment to the new product without the need for high cognitive learning efforts. Such interaction between the physical dimension and the emotional dimension of a user’s involvement with a product commonly occurs in so-called relationship-prone consumer products. It can also be achieved through purposeful marketing strategies and user-friendly design emphasising operational simplicity in high-tech durable products. The operational simplicity and the emotional attachment with a new product can be achieved through purposeful marketing strategies and user-friendly design emphasizing operational simplicity in high-tech durable products. The operational simplicity and the emotional attachment with a new product at the early stage of use process provide the users the opportunity for acquiring deeper cognitive understanding of the product attributes and benefits, as their experience of using the new product develops subsequently.

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Red or Green? Price, Product Content and Brand as Determinants of Bundling Purchasing
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Hsiao-Ching Lee, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan

ABSTRACT
This study examines a unique bundle of compact discs, the so-called red-green pair, composed of a tying (red-tag) and a tie-in (green-tag). In this special case of mixed bundling, buyers may purchase the bundle, opting to buy a tie-in in order to obtain the tying at a discount. A computer simulation is utilized to collect empirical data. The result shows that an equivalent price reduction is more effective on the tying than on the tie-in. Furthermore, it is worth noting that consumers will give up purchasing the whole bundle when the price of a tie-in is too high. Finally, consumer preference for the content of a tie-in is a more significant influence on consumer choice than brand reputation.
I Saved a Hundred Thousand Rupiahs on That Camera! Attitude Change Following Price Reductions in an Unfamiliar Currency
Michael Callow, Morgan State University, USA
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ABSTRACT
How does an American tourist respond to a price differential of a million rupiahs in Indonesia, as opposed to the roughly equivalent value of eleven euros in Spain? Are consumers who shop around in foreign markets acting rationally when they compare prices in an unfamiliar currency? We address this issue by examining how consumers from different countries respond to such price differentials. We develop hypotheses regarding the impact of currency denomination familiarity on consumers’ attitudinal response to changes in prices. The results of an experimental study conducted in Italy and the United States support our proposition that consumers who are more familiar with the foreign currency’s denomination will be more influenced by price differentials than those consumers who are less familiar with the foreign currency’s denomination. We discuss the implications of our findings for pricing strategies in regional trade zones, international tourism, and global e-marketing.
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